

THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2017

ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE— ATTORNEY-GENERAL, JUSTICE, TRAINING AND SKILLS

Estimate Committee Members

Mr DA Pegg (Chair)
Mr MJ Crandon
Miss VM Barton
Ms N Boyd
Mr DJ Brown
Mrs JA Stuckey

Members in Attendance

Mr JP Bleijie
Mr SL Dickson
Ms DE Farmer
Mr TL Mander
Mrs JR Miller
Mr TJ Nicholls
Mr LP Power
Mr IB Walker

In Attendance

Hon. YM D'Ath, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills
Mr J Sullivan, Chief of Staff

Department of Employment and Training

Dr J Watterston, Director-General
Ms S Wauchope, Deputy Director-General, Training and Skills

TAFE Queensland

Ms J Schmidt, Chief Executive Officer

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Mr D Mackie, Director-General
Mr G Davis, Chief Financial Officer, Financial Services Branch, Corporate Services

Crime and Corruption Commission

Mr A MacSporran QC, Chairman

Electoral Commission of Queensland

Mr W van der Merwe, Electoral Commissioner

Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland

Mr K Cocks AM, Commissioner

Committee met at 9.00 am

CHAIR: I declare the estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee open. I would like to introduce the members of the committee. I am Duncan Pegg, member for Stretton and chair of the committee. Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera, is the deputy chair. The other committee members are Nikki Boyd, member for Pine Rivers; Don Brown, member for Capalaba; Jann Stuckey, member for Currumbin; and Verity Barton, member for Broadwater, who is replacing Jon Krause, member for Beaudesert, for today. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to ask questions at its hearing today, so other members may be present over the course of the proceedings.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2017 and the estimates in respect of the portfolio areas administered by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills and then, later in the day, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services. The hearing program for today has been published and is available from the secretariat staff. It details the order in which we will examine expenditure for the various organisational units within these portfolios. The proceedings will end today at 7.30 pm.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. I ask that mobile phones and other electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent mode. Also, I remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. The committee will examine the portfolio of Training and Skills until 10.30 am. The visiting members present are Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, member for Kawana; Mr Linus Power MP, member for Logan; Ms Di Farmer MP, member for Bulimba; and Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP, member for Bundamba.

I remind those present today that these proceedings are similar to parliament and subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply here. I refer in particular to standing order 115; therefore, questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles or argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored without imposing artificial time limits and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Attorney-General, director-general, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Attorney-General or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Attorney, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Chair, and thank you members of the committee and members of the parliament. I am very pleased to attend the 2017-18 budget estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to answer questions regarding the training and skills aspects of my overall portfolio responsibilities.

In the 2017-18 state budget the Palaszczuk government has continued the focus on giving Queenslanders access to high-quality training opportunities to gain employment. We have continued our investment in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, and I am pleased to say that the first round of funding for projects this financial year has just been announced: \$33.9 million is going to 191 organisations across Queensland. That will help up to 7,100 Queenslanders access training opportunities and ultimately lead onto the pathway into employment. I think it is timely to highlight that Sunday marked the five-year anniversary of the scrapping of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative by the former LNP government even when there was a Deloitte report at the time that said this program was getting Queenslanders into jobs.

In the state budget we have also allocated funding for training strategies to ensure people are skilled in the industries where jobs will be in the future. We are also continuing investment in TAFE Queensland as a premium public provider of VET and continuing our commitment to set standards for

high-quality training delivery through the implementation of the Queensland VET Quality Framework. We have committed \$9 million over four years for the Regional Skills Investment Strategy to provide a place based approach to empower local communities to develop skilling solutions and capitalise on local employment opportunities.

On top of this, we have also allocated \$10 million over two years for the Regional Skills Adjustment Strategy to support individuals looking for work. Current research shows that individuals will be required to navigate faster through different workforce transitions in the future due to rapid changes to the economic, social and environmental landscape. This will require an approach by government to plan for the future and consider new skills and mindsets. This strategy will target specific regions facing economic uncertainty and support individuals to gain the foundation, employability and technical skills needed to transition to the jobs for the future. More specifically, this strategy will target mature age workers who are at risk of being displaced from traditional industries and will be primarily delivered through TAFE Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government has committed to TAFE Queensland's role as a premium provider of training and skills in the state. The Palaszczuk government committed to a \$34 million investment over three years to: increase the number of teachers and support staff and provide more regional support programs and foundation skills courses for disadvantaged learners; establish a fully independent Training Ombudsman; ensure TAFE had priority access to state owned training facilities; and provide training in emerging, innovative industries through advice from Jobs Queensland. We are continuing this commitment.

Under our government's Rescuing TAFE initiative we are developing a 10-year strategic training infrastructure plan. The government is currently drafting a plan to manage a diverse portfolio of more than 40 training facilities. I would like to point out from the outset that there will be no reduction in the number of TAFE campuses under the Palaszczuk government. This is unlike the former LNP government, which sold off campuses across Queensland as part of its rampage of selling state assets and had a plan to sell more. Let us not forget that they cut almost 2,000 full-time-equivalent staff from TAFE while they were in government.

We cannot hide from the fact that the training and skills sector is not thriving as it could be. The Palaszczuk government is doing what it can in an environment where the federal government has severely cut back funding in this sector and has created massive uncertainty to all providers. The federal government has refused to renew or extend the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, which delivered \$105.4 million last financial year. The Commonwealth contribution to the Training and Skills budget has decreased by \$63.7 million for Queensland this year. Instead, the federal government has allocated \$70 million under a new Skilling Australians Fund. This will be wholly funded through a new levy on the hire of migrant workers by businesses. That means that if migrant workers are not employed in sufficient numbers then funds will not be available to support apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland. That leaves the sector with much uncertainty. There has been a lot of pressure from the Commonwealth in the training and skills space, yet we have not heard from Tim Nicholls or the LNP on this. If they are truly supportive of funding training and skills in Queensland, they need to voice their concerns to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull about the ongoing funding pressures this state is facing.

Today I am also announcing the new Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-2020 that has been developed by Jobs Queensland. This plan has created a road map for the future jobs that will be available in the tourism sector. It is estimated that around 20,000 extra tourism jobs will be needed in Queensland by 2020. We are committed to ensuring that going into the future we have a skilled workforce that will be able to meet jobs needs, and this plan will help us to achieve this. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders have access to quality training opportunities. That is why we are investing in the training and skills space, based on current and future needs to ensure we have a skilled-up workforce that will in turn lead to a stronger economy. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney-General. I call the member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, in the exercise of your ministerial functions and duties have you or your staff used private email addresses?

Mrs D'ATH: I have utilised my private email from time to time so that I could provide and access documents from home to continue my work as I do outside of work hours, whether it is printing off speeches or whether it is accessing documents for different meetings or events I may be going to. As other members have explained, that is a use that has been undertaken by a number of ministers and I suspect many ministers over many governments.

I appreciate the line of questioning from the member, but I hope the member is going to be able to say, hand on heart, that no ministers in the Newman government in any way utilised their private emails when they undertook their work when he follows this line of questioning, because it is one of those ones where I think there are issues and there are certainly questions to be put today. We have the CCC before us later on, but this is an issue that I think all members of parliament and parliaments as a whole are going to have to deal with going forward, about the way communication is undertaken by members of parliament and how in the current digital age we make sure that our guidelines and our practices keep up with that changing nature.

Mr BLEIJIE: I note you mentioned the former government. I do not think any of the former Newman government ministers had the CCC say there was a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct made against them in a press release from the CCC. I take the political point you are trying to score there.

Mr POWER: Is there a question?

Mr BLEIJIE: The issue goes to the heart of the SDS in terms of the minister's duties and how she conducts the affairs of her office. The CCC put out a statement yesterday saying there was a breach—

Mrs D'ATH: The member will have the CCC before him later today.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, but I have you here now and you are the minister.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you are here to ask questions. Can I ask you to get to the point and ask a question.

Mr BLEIJIE: The CCC said yesterday that the use of private email addresses is a breach of the Ministerial Handbook. You have just admitted that you have used your private email address. Do you consider that a breach of the Ministerial Handbook and what do you intend to do about it?

Mrs D'ATH: As the member knows, the CCC has found that the use of private emails is not corrupt conduct in its own right; it is about what is done with those particular documents. If the member wants to cherrypick what was released by the CCC yesterday that is fine, but let us be absolutely—

Mr BLEIJIE: It is a big cherry.

Mrs D'ATH: Let us be clear: the LNP members are known to have their Gmail accounts, which is their name followed by .mp@gmail.

Mr CRANDON: Point of order—

Mrs D'ATH: This is the line of questioning that was started by the member for Kawana.

CHAIR: I will hear the point of order.

Mr CRANDON: The Attorney-General is raising issues around non-government members. They are not at issue. We are talking about ministerial email addresses and it is a deadly serious issue.

Mrs D'ATH: It is absolutely a serious issue. Sorry, Chair.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, the minister has been asked a question in relation to this issue and she can answer it as she sees fit.

Mr CRANDON: Mr Chair, point of order. The Attorney-General is referencing the use of emails by non-government members. That is not at question here. It is not at issue here. It is not against the law. We have a minister who has been hauled before the court of public opinion overnight. It is reasonable for the questions to be asked.

Ms FARMER: Point of order: the member is not making a point of order and I seek your ruling on that.

CHAIR: I am going to allow the Attorney-General to continue. She was attempting to answer the question and, in fact, did not get much of an opportunity to do so. I call the Attorney-General.

Mr BLEIJIE: I was wondering when the protection racket for Minister Bailey was going to start. It did not take long, did it?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you have asked the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: It did not take long.

CHAIR: I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to the member for Coomera's point of order, the fact is that the member for Kawana is the one who referred to the CCC statement that was released yesterday. I am speaking directly to that statement so I am very relevant to the question that has been put. If we want to talk about protection rackets, I can absolutely understand why the opposition members would not want to be questioned on this issue themselves, but this is estimates and it is for ministers to answer.

Mr BLEIJIE: This is actually your estimates. It is your budget, Minister.

Mrs D'ATH: But I suspect that in about an hour and a quarter's time the member may go outside and probably do some press. When he does, I hope then he will actually answer those questions for the people of Queensland.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will tell you who will not be doing press today and that is your Premier. What plane is she on? Where is she going today?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you are continually interrupting and interjecting. You have asked the question and you are getting the answer. The Attorney-General is entitled to answer the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: I do not know if I am getting any answer.

Mr BROWN: The member for Kawana has dissented twice now to your rulings. I ask for him to be brought back into line.

CHAIR: I caution you, member for Kawana. I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: As I have said, this is now an issue for all of parliament and not just ministers. In the statement made yesterday by the CCC, which the member for Kawana is showing around, I can take the member to about the third last line where he will see that the CCC also made reference—

Mr BLEIJIE: Is that the corrupt conduct against Mark Bailey line?

Mrs D'ATH: If the member for Kawana wants to keep making cheap political points as opposed to getting an answer to his question, he can keep going. I am answering the question. The CCC statement actually says that the CCC considers that the use of private email addresses by any member of parliament or public servant for official business lacks transparency and is a corruption risk. Let us face it: there are members on the other side who are throwing stones who cannot, hand on heart, say they do not use their private emails for business. In fact, I know for a fact that the Premier tabled on Tuesday an email account and an email from the shadow attorney-general, who I hope will be asking me questions today, at the address ian.walker.mp@gmail.com. I think this might be an LNP Gmail account, because I know other LNP members have a similar Gmail account.

Miss BARTON: Point of order. With respect, this was a question about ministers using private email accounts for ministerial purposes, not members of parliament using private emails for non-ministerial purposes. This is about whether or not ministers are in breach of very clear guidelines around ministerial purposes and the minister is not answering the question. It is not relevant to the question.

CHAIR: The Attorney is attempting to answer the question. I will allow the Attorney to continue and then we will move on.

Mrs D'ATH: Clearly I have gone to the answer for that question. I was asked directly about my use. I gave a very honest and frank answer to that. I am putting that in the context of what the CCC said yesterday and this is absolutely relevant. This is a line of questioning that the opposition started. You opened this line of questioning. Do not complain now that you do not like the answers. I appreciate the opposition only wants to be able to throw stones and does not want to look at their own behaviour in this respect.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, if I could continue, as it may help the Attorney to answer the question: in light of your admission of using your private email account to work from home, will the Attorney tell this committee what she means by working from home and does that include official business?

Mrs D'ATH: I have already stated the answer to that question. Quite clearly I have stated that I use it to undertake work from printing speeches and undertaking other duties, so that I can continue to work outside of office hours.

Mr BLEIJIE: Is it official business?

Mrs D'ATH: I have already stated that I print off speeches and other works, so that I can continue to do physical work at home, as other ministers have indicated and, I suspect, has been a practice of ministers over consecutive governments. As I say, can Tim Nicholls and yourself guarantee that no

minister in the Newman government ever used private emails for any work purposes at all, and whether you hold your shadow ministers to the same account as you hold ministers now, which we know for a fact is not the case, because the shadow Attorney-General is emailing out crime statistics—

Mr BLEIJIE: Attorney, I think the issue we are dealing with is that the CCC finalised its investigation into one of your ministers. There was a CCC finding in relation to your minister, who was stood down last night. You are trying to make this out to be not as serious as it is.

Mrs D'ATH: Not at all.

Mr BLEIJIE: One of your Labor ministers—

Mrs D'ATH: Does the member want an answer?

Mr BLEIJIE: You are not giving an answer

Mrs D'ATH: Once again, the member is cherrypicking out of the CCC. I can understand why he would, because he does not want to state that there is a particular issue that the CCC has identified—

Mr BLEIJIE: With all of your ministers, perhaps.

Mr POWER: Point of order. I am trying to hear the answer. This is the 15th interjection—I have been counting—by the member for Kawana in only two questions. If he is serious about asking a question, he should wait for the answer to be given.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order. The Attorney is engaging in debate. She is debating the question—

Mr POWER: When you have made 15 interjections, it is clearly the member for Kawana who is engaging in debate.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order. When the Attorney engages in debate and brings up former LNP ministers and debates the actual answer, she can expect a debate to ensue. The Attorney is starting the debate in the answer. She is debating the answer.

Mrs D'ATH: I am referring to the document that you held up.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, the Attorney-General is answering the question. You have been continually interrupting the answer. I also caution you in relation to repeatedly asking the same question. Do you have another question?

Mr BLEIJIE: I will move on, Mr Chair. With respect to the SDS at page 12 in relation to apprenticeships, traineeships, school-based apprenticeships and completions for 2016-17, there has been a reduction in the completion rate on each measure for 2016-17 compared with the previous year. The latest National Centre for Vocational Education Research data from the December 2016 quarter shows that there were 1,100 fewer commencements in Queensland in 2016 compared to 2015. Does this indicate that your training programs, such as Jobs Queensland, are a complete failure and a waste of taxpayer money?

Mrs D'ATH: If the member was genuine about asking this question, he would acknowledge the fact that apprenticeship and traineeship numbers have been significantly declining for a number of years. In fact, the peak in apprenticeship and traineeship numbers in Queensland hit in 2012 and has been significantly declining since that point. Under the previous LNP government, we saw a very large drop in actual apprenticeship numbers. In fact, we saw numbers decline from 50,400 to 40,900. That is a drop of almost 10,000 in apprenticeship and traineeship numbers.

I know that the member has previously put out figures using the NCVET data. In fact, the calculations he has previously released have been incorrect. His interpretation of how to compare those figures has been incorrect. I can advise that when it comes to the NCVET figures for Queensland, on apprenticeship and traineeship numbers we are the third highest in the country. That does not mean there is not more work to be done. There has been a significant impact on apprenticeship and traineeship numbers in recent years.

The Commonwealth has reduced a number of programs such as Tools for Your Trade, employer incentives, mature-age incentives, group training assistance and funding to boost childcare traineeships, which have all been eliminated, on top of the end of the resource boom. The federal government has created uncertainty by moving away from the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. Now it has announced a fund that, quite honestly, means that for Australian workers to get apprenticeship and traineeship funding in this space from the Commonwealth, we have to try to bring in as many foreign workers as we possibly can to fund it. If we do not bring in those workers from overseas, there is actually no funding to go towards apprenticeship and traineeship support in Australia. We are left in a state of uncertainty going forward in this space.

The fact is that the Commonwealth cut all of its funding to group training organisations, which are one of the largest employers of apprentices in Queensland. They have cut their funding altogether. Queensland continued our funding, matching it dollar for dollar. We have continued to provide funding to group training organisations. The fact is that, when it comes to Commonwealth contributions and state contributions collectively, group training organisation funding has gone down by half. When you slash those programs and cut that sort of funding, you will inevitably see a decline. That is happening at a time of transition away from the resource boom and towards other industries that are more based on traineeships and apprenticeships. We are seeing an increase in traineeship numbers, but with apprenticeships we are still seeing a decline, which we need to try reverse. We are starting to see some good trends in that space.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, you talk about the interpretation of the data. Let us be absolutely clear. I go to your budget document. The SDS at page 12 talks about the number of completions for apprenticeships and traineeships. It states that in 2016 the actual number of completions for apprenticeships was 9,800 and for traineeships it was 12,300. In the year before that, it was 11,400 and 13,100 respectively. There are thousands fewer young Queenslanders completing their apprenticeships and traineeships. Without blaming the federal government or the LNP, because you have talked about the LNP more than your own government today, so without blaming anyone else, your money, your investments and your state programs have seen apprenticeships decline in the thousands. Is not this a failure in your ministerial duties to make sure young Queenslanders are getting the apprenticeships that they need to be skilled for the future jobs that we need in Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: If you accept that premise by the member for Kawana, your government significantly failed because you dropped—

Mr BLEIJIE: It is your budget paper

Mrs D'ATH:—tens of thousands. It is about context, member for Kawana. I know you like to talk about that.

Mr BLEIJIE: Everything is about context, today, isn't it?

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Kawana never likes to talk about the previous government because—

Mr CRANDON: Point of order. The Attorney-General is debating the issue. The Speaker's statement of 27 March 2015 makes it very clear that ministers shall not debate the subject to which it refers. The question is very clear: it is in relation to 2015 and 2016 figures, and the fact that there are thousands less in 2016 compared to 2015. There is no need for a debate on what happened in previous years or, indeed, federal government funding.

Mr BROWN: Point of order. I do appreciate the point of order from the member for Coomera, but for those of us who are newer to this House, and as a first timer, I appreciate the Attorney's answer giving context over two years. It really brings it into context for members such as myself.

Mr CRANDON: How about over two years, Mr Chair?

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, the member for Capalaba is making a point of order. The reality is that the member for Kawana asked a broad question with an extensive preamble. The Attorney-General only just began her answer before points of order were raised. I call the Attorney-General to provide her answer.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. I think it is the member for Kawana who keeps interjecting and wanting to debate the issues.

Mr BLEIJIE: You are debating again.

Mrs D'ATH: You cannot talk about apprenticeship completion numbers—

Ms FARMER: Point of order. Mr Chair, under standing order 251 the members of the opposition are really only allowed to interrupt a member when they are speaking if they are making a point of order or there is one of several other specific circumstances. There have been a number of occasions on which the LNP members have simply interrupted with no point of order at all. I ask the chair to get the LNP to comply with the standing orders.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Chair. I think it would be handy if you ruled on frivolous points of order from government members of this committee.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you are continually interjecting on answers from the Attorney. I caution you that you will be warned standing order 185(1) if your conduct continues.

Mr CRANDON: Point of order. The commencement of the debate is by the Attorney-General. The specific question was very clear, relating to 2015 and 2016. She immediately went to 2014 and before. If the debate commences from the Attorney-General's side, surely the member has a right to respond and defend himself.

CHAIR: I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: The point I wanted to make is that you cannot ask about completion rates in 2015 and 2016 unless you talk about commencement rates in 2012, because apprenticeships go, on average, for four years. If there is a drop in completion rates it is because there was a drop in commencement rates also. There was a drop of 30,000 in commencement rates for apprenticeships and traineeships under the previous government. If you are going to talk about the completion rates of apprenticeship numbers, you have to look at it over the length of the apprenticeship. To do anything else would be misleading about how there would be a reduction in completion over time.

The member asked what we are doing in relation to this. I can advise the member that this government is introducing a range of programs and sustainable incentives to provide support for employers and encourage high-quality training arrangements. This includes: \$220.3 million in User Choice funding for apprentices and trainees; \$100 million for the Back to Work package; doubling the payroll tax rebate, which is worth about \$45 million over three years; the workers compensation premium apprentice discount; \$3.25 million for group training organisations; the expansion of the building and construction training policy; specific programs in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative; funding for pre-apprenticeship programs for priority trades; and a range of other funding and support for employers and apprentices.

This is underpinned by the work that is being done by Jobs Queensland in matching where our skills demands are with our training dollars. We are making sure that we are doing the work to identify how we increase apprenticeships and traineeships in this state. This is a challenge that every single jurisdiction in this country is facing right now. In fact, at ministerial council level the key issue being discussed is how we lift apprenticeship and traineeship numbers across the nation because they have been in decline for some time. We need to be focusing on that. The proposed new national partnership agreement is specifically around apprenticeships and traineeships. That is why the work we are doing in this space in conjunction with Jobs Queensland is so important.

Mr BROWN: Can the minister please outline the success of the Rescuing TAFE package, in particular the provision of second-chance funding to Queenslanders? I reference page 49 of the SDS.

Mrs D'ATH: The Rescuing TAFE package was a very important initiative we announced upon coming into government. I know that all of the government members who are here are absolutely committed to our TAFEs—and not just rescuing our TAFEs but actually building up our TAFEs in our communities. I want to acknowledge the tremendous work that our TAFE teachers, staff and support staff do each and every day in our TAFEs across our regions.

Rescuing TAFE was a three-year \$30 million initiative implemented by the Palaszczuk government when it came to office to support TAFE provide VET pathways for Queenslanders who would otherwise not have access to them and, more broadly, to start to repair the damage done to our TAFEs under the previous Newman-Nicholls government. As part of the allocation of the TAFE Queensland funding they had the ability within the overall framework to direct second-chance funding to students in differing areas depending on regional needs, available course offerings and demand.

As such, we have seen students access training in a broad range of disciplines right across the state. I am pleased to advise the member and the committee that under the second-chance funding component of the Rescuing TAFE package, as at 30 June 12,740 training places were provided to Queenslanders. These are people who would otherwise not have been able to access this training. There are many good-news stories that have resulted from this commitment that I would like to relay.

In TAFE Queensland North a group of six Indigenous students used the second-chance funding to complete a certificate III in media studies, with three of them being employed by National Indigenous Television. There is Connor, a student at Dakabin State High School, who used the funding to complete a trades taster at SkillsTech and while doing so obtained his construction white card. Connor was offered a full-time apprenticeship at the completion of his course and is now an apprentice roof tiler. Connor credits the course and completion of his white card for his ability to secure that apprenticeship.

There is also Kelly, who was a participant in the Small Business Solutions program, which, I might add, is another great project that TAFE Queensland delivers. Kelly used the second-chance funding to complete a certificate IV in small business management and has used this, along with the

mentoring in the overall program, to increase the size of her business from three to seven in around 12 months. These are just a small sample of the success stories that have resulted as part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to TAFE Queensland. With more than 12,000 places funded through the program, I look forward to seeing many more positive outcomes in the future.

I want to reiterate why this second-chance funding was so important. When I was the shadow education and training minister, time and time again I would have people coming up to me who were long-term unemployed, who had been stay-at-home mums and wanted to get back into workforce, who were full-time carers or who were on a disability pension and said, 'I cannot get subsidised training. I cannot access the certificate III guarantee because I did a course 10 years ago'—a certificate III in business or security or whatever it was—but that does not give me the skills I need now.' Time and time again I would meet these people. We were putting barriers in their way. They wanted to learn and they wanted to work, but they were not able to access affordable training because of that barrier and the criteria around the certificate III guarantee.

This second-chance funding has given so many opportunities to those people to get training and get into jobs. That is something that I am extremely proud the Palaszczuk government has introduced as part of its Rescuing TAFE funding.

Ms BOYD: With regard to page 46 of the SDS, could the minister please provide information about some of the industry collaborations that TAFE Queensland is engaging in and what this does to enhance the student experience?

Mrs D'ATH: One of the things that TAFE Queensland does so well right across the state is work closely with industry and employers to ensure that the training that is delivered not only is of a high standard but also has real-world links to job outcomes and employment pathways after completion. That is why TAFE Queensland is known for the quality training that it provides across the business.

It is all well and good to provide someone with training now, but if it is not linked to outcomes down the line for employment or progression through a career then it becomes less effective. That is why TAFE Queensland is working hard to develop, maintain and expand its collaboration to improve overall student experience. It is also why TAFE Queensland needs to be adequately resourced, with the ability to adapt to changing training demands across the state and a workforce that is strong and willing to go the extra mile for students. This is in stark contrast to the massive shutting of whole and partial campus facilities that we saw under the previous government.

TAFE Queensland staff across the state are engaging constantly in industry collaboration, and I am pleased to provide the committee with some examples. Anglicare Southern Queensland and TAFE Queensland have developed a partnership born out of Anglicare identifying a need to upskill its existing staff. The pilot project is on the Gold Coast. It is called Grow Your Own Workforce. It currently has 40 Anglicare staff studying to receive a certificate III in leisure and health and a large interest in the delivery of a certificate III in individual support that will commence in August. It is this flexibility and willingness to work with industry to address training needs that will come to develop as the partnership progresses.

ICON Community, a social enterprise staffed by volunteers, was experiencing issues because they needed a way to track their workflow better, to reduce duplications and inefficiencies in their office. The staff had developed a website but lacked the skills to develop a database to track activity and manage work they were doing. They approached TAFE Queensland Brisbane and 20 students studying IT networking and web created a tailored and easy-to-use customer relations management system for them. The students were able to use the skills they were learning to create a live solution that is now in use in the field.

Orora Packaging is an ASX listed company with a composite fibre packaging plant in Rocklea. It delivers major scale packaging in cold-chain agriculture produce. TAFE Queensland and University of Canberra interactive digital media students approached Orora with a proposal to create a virtual reality tour of the site to showcase to clients. Students storyboarded the VR tool, shot footage in the plant using 3D cameras mounted on drones and recorded audio of the staff. The Orora sales managers are now carrying the VR headsets to show the site to customers. Those students were awarded high distinctions, and a second project is currently being planned.

A final example is how TAFE Queensland, through its SkillsTech campuses, works closely with the electrical contracting industry to ensure future workers have the required skills as technology continues to advance in the industry. As equipment improves, so has the role of the electrical contractor diversified. The curriculum for accreditation now has more options available to choose from. Seven years ago a typical electrician would have had a certificate III in electrical wiring. Now a typical electrical

contractor may have a certificate III in telecommunications or a certificate IV in engineering and HVAC air conditioning. Outcomes for TAFE Queensland include high completion rates and nearly 100 per cent employment rates after graduation.

We as a government are very proud of the work that TAFE Queensland is doing in developing these links and these collaborations with industry. It is absolutely critical because it is not enough to just train; you have to train with the purpose of ensuring there are employment pathways. Otherwise you end up with highly skilled unemployed people.

CHAIR: Attorney, can you please explain the importance of a strong TAFE Queensland as the premium provider of VET in this state? I refer to page 11 of the SDS.

Mrs D'ATH: As I have been talking about, TAFE are not just our premium public provider; they are the premium provider of VET training in this state. I am proud that they are not just delivering vocational education and training but also now delivering undergraduate degrees in collaboration with the University of Canberra.

In a time when there is massive upheaval and fluctuations in the training sector nationally, it has become more important as time goes on that there is a strong TAFE Queensland that has the ability to deliver training in locations right across the state. Since the Palaszczuk government took office we have seen many private RTOs struggle to continue trading as a result of a series of federal government initiatives. They have reined in what was a flawed VET Fee-Help scheme, which we are very grateful for, but they replaced it with a VET student loan scheme that was not consulted on and had an approval process that was cloaked in mystery. There was no consultation with jurisdictions and there was no consultation with industry. It was brought in very quickly and the transition was flawed. This has meant that the problems we saw with VET Fee-Help have now been compounded by the implementation of and the parameters around the new VET student loan system. This, in addition to all the uncertainty surrounding the federal funding arrangements, is still unresolved today.

Unfortunately for staff and students of some of these private RTOs, a number of them have ceased operations over time, putting staff and students in a state of confusion. I am proud to say that on many of these occasions it is TAFE Queensland that has been able to step in and take on the students to allow them to continue their studies and in some cases take on former staff of the RTOs to aid in this transition.

What we have seen in Queensland since September 2016 is that there have been 10 significant closures of private RTOs that have had large student numbers and facilities right across Queensland. Across these 10 providers there have been around 9,000 students in Queensland alone who have been impacted by their training provider closing down. This has included school students studying VET subjects, including this year students in year 12 who have had their VET provider go into administration and their training cease. For some of those students that training would have counted towards their QCE points. It will have a significant impact. While regrettably some of these students will no longer wish to continue their study as a result of their experience, many more want to or need to continue studying. There needs to be a strong, reliable public provider that can step in and support these students should they wish to keep going.

For example, I am advised that TAFE Queensland was able to step in and has already enrolled 712 former students from the Careers Australia group, with the expectation that more will follow as students evaluate the choices available to them. TAFE Queensland should be applauded for being able to show the flexibility and skills to react to assist in situations such as these.

Without a strong public provider that has confidence in its own future there would likely be many people who exited the VET experience with a bad taste in their mouths. This has done damage to training and quality training across the state and the nation. Since the Palaszczuk government came to office it has given TAFE the faith that it has a future and a key role to play in the provision of training in this state as opposed to the threat of having its delivery footprint further shrunk, fighting to stay on facilities and facing continued staff cuts.

We have delivered the Rescuing TAFE package and it is delivering results for Queensland. We gave TAFE their facilities back. We gave them the ability to grow. It was the Palaszczuk government that gave TAFE a future.

When I talk about the private RTOs and the impact on students, employers and schools, I want to acknowledge the work of my department. It has been working tirelessly as well as reaching out to those students—identifying them and making sure they are clear on what opportunities are available. It has been connecting with schools and TAFE Queensland as well to try to get these students continuing with their training as quickly as possible.

Ms FARMER: I refer to page 46 of the SDS. Could the minister provide an update of the work of TAFE Queensland as the training partner for the 15,000 volunteers for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Bulimba for her question. This is a really exciting partnership for TAFE Queensland with what is going to be one of the most significant events that will happen in this state for many years. It is certainly going to be great for our local economy. As members would be aware, in February 2016 TAFE Queensland signed a partnership arrangement with Goldoc to be the official training partner for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Through this partnership, TAFE Queensland will provide 15,000 volunteers with transferable skills and future opportunities to gain further accreditation and employability which will provide long-term benefits to Queensland employers and the community.

As the selection process for volunteers concludes, a lot of the bulk training will occur for the volunteers in many different elements—orientation training, role specific training, venue specific training and, for those in specific roles, event leadership training and train the trainer training. In the meantime, however, there are still a number of training activities related to the games that I am pleased to advise the committee of. TAFE Queensland has been working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander small business owners to develop their key business documentation and management skills in a partnership with Grocon—a constructor of the athlete's village. There is also a partnership with NEP Broadcasting, the outside broadcast provider, which has resulted in 15 TAFE Queensland students securing work placements, two students so far securing paid work and multiple cohorts completing master classes with the broadcaster to prepare them for future opportunities.

The 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games is a great opportunity for TAFE Queensland to show not just us but the world what a great training provider it is. TAFE already delivers significant volumes of training and expertise to foreign markets. This will provide another opportunity to further expand those relationships and potentially develop new opportunities. We know that international education and training is a large service export for this state. We should be sitting higher than Victoria and New South Wales. We have a lot to offer, especially when it comes to tourism and linking tourism with education and training. This is a fantastic way to showcase our quality training and our quality training provider being TAFE Queensland to our international guests and businesses as well.

The Palaszczuk government is very proud of the work that TAFE Queensland has done to develop this partnership with Goldoc and looks forward to seeing the volunteers in action with the quality training we know they will get from TAFE Queensland. I do not know about other members, but I have people in my community coming up to me saying, 'I've been accepted as a volunteer,' and they are so excited or they have gone to their interview and they are so excited about the chance to work at the Commonwealth Games. I have to say as someone who worked at Expo 88 it is an experience that never, ever leaves you when you have an opportunity to be part of such an incredible event like that and one that I am sure all Queenslanders will be very proud of.

CHAIR: I call the member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the DG. With respect to the minister's answer earlier in relation to her private email account being utilised at home, has Minister D'Ath or any of her staff ever used a private email account to correspond with you or anyone in your department?

Dr Watterston: I checked obviously before I came today. I can categorically answer no. That has not occurred.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, you answered before with respect to completion numbers, blaming the former government and the federal government and so forth. I refer you to your own SDS on a couple of things. One is with respect to page 16 and the training and skills budget. It appears to me that there has been a cut to the training and skills budget. That is on page 16. As I indicated, the actual 2016-17 expenditure was less than what was budgeted, so there has been a cut. We see on page 48 there is a cut to staffing numbers at TAFE Queensland. You are budgeting fewer staff for TAFE than the actual was this year.

Then with respect to apprenticeships you talked about completions and you said we should be looking at take-up rates. Under your government—you have been in for three years—I refer you to the take-up rates and note that there were 3,800 fewer Queenslanders starting apprenticeships under your watch in 2016 than there were in 2014 under the former government. We have completion rates down, start-up rates down, budgets being cut to TAFE, budgets being cut all over the place. Is it any wonder that we have a youth unemployment crisis in this state, particularly in outback Queensland where the unemployment rate is over 50 per cent?

CHAIR: I note, member for Kawana, that there are numerous points to your question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes. The point is that there is such bad news it is hard to get it all in an easy question.

CHAIR: I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: If the member was listening to my advice earlier and my response earlier to those questions, he would know that there are a large number of reasons why nationally we have seen a decline in apprenticeship and traineeship numbers—granted those declines are not as big as they were under the LNP, but that does not mean that we are satisfied with decline. The fact is that apprenticeship and traineeship numbers have been declining across the country, not just in Queensland but across the country. I am proud that we are near the top of list and not the bottom of the list when it comes to those numbers, but that does not make it okay. We need to keep investing in programs to lift apprenticeship and traineeship numbers.

The member referred to page 16 and also made a statement at the end that I am cutting funding for TAFE. Could you please take me to the page in the SDS that says we are reducing TAFE funding and also specifically where you are saying we are cutting the training budget on page 16 so that I can directly respond to your question?

Mr BLEIJIE: I have already asked the question. If the minister looks at page 48 there is only one table on page 48 of the SDS, and that is of TAFE Queensland. The 2016-17 budget was for 4,016 staff. The actual was 4,015. You are budgeting for 3,989.

Mrs D'ATH: So—

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, you asked me to clarify.

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, I am happy to answer that question.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is the first clarification. There are fewer TAFE teachers going forward. With respect to page 16 that I referred you to which you have asked for further clarification on, if you look at the training and skills control budget expenses, the 2016-17 budget was \$1,107,200. The actual was \$1,061,139, which of course is less than what was budgeted for. Then going forward what is more concerning is that you have budgeted less for next year of \$1,054,069. We are having expenses cut and TAFE teachers cut. It is not good news for the training sector, is it?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. He still has not shown me where he is claiming that the TAFE budget is being cut.

Mr BLEIJIE: If you are sacking—

CHAIR: Member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, she has asked a question. If you are sacking teachers and you have fewer teachers, that is a cut, isn't it?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you are again interrupting.

Mr BLEIJIE: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. The Attorney asked me a question.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I will allow you to make your point of order. However, you have asked a question with numerous components to it. The Attorney has asked for clarification. I am giving her a chance to answer. What is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: The minister has just two seconds ago asked me where the cut was. I am saying that it is in her budget paper on page 48. She asked where it is. There is only one figure on page 48. Have I got a different SDS from you? This is the 2017-18 budget.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you have made your point of order. The Attorney was making a comment and I will allow the Attorney to continue with her answer.

Mrs D'ATH: I am more than happy to answer the question if the member for Kawana gives me an opportunity to do so.

Mr BLEIJIE: You asked for more clarification.

Ms FARMER: I raise a point of order. Standing order 251 clearly states, as I said before, that a member cannot be interrupted unless on a point of order or several other quite specific circumstances. I know the member for Kawana said before when I raised this that this was frivolous. He obviously thinks he is above the standing orders of the Queensland parliament. Nevertheless, standing order 251 is quite specific. If you are going to interrupt another member, it needs to be on a point of order.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Bulimba. Member for Kawana, you have been given a lot of latitude so far. The Attorney-General is trying to answer the question. You have asked a question with numerous components to it and then interrupted the Attorney. I caution you again that if you continue to interrupt you will be warned under standing order 185(1). I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. I can absolutely assure the member for Kawana that when it comes to investment in training there is no reduction in state contribution. In fact, in this year's VET Investment Plan, when it comes to funding all of our training initiatives—User Choice, Certificate 3 Guarantee, public provider grants—our state contribution is going up despite our federal funding significantly going down—in fact, going down by more than \$30 million and collectively over \$60 million across the training budget in Queensland. Our state contribution is going up under us by \$38 million. I can advise the member for Kawana that the state contribution for training and skills is going up by \$38 million, while the Commonwealth funding is going down significantly.

In relation to staffing that the member refers to on page 48—I know the member has already asked this question in the parliament, I believe, of the Premier, not of me—the SDS clearly states that any expected reduction in staffing is in relation to short-term contract and seconded staff engaged in project activities. When he talks about sacking staff and wants to start throwing around those words, the fact is that we are not planning any reduction in permanent staff in TAFE over 2017-18. These will be short-term contracts and seconded staff. In fact, I can advise the member that as at 30 June the actual number for TAFE Queensland was 4,059. These figures fluctuate from time to time based on programs, the enrolment numbers and staffing needed across the state. Many are permanent, but there is also a contingent of casual, seconded and temporary staff in TAFE to supplement that because of the fluctuations in training. For example, unfortunately, I can advise that with the literacy program—one that TAFE has done a fantastic job of delivering in the regions—the Commonwealth has significantly cut the funding in that space and that will result in staff not delivering those courses to as many students throughout 2017-18.

There is an impact as a consequence of the loss of funding through the shift from VET Fee-Help and through the reduction in the number of qualifications that are now subsidised under the VET student loan and the cap on that subsidy for the VET student loan, and there is also a cut in the literacy program that was funded by the Commonwealth that TAFE delivers. Every single one of those programs directly affects the delivery of courses and consequently has an impact on staffing numbers who deliver those courses. There will be fluctuations throughout the year as we adapt to those courses. At the same time, we end up having surges in student numbers for other programs because private RTOs are shutting their doors and suddenly we find ourselves having to pick up hundreds or thousands of extra students and deliver programs quickly. That is why you need that flexibility in TAFE Queensland. That is why we have that flexibility. As I say, as much as the member for Kawana wants to say the numbers are going to reduce under us, the fact is that as at 30 June there were 4,059 staff at TAFE Queensland.

Mr BLEIJIE: On that, if it is 4,059 then your budget SDS is wrong and your budget has already been changed for a month.

Mrs D'ATH: That is as at 30 June.

Mr BLEIJIE: DG, with respect to page 11 of the SDS in relation to preparing a strategic training infrastructure plan to manage investment—otherwise known as the Strategic Training Asset Management Plan, or STAMP—where is this? This is a plan that has been going on now for the entirety of this government—nearly three years. We asked about it at the estimates last year. We got an indication that it was even finished. Where is this plan?

Dr Watterston: I thank the member for the question. As you have heard today, it has been the most volatile period of time in the VET sector that we have ever experienced, and our department has been working hard to respond to that. The changes which the minister outlined in VET Fee-Help and the new VET student loans have created a seismic shift, I think, in the way students address the market.

Over a period of time, with the number of RTOs going into administration and closing down, there has been a move to the public provider. You are right: we did talk about that last year. The plan was being developed and we expected to have it ready, but, based on the changes that we have seen and the focus on the need for the public provider to be able to adapt to those students who have been displaced, we have had to look harder and use our audits to make sure that the plan is responsive.

The main point about this is that we do not want to do this in a piecemeal way. We want to focus on having the TAFE assets available for contemporary skills and training development over generations to come. It would have been easy to finish the plan and ignore the volatile environment that we are

working in. The plan is coming along and it is being worked on. There has been enormous consultation. We have looked at the demographics and confirmed the objectives of what those 47 pieces of TAFE infrastructure will be used for.

Mr BLEIJIE: My understanding is that nearly a million dollars has been spent on this plan. The consultation finished in June last year. Nearly a year ago consultation finished. Volatility happens in every sector across Queensland. We have known volatility for 200 years. My point is that a million dollars has been spent and consultation is finished. When is this plan going to be released to the public? A million dollars worth of taxpayers' money has been spent. What is the time line for the release of this plan?

Dr Watterston: When we are confident that we have the appropriate usage in place to enable us to serve the generations to come, as I said, in a volatile environment. You are right: there is always volatility but this is exceptional.

Mr BLEIJIE: For which generation?

Dr Watterston: The generations to come including the current generation. There is work going on. We are partnering with a number of organisations—with TAFE infrastructure already. My understanding is that 19 partner organisations use part of the TAFE infrastructure and will continue to do that. As I said a minute ago, we are not going to do it in a piecemeal way. We are going to do it with a holistic plan that will make sure we have the capacity to be agile through TAFE as a public provider to continue to provide the standard that we require in training in Queensland so that every young person is on a pathway to success. I make no apology for not having the plan ready. I have instructed my department to make sure that it is responsive and is going to be flexible as we go forward to deal with this volatility.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, are you covering up the plan being released? We know that you have form in relation to other issues—

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, that question contained an imputation. I rule your question out of order and I ask you to recast your question.

Mrs D'ATH: Cheap pointscoreing.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, it has been a year since we talked about the Strategic Training Asset Management Plan of TAFE and the assets of TAFE. The DG said that it is a working document, it is subject to volatility and it will be available for generations to come, but when are we going to see it? Surely if it is a working document Queenslanders ought to expect visibility of it and input into it. Consultation finished a year ago. How can it be subject to volatility if Queenslanders now cannot have access to it, have not seen what has happened and a million dollars worth of their money has been spent? All I am asking is: if you have some form of document, release it—a million dollars has been spent—rather than come here each year at estimates saying, 'It is subject to volatility.'

Mr BROWN: Mr Chair, I raise a point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Where is the document and will be minister release the document?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, there is a point of order from the member for Capalaba.

Mr BROWN: The member asked a question and then continued on with—

Mr BLEIJIE: It was a long question.

Mr BROWN: You asked it and then you continued on debating it afterwards.

CHAIR: I think the member for Kawana's question is clear. I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. There has been a significant amount of information out there. To say that there is no information in the development of the long-term infrastructure plan for our TAFE campuses across the state is inaccurate. I appreciate that the member himself may or may not have attended any of those public sessions, but I know that other members of the opposition did. I welcome that because it is nice to see they have an interest in their local TAFE campuses.

The fact is that we have undertaken significant consultation. Materials have been put out there about the criteria for our consideration—what we are looking at as far as the needs of TAFE, the training demands in regions and what the usage is currently. We were very open at all of those consultation sessions about the current use of all of our campuses and what the future use could be, but we are trying to establish a long-term strategy for building on our TAFE facilities going forward. We need to do

that in a way which ensures our TAFE campuses are situated where the future growth of demands and training is needed; that the facilities meet the expectations of students and industry in how we deliver that training; and that it is flexible and adaptable.

Some members have asked, 'Why aren't you leasing it out to this group or this group?' I think it would be irresponsible of us as a government to hand over potentially whole buildings on a campus for 30 years for a dollar a year, because if suddenly we find that we have to pick up 600 new students in a region because a private RTO has fallen over or we have a growth in health, disability and aged care in that area and we need to expand our training offerings then we will not have the facilities because someone else will be using them. It is a government facility and someone else is using it, and it costs a lot more than \$1 a year to rebuild an entire training block.

We have to make strategic decisions based on the evidence that is available. We will be using the work that Jobs Queensland is doing with its regional workforce plan and footprint in conjunction with state and national data on the growth in training industries, the changing nature in regions, the transitioning regions that are going from resource to more service sectors and how we adapt to that training. We need to ensure we are not just thinking about building the traditional trade training centre and classrooms where we have rows of desks and chairs. We need flexible learning spaces. We need modern learning spaces so we can compete with the private market and meet the expectations.

We have some great examples of how we have done that on a smaller scale in Hervey Bay with the health facility and in Maryborough. We have started, quite honestly, from a very low benchmark. We started with a number of sites already sold off by the previous government. The list of sites that had been approved for sale included Ridgeway Avenue, Southport, Cleveland land, North Lakes land and Normanton. These are all sites which the LNP had approved to sell off. We had empty sites. That is our starting point that we have had to work with.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, you have empty sites now across Queensland.

Mrs D'ATH: That were left behind by the previous government. If the member wants to go to individual sites, I know there are some where it is claimed they are not being used. I can advise that the usage across our sites—

Mr BLEIJIE: Coolangatta.

Mrs D'ATH:—is significant. I am happy to get the detail about what the current—

Mr BLEIJIE: Fifty per cent.

Mrs D'ATH: As I have said, we are happy to partner with industry, private RTOs and other government agencies about how best to utilise space within our campuses that in the long term is not needed, but we first have to make sure that we are looking in the long term at strategic planning for what may come, not just what we need now, because we do have to plan for the future—

Mr BLEIJIE: When is the document going to be released, Minister?

Mrs D'ATH: When it is ready. We will release it once that planning work has been done.

Mr BLEIJIE: An estimate of time?

Mrs D'ATH: In the meantime we have said that we will continue to partner with other agencies, with private RTOs, with industries and with universities. We are happy to enter into arrangements for sharing space where TAFE does not need it in the immediate future, for short-term arrangements, but what we are not going to do is allow for whole campuses or part campuses to be leased out for \$1 a year for 30 years while that planning is going on.

Mr BROWN: With reference to page 46 of the TAFE Queensland SDS and the TAFE Queensland program offering, can the minister please provide an update about student numbers and potential growth within the Alexandra Hills campus in my electorate?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I want to acknowledge his advocacy and support for TAFE in his area and for TAFE Queensland generally. More specifically, in regard to the Alexandra Hills campus, the former government was more than happy to see that close down, leaving those who wanted to access TAFE services having to travel out of their local area.

I have already stated that almost 2,000 staff right across Queensland were sacked by the previous government across our TAFE campuses, and Alexandra Hills was no exception. Once bustling staff rooms were left with one or two people as courses were ripped out and staff were shown the door. As the member would be aware, we put a stop to that once we came to office as part of our overall efforts to restore TAFE's position as a premium public provider of VET training right across Queensland.

The member would be aware that under QTAMA I saw firsthand the way TAFE was being treated in its own facilities and heard many stories about classrooms being emptied without notice and valuable equipment being auctioned off or, even worse, being thrown away with no regard to whether it might be needed. When I became minister I visited a number of campuses. When I walked in I saw all of this equipment piled up, including trade equipment, and I would ask, 'Why is all of this not being used?' The response was, 'We are not allowed to use it.' It was TAFE's equipment and they were not allowed to use their own equipment to deliver training because it was under the control of QTAMA, which the previous government set up, and QTAMA said they were not allowed to use it—or, in the alternative, they had to pay to lease back their own equipment. We were determined to see TAFE Queensland continue its presence right across Queensland, and this extends to the provision of and access to TAFE in the Redlands region.

Since the Palaszczuk government was elected, we have seen a very pleasing growth in the number of students at the Alexandra Hills campus, driven mostly by the use of SkillsTech in bringing in more work. The staff at SkillsTech based at Alexandra Hills have been doing some excellent work in rebuilding relationships with local industry across a number of sectors including construction, plumbing, automotive and electrical. I am pleased to advise the member that at the Alexandra Hills campus as of the end of June there were 1,299 students enrolled at the facility, with approximately 726 attributable to the work of the SkillsTech staff. SkillsTech enrolments on the site have increased by around 96 per cent since the end of the 2014-15 financial year. Furthermore, I can advise the member that the amount of competencies undertaken at Alexandra Hills by SkillsTech has increased by 175 per cent to over 6,900.

I am also advised that student numbers are continuing to increase, with more students commencing in July and August in the plumbing and carpentry streams. SkillsTech will continue to work to secure more space in the facility on a needs basis in order for them to continue their excellent work in responding to the training needs of the region, and I look forward to reporting on more success to the member about TAFE in his local area in the future.

Mr BROWN: I look forward to it as well.

CHAIR: I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of students from St Bernard's in Upper Mount Gravatt which I understand is the alma mater of the member for Logan.

Ms BOYD: Minister, in relation to prehearing question on notice No. 18, could you please outline the state government's commitment to ensuring continued funding to training and skills in this state?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to ensuring there is adequate funding for training and skills in Queensland. Queenslanders need to have the training that they need now to access employment and to make sure they have the skills they need in a rapidly changing economy.

When it comes to investing in training and skills, and vocational education and training particularly, it has never been more important. We are seeing more and more students going through a VET pathway, not just to university. We are seeing students using a VET pathway to get into university. We are seeing graduates from university come back and do VET qualifications because they believe they need the practical skills now to get the jobs. We see vocational education and training in schools as not just being an alternative or something kids do when they are not going to university or they are not the bright kids, which unfortunately has been the way it has been seen in the past by some. It is a genuine pathway for kids. With the changes that are coming in I think 2019 or 2020 from the OP to the new system, where a VET qualification can form part of that overall score, I think it has never been more important to be investing in vocational education and training in this state.

That is why we have increased the state contribution to the training and skills budget in Queensland for the 2017-18 year. This is at a period when not only is the contribution from the federal government decreasing but there is still massive uncertainty, as I have mentioned before, about the structure of the federal funding. I can advise the member that the Queensland contribution for the 2017-18 year is budgeted to be \$614.9 million, which is an increase—and I think I might have said it was \$38 million earlier; it is actually \$43.9 million—from the budget papers last year. I can also inform the committee that the federal contribution is forecast to be approximately \$419.6 million for 2017-18, as opposed to the 2016-17 figure of \$483.3 million. The Commonwealth contribution to training and skills in Queensland is going down from \$483.3 million to \$419.6 million for the following 12 months.

It has become clear to the Palaszczuk government that the federal government have dropped the ball when it comes to training and skills in this country, and in particular in Queensland. They do not have a plan to ensure continuity of funding and they lack a coherent plan across the whole portfolio.

Since 2013, the federal government have cut a wide range of funding programs that had been designed to support apprentices and trainees and the training system more broadly. I went through some of those earlier. Incentives to take on apprentices have gone. Incentives for targeting mature age apprentices have gone. Support to group training organisations has gone. Tools for your trade have gone. That has been replaced with another loan scheme, so they not only end up with potentially this big debt over their head with VET Fee-Help, but in the apprentice space they have gone from having a tool allowance, or a grant, to having a loan that they have to pay back. When you are on apprentice wages, that is a pretty tough gig to have to do that as well.

The TAFE fee waiver to encourage people into child care was scrapped as well. This is without taking into account the lapsing National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform which was worth \$105.7 million in Queensland last year. This has gone and has not yet formally been replaced with any funding arrangement.

It is really concerning that we have a new federal fund that is based solely on revenue being generated from a levy charged to businesses for when they bring in overseas workers. It is that revenue and that revenue alone that is going to fund the national partnership with states and territories to support growth in apprenticeships and traineeships. We have asked what happens if there are not any funds in that. The assistant minister went on ABC Radio the day after the federal budget—and I have to say that we first found out about this on the night of the federal budget—and was asked, ‘If you succeed in your changes for 457 visas, which means more workers here in Australia are getting jobs as opposed to bringing in foreign workers, doesn’t that mean you won’t have any funding to support apprentices and trainees?’ The response was, ‘That will be a good problem to have.’

I disagree that we should have funding to support apprentices and trainees reliant on this levy, as opposed to guaranteed funding from consolidated funds. If we are genuine about apprentices and trainees in this state, we have to invest and we have to have guaranteed funds. To say to a state, ‘You can apply and you can apply right now, except we do not have a criteria for you to apply to and we don’t have the benchmarks yet. By the way, if you meet all of those benchmarks, we still may not give you the funding because we’re looking at tying it to other things outside of the national partnership agreement as well. All of this is contingent on funding that will come out of a skilling Australia fund that actually will not go through parliament until March next year, and we don’t know if we’ll get it through.’ This is contingent on legislation going through that may or may not pass both houses in parliament. If it does not generate funds, the federal government has no funding for apprentices and trainees.

For those opposite who want to talk about blaming others, this is just the reality. The people of Queensland have a right to know that, while we are increasing our contribution—our money is going up; our funding to TAFE Queensland and our public providers is going up in this budget—the federal government talks the talk when it comes to investing in apprentices and trainees but is not funding it. This is how states and governments end up in a situation—

Mr BLEIJIE: I have a point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: I will hear your point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: In relation to something the minister just said about funding going up, I think the minister should reflect on what she said, considering that page 16 shows expenses in training and skills going down. This is serious. The minister may be misleading this committee.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, that is not a point of order. You are making an argument.

Mrs D’ATH: I am happy to answer it because I can clarify that once again for the member for Kawana. What I have said is that there is no cut to the delivery of training funding in this state. The overall budget of the department is, as the member should know, very different to the state contribution, the VET Investment Plan, which directly goes to funding training in this state and training programs. The VET Investment Plan and the state contribution in the VET Investment Plan is going up. That is a fact that the member does not want to acknowledge. When we are talking about what is in the budget, it is expenditure, demand driven, but the fact is that the state contribution is—the member is just being childish now so I will stop there.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did not say anything.

Mrs D’ATH: He keeps making silly little faces. This is childish.

Mr CRANDON: Page 16 clearly shows that the figures for 2017-18 are significantly less than the figures for 2016-17.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, you are not making a point of order. The Attorney-General, in my view, has answered the question so we will move on.

Mr CRANDON: I hope she is not misleading the committee.

Mrs MILLER: I have a question in relation to the forms that potential trainees and students need to fill out at the TAFE Queensland South West campus in Bundamba. I do not mind if the minister or the director-general answers this question. Part of the form says 'payment plan application', and you have to list your work, your Centrelink income and the income of your parent or spouse, which causes quite a lot of grief for those in domestic violence situations. It also says that you have to list your fortnightly expenses including rent, mortgage, telephone, electricity, gas, food, petrol, credit card, loan repayments, entertainment and other. This is providing quite a level of disturbance for many people in my community who are on low incomes. They want to go to TAFE to get qualifications. They are being refused enrolment on the basis of these payment forms. In my view, we are excluding exactly the cohort of potential students that we should be helping. They feel very embarrassed about these forms. They regard it as an invasion of privacy. Minister, I am asking you to do something about it and return TAFE to what it was—that is, an institution whereby we help those get a qualification and get into a job and not embarrass them by making them fill out these dreadful forms. I table that form.

CHAIR: According to the standing orders, the member for Bundamba requires leave from the committee to table that.

Mrs MILLER: I seek leave to table that.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mrs D'ATH: Obviously, any forms that are generated in relation to enrolments and payment plans are operational matters. Jodi Schmidt, the CEO of TAFE Queensland, is here so I will let Jodi address that specifically. I want to talk about the broader issue that the member for Bundamba has raised. I think the member has known me long enough to know that, when it comes to TAFE as a public provider, first and foremost we are there to support the most vulnerable in our community. It is what we do with TAFE; it is what we do with Skilling Queenslanders for Work. We are not there to put barriers in their way. We should be there to make sure we work with them to overcome those barriers. I certainly take the point you have raised. I am not aware of the specific form myself. I will pass to Jodi Schmidt first, and then I might add some other comments after that.

Ms Schmidt: When a student engages and enrolls with TAFE Queensland, there are a number of funding frames. It is quite a complex environment. The student may be eligible for state government funding, federal government income contingent loans and the like, so it is dependent on the program as to what the student will have to pay, if anything, in terms of student fees. Where a student is required to pay student fees—and it has been the case for a long period of time that students will make some personal contribution—if the student is not able to do that up-front, and the policy would be that you would take that up-front, then payment plans are offered to assist students for all the reasons that have been outlined. In doing that, general credit check arrangements are undertaken.

As we all know as we would undertake credit arrangements in a range of places, they are standard questions and forms whereby you give an indication of your capacity to pay and then credit reference checks are undertaken for those students. That is done in a frame of privacy legislation and with our student services staff responding appropriately in that way, and all student data is maintained in the strictest privacy. The form is standard for the purposes of giving credit for a service, but in many instances students will not have to engage in that process.

Mrs MILLER: I have a follow-up question. Some of the TAFE courses are now over \$20,000 per year. How do we expect some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the community to be able to come up with this money? They are walking away from TAFE, which should be there to support them. We have a situation in my community whereby students who want to do these courses are being turned away from TAFE.

Ms Schmidt: TAFE Queensland works in a training sector whereby the conditions for public and private providers are of a similar nature. The \$20,000 that you quote is indicative of high-cost courses, presumably usually at the diploma level. Those courses will run over multiple years and be quite extensive and have significant salaries upon completing. Since 2009, income contingent loans have been available to students, as well as a range of other government funding arrangements to support and offset those training courses, but it is an indication of the costs of actually delivering that training as a total number.

Mrs MILLER: You cannot get the loans that you are talking about if you are on Centrelink—if your payment is so low on Centrelink that you cannot support the loans. This is my whole point.

Ms Schmidt: I am not sure that is true. Income contingent loans are available to all individuals in Australia who have the appropriate eligibility in terms of citizenship and a tax file number. It is then contingent on reaching a threshold for income, at a point in time when the repayment is returned to the Australian government.

Mrs MILLER: What you are saying is that they have to be Australian citizens to be able to access these loans. In a community like mine, where there are 120 nationalities, they are automatically excluded.

Ms Schmidt: It is Australian citizens and a range of eligibility criteria that the Australian government of course rightly puts in place in order to provide government funds as an income contingent loan. There are other arrangements for international students and their dependants.

Mrs MILLER: And the fees are higher. Minister, can you look at this for us? It is a real issue.

CHAIR: Member for Bundamba, the time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio of Training and Skills has expired. Just as a point of clarification, the deputy chair did raise with me whether or not the Attorney took a question on notice earlier during non-government questions. It is up to the minister. My recollection was that it was not, and we have just had that clarification from the minister.

Mr CRANDON: Could I clarify the particular area that we are referring to?

CHAIR: No, because we have moved on.

Mr CRANDON: The Attorney has got no idea.

CHAIR: The Attorney has made it clear that she has taken no questions on notice.

Mr CRANDON: The inference was about the underutilised campuses. The example used was Coolangatta and I know another one that has been used. We want not just Coolangatta—all of them, if you would not mind. Another one that I am aware of is Gympie. Can you take the questions on notice in relation to the underutilisation?

Mrs D'ATH: In fact, I was not specifically asked to give a breakdown of the utilisation across each and every campus. However, I am happy to very quickly advise the member for Coomera that there is 50 per cent campus usage at the moment. The majority of training being delivered there is the skills for education and employment and the Adult Migrant English Program. As I mentioned to you earlier, that is the one that is being cut by \$4.3 million, by 20 per cent, in this financial year by the Commonwealth. There are pressures there which we are still working through. I thank the member for Bundamba for her question. As hopefully she is aware, affordability of training is still a very big issue for me and for this government.

Mr CRANDON: Can the AG take that question on notice in relation to other campuses?

Mrs D'ATH: This is a new question. I was not asked—

CHAIR: The AG has answered the question. The time has expired. The committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 10.45 am with the examination of the estimates within the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Attorney, would you like to make a brief closing statement?

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you. Can I just very briefly thank all of my departmental staff who assisted in preparation for today? We all know the work that goes into estimates. I thank broadly the staff of DET, TAFE, Jobs Queensland and our partners who deliver quality training, research and services to the people of Queensland. To all the amazing teachers and trainers out there, I say thank you.

Proceedings suspended from 10.31 am to 10.45 am



CHAIR: The estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is now resumed. Welcome back, Attorney-General and departmental and statutory authority officials. In this session we will be focusing on the proposed expenditure for the statutory bodies within the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Before I ask the Attorney to make a brief opening statement, I note that Mr Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, and Mr Ian Walker, the member for Mansfield, have now joined with leave of the committee. Attorney-General, would you like to make a brief opening statement of no more than five minutes, please?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the committee members and members of parliament here today. The Palaszczuk government's budget for 2017-18 invests in the justice system, makes our communities safer and delivers on the promises we made to the people of Queensland. We are building on our significant reforms of the past year, not the least of which are Australia's toughest and most effective

laws to tackle serious and organised crime. The Palaszczuk government's serious and organised crime regime tackles criminals ranging from child exploitation rings to financial fraudster groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs and organised drug rings.

Likewise, we are leading Australia when it comes to openness and transparency, delivering Australia's first real-time electronic donation disclosure system. Queensland now has the most progressive, open and transparent political donation laws in the country.

We have passed a suite of reforms related to domestic and family violence and funded the support services to tackle this insidious crime. In addition to making the Southport domestic violence court permanent, we will roll out specialist DV courts in Beenleigh and Townsville, with circuits to Mount Isa and Palm Island. We have made domestic violence an aggravating factor for sentencing, increased penalties for repeat breaches of domestic violence orders, created a stand-alone offence of strangulation, provided greater protection of victims who appear as witnesses and increased the length of domestic violence orders. We have tackled alcohol fuelled violence, again showing the courage to actually introduce policy rather than taking the LNP government approach of putting implementation in the too-hard basket.

We are investing in justice, with more job-creating capital works at courts across the state, seven new magistrates who will be named in the near future and the reintroduction of the Drug Court, one of the many diversionary courts that we have reintroduced that were previously scrapped by the LNP government.

We have done what no government before us has ever done and we have the courage to do it—that is, deliver a comprehensive whole-of-government strategy to reform youth justice. I am proud to be part of a government that invests in programs that actually work—programs like Transition 2 Success, which diverts troubled youth into training and jobs, changes their path in life and creates a safer community for everyone. The Palaszczuk government's commitment to breaking the cycle of youth crime stands in sharp contrast to the LNP, who thought naming and shaming would have an effect and who spent \$14 million on failed boot camps—boot camps that just 36 young people completed, boot camps that had no effect on reoffending rates.

The 2017-18 budget also provides for the transition of 17-year-olds from the adult justice system into the youth justice system. For more than 20 years there has been a lack of resolve in Queensland to take the critical first step in addressing this problem. The Palaszczuk government refuses to join the queue of inaction. The opposition fails to acknowledge the overwhelming support in Queensland and around the country to transition 17-year-olds to the youth justice system and finds itself isolated in its disgraceful stance against this important change. In contrast, the Palaszczuk government is about evidence based policies that foster a fair, safe and just community. As part of this commitment I can today announce the model for the independent crime statistics body, as promised. The Crimes Statistic Research Unit will be established in the independent statutory office of the Queensland Government Statistician. This will take the politics out of crime statistics and mean the implementation of evidence based policy going forward.

Our commitment to informed, effective policy is why the Palaszczuk government reintroduced the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, another vital reform which was axed by the LNP in their first year in power. Last year I asked the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to conduct a thorough review of how we classify child exploitation material for sentencing purposes. This review is an important part of identifying children at risk and ensuring offenders are appropriately punished. I am pleased to announce that the QSAC comprehensive final report is being released publicly today and is now available on their website. Importantly, the report reminds us that child exploitation material is not a victimless crime. These findings will help us ensure that our resources are focused on identifying the victims and removing them from harm. It also builds on the new offences and increased penalties for online child exploitation which we have introduced. We will now give full consideration to the recommendations that the work of QSAC has produced.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the delivery of justice in this state—from the JPs who volunteer their time, to the youth detention workers who are committed to changing lives, to the department staff who work tirelessly to deliver policy and reform, to the judges who must deal logically and methodically with tragedy and horror every day. Where the LNP has no vision to address crime, just tabloid headlines and kneejerk reactions, the Palaszczuk government remains committed to reform that ensures timely, effective justice for all across this state.

Mr WALKER: I ask Mr MacSporran to come forward, please. Mr MacSporran, I refer you to page 51 of the SDS in relation to the CCC budget for 2017-18. It appears to me that the CCC is having its budget reduced for the upcoming year, from \$56.196 million to \$55.878 million. Is that correct?

Mr MacSporrán: That is so. Yes, it is.

Mr WALKER: What will that mean for the fundamentally important services that the CCC provides?

Mr MacSporrán: It should not affect us operationally, which is the most important aspect to it. It arises largely because of increased funding for enterprise bargaining and a number of other small measures that make up that sum. As I say, operationally it will not affect our funding for those operational units at all. That is obviously an important aspect to this.

Mr WALKER: How can it be that if the funds are being decreased the operational side does not go backwards?

Mr MacSporrán: It is just a matter of finding efficiencies in other areas. The overall reduction is quite small by comparison and we managed to absorb that into other areas.

Mr WALKER: Were you seeking a reduction? What was your annual submission? What were you seeking in your annual submission?

Mr MacSporrán: We were seeking extra funding in particular for off-site storage of data. That was our main request and that was denied. Other than that, we made some requests but they were not otherwise significant in the scheme of things.

Mr WALKER: Can you give me some idea of the quantum of your ask?

Mr MacSporrán: I cannot give you the exact figure but it was a small number of millions, from memory.

Mr WALKER: Could I ask that that be taken on notice as to what that figure was, please? Perhaps I should ask the Attorney for permission for Mr MacSporrán to do that.

Mrs D'ATH: Sure. I just need to identify whether that forms part of any cabinet or CBRC consideration that would be confidential. I am happy to clarify that. If it is not, then we would provide that information. In answering that, I can go to the specific reduction. I think it is important to point out that, in that budget paper, the budget allocated for this financial year was greater—sorry, I was reading that wrong. I just want to take the member to specific offsets.

In terms of the difference between the 2016-17 budget and the 2017-18 budget, some of that has to do with the cessation of the one-off funding that was announced as part of the commission of inquiry into organised crime. The premier at the time announced a one-off injection for there to be a blitz of work done in relation to child exploitation. That was one-off funding which did not carry over to the next financial year. There is budget reprioritisation, which is \$69,000, and there is also the computer replacement funding in 2016-17, which is funding that happens every four years. That funding also did not carry over. When you compare the 2016-17 budget to the 2017-18 budget the difference is due to two of those components, being funding that were one-offs for that particular year and also budget reprioritisation.

Mr WALKER: I ask Mr MacSporrán: why was there a slight increase from the 2016-17 estimated budget to the 2016-17 actual?

Mr MacSporrán: I think it was just due to operational activity. There is a series of rises and dips. Ultimately, it has worked out. We have done the figures most recently. As of Monday this week I think the actual deficit is \$28,000 as to the estimated budget, so it is a very close outcome. There are always fluctuations up and down. Jobs arise, there is prioritisation of operational activity and a need for further resourcing of that, and that changes from time to time.

Ms FARMER: Chair, I seek your clarification on whether it is appropriate to ask a public servant about budget bids.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Bulimba. In this particular case I understand it is appropriate for the chairman. Before we continue I would like to acknowledge another class from the St Bernard's School in Upper Mount Gravatt.

Mr WALKER: In the electorate of Mansfield.

CHAIR: It is in the electorate of Mansfield in fact. That is very fortuitous for the member for Mansfield.

Mr WALKER: I will hand to the member for Clayfield.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr MacSporrán, I also follow up with some questions in relation to the CCC's role to protect Queenslanders from major crime and corruption. I am seeking clarification immediately into why the CCC is not conducting the investigation into Minister Bailey's deletion of email accounts, given that the CCC has found a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct.

Mr MacSporran: If I can put into context the nature of that assessment and investigation, the CCC's jurisdiction is only enlivened in respect of elected officials where there is a criminal offence established. In that sense, the threshold for the definition of 'corrupt conduct' is met and we then have jurisdiction and we can decide to investigate and decide which way we investigate. The most serious allegation, as I am sure you are aware, against Minister Bailey was that he had used a private email account to conceal secret negotiations with the ETU over a range of issues. Having recovered the emails with the assistance of Minister Bailey, those were assessed and a report was given to us by Crown Law—the department I think it was. We assessed that there was no evidence to suggest that Minister Bailey had conducted those secret negotiations with the ETU. We had the emails. We looked at them. They did not bear out the allegation that he had attempted to use a private email account to cover up what had been discussed between himself and the ETU. However, we did discover that he had deleted emails in that category. That is potentially an offence under the Public Records Act. It being an offence, it is a potentially corrupt conduct—within our definition—so it satisfies our jurisdiction.

It is a very complex area. The State Archivist is the expert in the area. We determined that, for efficiency, a reasonable approach would be to send the matter back to the State Archivist to assess the evidence and report back to us what the facts reveal before the matter is concluded. We are sending it back to the State Archivist, but we are not relinquishing our role because we will hold what is called a public interest review at the end of the investigation by the State Archivist. That is essentially what we have determined.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr MacSporran, your public statement, which was released yesterday, says that there is sufficient evidence to raise a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct relating to the potential destruction of public records. That enlivens your jurisdiction, so it meets the threshold of corrupt conduct for the CCC to be, if you like, the supreme body for the carrying out of that investigation.

Mr MacSporran: That is so.

Mr NICHOLLS: You have referred it back to the State Archivist for investigation into potential breaches of the State Records Act.

Mr MacSporran: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: The State Archivist will report back to you.

Mr MacSporran: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: Under what circumstances would the CCC take back control of the investigation? What would you need to be satisfied of or dissatisfied about in terms of the State Archivist's investigation? You have far more extensive powers than the State Archivist to take information and to take evidence.

CHAIR: Member for Clayfield, you are asking a hypothetical question and I rule it out of order.

Mr MacSporran: Mr Nicholls, let me can explain it this way. Statutorily we are constrained jurisdictionally to look at the more serious systemic issues that involve corrupt conduct. We take that role seriously. We do not have the resources to investigate everything. In this case, the serious allegation—and it was serious—was that Minister Bailey was using a private email account to deliberately circumvent the ministerial trail, as it were, of his official account so that he could conduct nefarious business without being exposed publicly as would be the case normally with a ministerial account. We found no evidence whatsoever to substantiate that allegation. Had we found evidence of that, we would have retained the investigation entirely and conducted it from go to woe. Because there was no evidence of that, what we are left with is the bare allegation that, by deleting emails or deactivating the account, there is potentially a breach of the Public Records Act.

One could say in one sense that that is a technicality. It is an offence under the Public Records Act if that is what occurred. If a public record has been deleted or deactivated without there being a proper sentencing—which is the period that it has to be kept for under the Public Records Act—that is an offence. In terms of its seriousness, in the scheme of things for our jurisdiction that is not a serious allegation unless it is done for a nefarious purpose. Any use by a minister of a private email account is not per se corrupt conduct: it is only if it is done for a nefarious purpose to conceal communications and so forth. We felt quite comfortable referring it back to the State Archivist. If something arises during the course of the State Archivist's assessment and investigation of those facts, we have not let go of it. We have the ability always to take over the investigation from the State Archivist or to direct that it be investigated in a certain way.

Mr NICHOLLS: There is a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct as found by you.

Mr MacSporran: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: It has now been referred to the State Archivist. You have the capacity and the ability to carry out that investigation should you be satisfied that you should do so.

Mr MacSporran: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: You were able to find that attachments to emails were unable to be retrieved as a result of that, and you are unable to say whether all emails in that deleted account have been retrieved when it was reactivated.

Mr MacSporran: That is right.

Mr NICHOLLS: In those circumstances, how are you able to say there is no evidence when you have not been able to investigate or interrogate all of the details that have been made available?

Mr MacSporran: We can say that quite legitimately. We can say definitively that what we have recovered does not include evidence of corrupt conduct. We have said, as you correctly point out, that we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that what has been recovered is everything. We do know for a fact that some of the attachments to some of the emails could not be recovered, but we would be speculating to say what they may contain. Certainly the overall flavour of the emails that we did recover which reflected communication between Minister Bailey and the ETU were clearly not corrupt conduct. There may be some that we have not recovered that do evidence that, but that could be complete speculation and, in our view, quite an improper conclusion to draw.

Mr NICHOLLS: In those circumstances, corrupt conduct would not just be evidence of the emails but could be conduct outside of that; for example, telephone conversations and other contact or communication not evidenced by emails following on from those emails. For example, I receive an email and you make a phone call.

CHAIR: I am ruling that question out of order on the basis that it is hypothetical. I ask you to recast your question, member for Clayfield.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr MacSporran, the initial terms of reference for the State Archivist were set by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Were you initially consulted in relation to those terms of reference, or did you subsequently offer advice in relation to those terms of reference if you were dissatisfied with what they originally set out?

Mr MacSporran: We did review them after they had been put in place and we noted those terms of reference on several occasions during the course of the investigation. We had ongoing contact with the persons within the Department of Premier and Cabinet who were dealing with that issue. Ultimately, to cut a long story short, we were entirely satisfied with both the terms of reference and the way the inquiries were conducted, but we had free input into that process along the way.

Mr NICHOLLS: Not prior to the terms of reference, but after the terms of reference were set they were referred to you?

Mr MacSporran: I think that is so, yes. We were not consulted before about what the terms should be because I do not think the complaint had come to us at that stage. It was an internal inquiry, so we had no ability, I suppose you would say, to step in and say—

Mr NICHOLLS: You were not proactively asked what would be appropriate or inappropriate in those terms of reference.

Mr MacSporran: No, but we were given free access and the ability to comment after we were involved and the complaint came to us and those issues were taken on board, and ultimately we were satisfied with what had been done.

Mr NICHOLLS: Those terms of reference were not subsequently changed.

Ms FARMER: Point of order, Mr Chair. You have made a number of rulings about hypothetical questions, and I wonder when the member for Clayfield will ask questions relating to the budget.

CHAIR: Member for Clayfield, I also caution you that you are potentially straying into other portfolio areas as well. I ask you to recast your question, please.

Mr NICHOLLS: In your role, Mr MacSporran, as set out in the SDS, you obviously have responsibility for covering corrupt conduct and the terms of reference were referred to you in that role. Did you suggest changes to those terms of reference, or ultimately after negotiations were you satisfied with those terms of reference?

Mr MacSporran: From what I understand, I do not think we asked for things to be changed. We noted throughout the methodology. There were discussions had between my case officer and the officer within DPC who was handling the inquiries. I do not think there was any resistance or anything that we wanted done that had not been done or needed to be done. Ultimately we were quite content with the terms of reference and the methodology adopted. Our role, as it were, commenced after that process had been completed because there was nothing else we could do until that process had been completed.

Mr NICHOLLS: In terms of the referral to the State Archivist, has the CCC satisfied itself of the resources of the State Archivist in order to carry out this investigation? It is not the State Archivist's normal function, so is it the case that you would provide additional resources to the State Archivist should that be necessary?

Mr MacSporran: That is always the understanding. It may even have been expressly communicated along those lines. The reason it is going back to the State Archivist, as I said before, is because of the expertise that the State Archivist has in this area, which is complex. From our point of view, it was most efficient to send it back there to get them to have a look at the facts as we understood them. If there is a point reached where the State Archivist is unable to complete the investigation due to a lack of resources or if they need further assistance, then clearly all they have to do is ask us and we are more than happy to help, because we still have oversight and we are monitoring the investigation as it progresses.

Mr NICHOLLS: During the course of the investigation was there any investigation in relation to claims made regarding the sequence of events; that is, Minister Bailey claiming not to have known about an RTI application and his chief of staff claiming not to have told Minister Bailey about that RTI application from a media organisation? Does that form part of the CCC investigation?

Mr MacSporran: I do not think so, no.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is a separate matter?

Mr MacSporran: Yes, it would be as I understand it.

Mr BROWN: Attorney, I refer you to page 85 of the SDS. Can you please advise the committee about the implementation of the new electoral real-time disclosure system, including the government's rationale for introducing this project and its role in promoting the integrity of our democracy?

Mrs D'ATH: The implementation of real-time disclosure is an initiative that all members of the government should be extremely proud of. In fact, across the country we have had nothing but praise for undertaking this initiative. I know that there are many integrity bodies which are now calling on other governments, including the Commonwealth, to look at our system. I know that in fact others are talking to the developer of the program to see if they can implement it, because we are the first in the country to have real-time disclosure. This is in stark contrast to the way that the LNP approached the disclosure of donations, which we know was to increase the donation threshold.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering on transparency in politics, and the real-time disclosure of donations to political parties is an integral part of our commitment. The launch of the real-time electronic disclosure system has been an Australian first. Members will recall that one of the first acts of this government was to decrease the disclosure of donations threshold from \$12,800 down to \$1,000 after the previous LNP government raised that threshold. While the LNP hid those donations, Labor continued to disclose all donations of \$1,000 or more. Irrespective of the changes to the laws, as a political party and as an opposition we chose to continue our disclosure at the \$1,000 threshold. Regrettably, I am advised that \$100,000 still has not been disclosed by the LNP in relation to previous donations.

Our government recognises that this is only the first step in improving the administration of elections and the oversight of political donations in Queensland, but it is an extremely important one. Members may recall that at this time last year the Premier and I made a joint statement committing to the delivery of the electronic disclosure system to record and report political donations. I am proud to say that we have delivered this important reform, and the new electronic disclosure system went live on 23 February this year. The system has been live for five months and it has attracted a lot of interest from a number of jurisdictions, including overseas. This is a great example of Queensland innovation. It might even become the next great Australian electoral export following the runaway success of the secret ballot when it was introduced in the 1850s.

I can advise the committee that the system's design followed consultation with the political parties and the Local Government Association of Queensland. The new system gives Queenslanders access to up-to-date data and information about donations made to parties and candidates. It also discloses

the expenditure of political parties. The new system accommodates donations to both state and local candidates as well as political parties, and these donations are mapped to electorates by the donor's address. Voters are entitled to know where the money is going in a timely fashion. With the electronic disclosure system, the details of donations will be made available seven business days after they are made. This is another important measure which builds on the Palaszczuk government's transparency and integrity reforms. I am also pleased to advise the committee that a local small- to medium-sized enterprise developed the electoral disclosure system. This is a great example of an Australian business putting our state on the map for all the right reasons.

The disclosure system can be accessed at disclosures.ecq.qld.gov.au. I want to be clear: for the first time ever you can go on to this site and you can search by map or by list. You can search by candidate. You can search by political party. You can search by date. You can search by election, so you can search if it is a state general election, if it is a by-election or if it is a local government election. You can identify all of this information. You can search by donor, so you can see a particular donor and who that donor has donated to over that election period. This is the most transparent system we have ever had and it does mean that people will be able to go to the election knowing who is giving what money to whom.

Importantly, there is a proper system in there that shows reconciliation. If someone tries to make a false claim that they have made a donation to a candidate or a political party, if it is not reconciled by the party then that can be identified, examined and if it is false it can be removed. It is only once the party or candidate confirms that they have received the donation and the donor has confirmed that they have given the donation that it is reconciled and the public will be able to see that that is a validated donation that has been provided and received by the relevant parties. Again, I think it is a system that we can be extremely proud of as a Labor government and an Australian first.

Ms BOYD: My question is to the ECQ commissioner. Commissioner, I refer to page 85 of the SDS. Can you advise the committee what activities the Electoral Commission of Queensland will be undertaking to update Queensland electors affected by shifts in electoral boundaries?

Mr van der Merwe: Certainly. As you would be aware, the redistribution has been finalised. The report is out. For the upcoming state general election every elector in Queensland—3.102 million electors—will receive a voter information card. On that card it will specifically outline what electoral district they are in and what the electoral district is called, because, as you would know, there have been a number of name changes.

With regard to the redistribution, in excess of one million electors have been affected. The boundaries have changed, so it is very significant. Instead of writing just to those electors who are affected—it will cost in excess of \$1 million anyway—what we do for a state general election is provide a voter information letter or a voter information card. We have slightly changed it this time around and it will have all of that information in terms of what the new electoral boundaries are and what the new district is called, so every elector in Queensland will be advised. That is what we intend doing.

Mrs D'ATH: If I can add to that, every redistribution is significant for voters, for candidates and for members of parliament, but this one was particularly significant because we were going from 89 to 93 seats. It is not just about those people who fall in the new seats and it is not just about voters who fall into seats where the names have changed; just about every seat has had some change to the boundaries—even in my seat of Redcliffe there is a small change to the boundary—so it is really important that people are informed of what electorate they are in. I get that it does not change where they vote, because at the end of the day they vote in whatever electorate they are registered in, but it is important for people to know who their local member is, who their candidates are and the name of the electorate they live in. That communication is extremely important, so in this year's budget we have allocated \$1.25 million additional funding to the Electoral Commission of Queensland for the specific purpose of communicating with voters about those changes to boundaries so they are informed in advance of the election.

CHAIR: Attorney, I have a question for you in relation to page 48 of the SDS and organised crime. Cold-call investment fraud activity has been a significant concern for many Queenslanders. Can you please advise the committee of what actions the Crime and Corruption Commission, in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service and other agencies, is taking to investigate these schemes?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission may wish to say a few words on this as well, because I know that they have done significant work in this area, but our government is very proud to deliver a package of organised crime laws that is tackling organised crime in this state in all of its forms. As we said when we introduced and passed the legislation, when we talk about organised crime it is not just about outlaw motorcycle gangs but also

about child exploitation rings and cold-call investment fraud. This might be an area that does not get a lot of media attention, but I am sure the chair of the CCC would agree that it is one of those areas that cause incredible harm to the community. Mums and dads and grandparents get caught up in scams and, surprisingly, it can happen to anyone, including well-educated people, because these scams are just so complex and so intricate in the way that they go about it.

I am sure we have all had the calls, the emails and even the knocks on the door or a text message saying, 'Do you know that your bank security has been affected? Please put in your details here to confirm,' or a phone call saying, 'Can you confirm your name and address and date of birth for us?' You are giving over this personal information. In the worst case scenarios, people lose their homes and, worse still, take their lives because of the devastating impact that organised crime has had. That is why the commission of inquiry identified very sophisticated financial crimes such as cold-call or boiler room investment frauds as a key organised crime threat in Queensland. We know that the Gold Coast is one area where we have seen significant activity. Cold-call investment fraud relates to fraud where organised crime groups or syndicates set up complex business structures which appear legitimate in order to defraud people who invest in those businesses.

In the last financial year, 2016-17, the CCC focused on identifying and executing prevention strategies in this area, because we can keep going after the cold-callers but they do not have a business model. If we can actually inform the community better about how to identify these scams and not get caught up in them in the first place, that is the way we can achieve the best outcome. Some of the initiatives have been to just hang up. It might sound simple—even when you are on the 'do not call' list, because they still call—but the message is to just hang up, to remind Australians about the dangers. The campaign brought together agency heads from the CCC, the police, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. I know that the CCC published a public document, *Cold-call investment fraud: how organised crime is targeting your money*, to raise awareness of the crime and how people who are targeted can respond. I might ask the chair of the CCC if he wants to talk about some of the success they have had in that area in identifying some of those syndicates.

Mr MacSporran: Thank you, Attorney. I agree entirely with what the Attorney has said. The problem with cold-call investment fraud is that it is not sustainable to continue to investigate and enforce the law in that area; it is just simply that no-one has the resources. Absent a huge organisation similar to the Serious Fraud Office in the UK, you simply cannot do it. To illustrate the point, in the last couple of years we have placed before the court—and it is still before the court, so I cannot say much about the facts—two syndicates and the members of them in relation to a joint operation between ourselves and the QPS. Those two syndicates cost the CCC alone \$5 million in resources, so it is hugely resource intensive. As you would imagine, there is a very difficult, complex paper trail to follow. It takes up financial investigation resources. It takes a lot of time putting the briefs together and then you have the court cases to follow. We determined that, whilst our duty is always to enforce the law—and we will continue to do that—there needs to be a better, well-directed, focused strategy employed, and that is how we came to conduct the public campaign in July last year to inform the public to simply hang up, because if there is no person willing to take on these schemes and be a victim then the schemes cannot operate, so we did that.

In light of the Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry recommendations we have also conducted a whole series of intelligence hearings to gather data on how these syndicates operate. The Gold Coast, for whatever reason, seems to be one of the hot spots. We identified 11 syndicates which have, as it turns out, been operating in one form or another since about 1994. The problem is that you shut one down and one opens up down the road. They can even go offshore completely and still target Queenslanders and Australians, so it is a very difficult problem to deal with. We examined 64 witnesses over 65 hearing days to gather data on these syndicates and to properly focus our attention to what we could do about them.

A lot of these syndicates have to use so-called innocent agents to act as dummy directors of these companies they set up as well as people who actually conduct the cold-calls. Often their explanation when they are intercepted is, 'I didn't know the scheme was fraudulent. All I was doing was promoting a scheme I believed was genuine.' If that is the case and that is accepted, you cannot prosecute those people and you cannot close the syndicate down. We took the step—rather unusually, I think, but effectively—of putting a lot of those people on notice that the scheme they were working for was in fact corrupt and that any other scheme they wanted to change to was likely to be corrupt as well—fraud, a scam. We wrote to them and gave them the piece of paper and said, 'If you're found again to be operating in this space, you won't have the excuse that you didn't know and you can be

prosecuted.' We are attempting to disrupt, if you like, the organisations and hopefully make it harder for them to operate, but it is insidious. It is a global problem. They have offshore offices. It is all over the world. Our impact assessment is that it is something like \$50-plus million we can actually put our fingers on affecting the community every year, and that is almost certainly an underestimation.

We produced a paper to government to suggest some ways that it might be more effectively dealt with. One way we have suggested that I think has real merit is that if people are convicted of a fraud of, say, usually up to \$1 million or so—you select an area you can prosecute quite efficiently—but the scheme is much wider, on sentencing the onus of proof is reversed. If we allege that the conviction relates to \$1 million of fraud but the scheme involves \$20 million of complainants' money that has gone missing, we say, 'Okay, we think for sentence purposes you should be dealt with for the much larger fraud unless you can convince the court that all of that money that you took from the complainants was not in fact tainted property and didn't come from the use of this scam.' That is one way you can strike at the heart of these sorts of scams and, arguably, significantly deter the activity, because it would mean that a much broader sentencing option was open to the court. There are other ways that it can be dealt with as well, but they are just some of the ways.

As I said, we produced a detailed paper that sets out some of the other things such as a specific offence-creating provision that aggravates a fraud offence if it involves attacking or targeting vulnerable victims such as pensioners and retirees, because our experience has shown that most often these scams do target those people. They are the people who can least afford to lose their funds. They are not in a position to recoup their retirement savings. Once it is gone it is gone, and then they are of course a burden on the social security system and taxpayers pay the penalty. Proceeds of crime legislation does not help because the way these schemes operate is that the money, as soon as it is taken from the victim, usually goes through a series of company accounts and ultimately overseas and is filtered back from overseas in a different form. You cannot use proceeds of crime legislation to attack them either and you cannot recover the money for either the taxpayer or the victim, so it is a particularly serious form of organised crime.

One thing that these intelligence hearings of ours has identified is that outlaw motorcycle gang members, would you believe, are involved in this sort of organised crime as well. It is a very attractive scheme for all sorts of criminals and deserves to be properly targeted and our attention should be focused upon it. Whatever we can do to make the job of enforcement easier is a very worthwhile initiative, in our view. As I say, that is why we produced this paper.

CHAIR: Thank you. Before I call the member for Mansfield, I remind all committee members and those participating in the hearing today that questions cannot contain hypothetical matters. All members should be aware of the standing orders in that regard.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you for reminding us. There were some issues that I put to the Premier's department on Tuesday in estimates in relation to an investigation regarding the leak of cabinet documents, including CBRC material from the prior government pertaining to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Mr MacSporran, is the CCC conducting investigations into the leaks of those documents from the previous administration that occurred earlier this year?

Mr MacSporran: I might have to take that on notice in the sense that I know the matter you are referring to, but I cannot recall personally whether that matter has been referred back to the department to deal with, subject to review by us and monitoring by us, or whether we are ourselves investigating it. Can I make a more general point about that type of complaint and allegation?

Mr NICHOLLS: Yes.

Mr MacSporran: It is—and it is really obvious when you think about it—notoriously difficult to investigate, and certainly successfully investigate, for a whole host of obvious reasons, the most pertinent of which is that, if something appears in the newspapers, one would think that the sensible thing to do would be to ask the journalist where the information came from. Journalists routinely—rightly or wrongly—claim journalistic ethics and the protection of sources. That trail usually goes dead. We have extensive powers that could force that issue. There is now a provision that is called a journalist information warrant and we have power to request to access the telephone records of a journalist to try to trace the source of a leak, but that is subject to monitoring, as it properly should be, by a journalist warrant monitor, who currently is the former Justice Muir of the Court of Appeal. It is not easy and, without being able to progress the investigation through those stages successfully, you almost certainly end up chasing your tail and, having done so, with a huge expenditure of resources and time for no sensible outcome. I am not saying that it is not serious, because any breach of confidence and trust by the leak of information is extremely serious, but it is, I would have to say, frustratingly difficult to investigate.

Mr NICHOLLS: Can I return to the previous matters that we were discussing? Your statement in relation to Minister Bailey last night confirmed that other ministers had used private email accounts. Was this discovered as a result of your investigations in terms of emails between Minister Bailey and other ministers, or was it discovered in another way through your investigations?

Mr MacSporran: I think it arose in the former context that you mentioned, where it became obvious through assessing Minister Bailey's emails that there had been other ministers using private email accounts as well.

Mr NICHOLLS: Can you tell us who those other ministers are?

Mr MacSporran: I cannot, for the simple reason that I do not know, other than the ones that I have seen mentioned in the press most recently. The reason I do not know is not that I have failed to do my job; I do not know because it is largely irrelevant to us. The context in which that information came to hand was that the emails that they had been conducting did not reveal any evidence of conduct that would satisfy our definition of 'corruption'. The only relevance it has to us—it is outside our jurisdiction—is, as you have seen in the media and in our press release, that it is a matter we thought that we should bring to the Premier's attention because it is a corruption risk, if you like, for ministers or any other public servant, or departmental representative, or elected official, to use other than official email. Firstly, it is a bad look. There is a perception that you might be doing so for a nefarious purpose, even if you are not, and it is undesirable, so it should not be allowed to continue. It is a breach of the Ministerial Handbook, as we understand it. The Premier, as I have seen from the media, has taken on board our recommendation and intends to pursue that. I do not know who they were, but they will be advised, no doubt, that the practice should discontinue.

Mr NICHOLLS: You mentioned that it also raises the fact that it is a breach of what you understand to be the Ministerial Handbook guidelines for ministers to use their private email accounts for official purposes?

Mr MacSporran: That is our assessment of the requirements of the handbook, yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: Would it not be relevant for the CCC to have investigated whether Minister Bailey knew of the RTI request when he deleted the account to determine if the deletion of that account was for, as you described, nefarious purposes or to avoid public scrutiny? Is it something that you ought to investigate—whether he knew of that to determine his state of mind in deleting that account?

Mr MacSporran: Your point is right in this sense. I did not mean to convey that we ignored the fact but, as you correctly said, the minister himself said that did he not know. He was supported by his chief of staff, I think. It was merely an inference that you might be able to draw that he knew and deliberately deleted the emails if, in fact, there had been some nefarious purpose behind the exercise. Bear in mind that, with that notion to be considered, when we assessed the emails we found no evidence of any such nefarious motive. In that sense, getting to the bottom of that issue became obsolete, as it were, because there did not seem to be any reason he would have deliberately deleted the emails when he found out that the RTI application had been made.

I think the timing is, according to the media that I have seen—I cannot remember the facts directly myself—there was an 11-day gap between the RTI application being made and the emails being deactivated, or deleted. In that time frame, you might expect that he would know. He says that he did not, but, in any event, that does not seem to be important when you look at the emails themselves, which reveal no evidence of wrongdoing, to use the neutral term.

Mr NICHOLLS: In that sense, was it something that the CCC investigated, that is, did Minister Bailey know of the RTI application when he deleted that account? You say that he and his chief of staff both denied that. There was the application lodged. Then there was an email from the chief of staff to the minister which, if memory serves, was three days before the email account was then deleted. Was that sequence of events investigated by the CCC?

Mr MacSporran: When you say 'investigated', it is certainly part of the factual matrix that we considered, or made an overall determination and assessment as to what we do with it. It was not ignored. It is not irrelevant. You are right to say that it is significant, but it is not in the context of what the emails themselves revealed. At the end of the day, that was part of the investigation in that sense, but it did not go anywhere for the reasons that I have said about the context of what the emails themselves revealed.

Mr NICHOLLS: Is it fair to say that, because you determined that, in your view, the content of the emails was unlikely to show corrupt conduct between the minister and the email sender—the ETU—at the time that you did not then consider it necessary to investigate the circumstances prior to the deletion of the email as to whether the minister knew or not?

Mr MacSporrán: We determined it was not necessary to resolve that question, ultimately, because there did not seem to be any reason the deletion would have occurred in those circumstances.

Mr NICHOLLS: Sure.

Mr MacSporrán: I might say that, if any other evidence came to light to make that point more significant, it would not be ignored, but in the current state of play it does not seem to be an issue to us.

Mr NICHOLLS: In the event that the minister did know the RTI application had been made and in that knowledge then deleted the accounts, that would enliven your jurisdiction?

CHAIR: I am ruling that question out of order. That is quite clearly a hypothetical question from the member for Clayfield.

Mr NICHOLLS: Sure.

CHAIR: Does the member for Buderim have a question?

Mr DICKSON: Attorney-General, I note on page 48 of the SDS under the heading 'Service summary' it states—

In 2017-18 the CCC's focus will be to:

...

- use crime hearings to continue to monitor outlaw motorcycle gangs in Queensland and to gain a broader understanding of organised crime that poses a risk to Queensland

...

- pursue corruption involving excessive use of force, misuse of confidential information and fraud.

Given the publicity regarding the infiltration of certain trade unions by motorcycle gangs and taking into account the comments of the Secretary of the ACTU, Sally McManus, who said—

It might be illegal industrial action according to our current laws, and our current laws are wrong.

I believe in the rule of law when the law is fair and the law is right.

But when it's unjust—

Ms FARMER: Point of order.

CHAIR: Member for Buderim, I will stop you there. There is a point of order.

Ms FARMER: Chair, this is a very lengthy preamble. I seek your ruling on whether the member should be asking a question.

Mr DICKSON: I am happy to go to the question.

CHAIR: Member, can you please keep your question brief and relevant.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. As the chief law officer in Queensland, does the Attorney-General agree with those comments? What action will the Attorney-General and the Queensland government take to ensure that trade unions obey the law?

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you very much for the question. My view is that anyone who breaks the law should be held to account. It does not matter where you come from or what you are doing, or what position you hold, if you break the law you get held to account and the law should be enforced.

In relation to what we are doing as a government to ensure that trade unions, or anyone else, or any other organisation is being held to account—and I should say that I am not the industrial relations minister who oversees the registration of industrial organisations—in relation to any criminal offence, there is the industrial relations legislation relating to any registered bodies in Queensland, which is employer trade unions and employee trade unions, that they must comply with in their financial reporting, their access to worksites, or anything of that nature. It is the same with any trade unions that are registered federally. They must comply with federal legislation.

In addition, if there is any allegation whatsoever about corrupt conduct, or criminal conduct by anyone, again, in a trade union, being an employee trade union or an employer trade union, it should be reported to the police and it should be reported to the Crime and Corruption Commission so that it can be properly investigated and any action or charges being made.

Mr DICKSON: That includes Sally McManus?

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Electoral Commissioner. I take you to page 84 of the SDS in relation to that Strategic Elections Management System. Could you explain briefly what that system is?

Mr van de Merwe: Yes. The election gateway project will ensure that the Electoral Commission of Queensland—the ECQ—has the information technology and capacity required to deliver fair and just electoral events. Are you asking about the new system or the old system?

Mr WALKER: What is referred to as the Strategic Elections Management System.

Mr van de Merwe: The Strategic Elections Management System, which is SEMS, is ECQ's primary operating system. It is fundamental to the operation of the management of elections. SEMS was developed in 2004 and implemented in 2006 to assist in the administration and management of state general elections and state by-elections. Significant changes to SEMS occurred to expand its functionality.

For example, in 2007 local government elections were added to the original SEMS. In 2008 Queensland state district boundaries and redistributions were added to it. In 2011 local government elections were enhanced again. In 2011 returning officer staffing solutions were integrated. In 2013 the electoral roll import and distribution system redevelopment was integrated into SEMS. In 2013 the electoral offences system was developed and integrated. In 2013 there was an adaptation for local government deamalgamation polls. It was growing over and over again. In summary, it basically runs the IT of the Electoral Commission.

Mr WALKER: Page 84 refers to replacement of that system. Is it vital that that be implemented ahead of the next state election?

Mr van der Merwe: No.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, page 91 of the SDS refers to a deferral of \$6.3 million from 2016-17 for the completion of the project. Why was that the case?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The updating of the election management system has been going for some time. Obviously our priority over the past 12 months has been equipping our system to be able to do the real-time disclosure. We wanted to make sure that we could implement that as soon as possible. We have put in the budget obviously the replacement of the funding of \$6.385 million deferred to this year because the procurement process in relation to the replacement has taken longer than expected. From what I have been briefed on in relation to the system, what is required has become more complex, it would be fair to say, as we go along. When you are talking about this being the entire election management system—we have every bit of constituency data, voter data, in that—it is really important that we have a system that can handle not just the volume we have in there now but also the volume that we are going to have going forward in terms of growth in this state. All these systems always turn out to be extremely expensive. It is important that we do not spend the money and find in five years time that the system is already at capacity and already outdated.

The procurement process has taken a bit longer. That is why we have deferred \$6.385 million to this financial year. As I understand it, \$79,000 has been allocated for ongoing replacement of the ECQ's plant and equipment for this year.

Mr WALKER: It was meant to be finished by now and yet page 44 of the Capital Statement says that not a cent has yet been spent.

Mrs D'ATH: As we say, we have been making sure, first and foremost, that we delivered on our commitment to get the real-time disclosure in place, and we have done that and managed the current system well. It is important that we get the procurement process right. The procurement process has taken longer than we expected. We are not going to push through a procurement process and end up with a figure that does not deliver what we need, as I said. I would rather it take a bit longer to get the procurement process right, get the right system for us and do it once than end up with a system that can just end up costing us more in the long run.

Mr WALKER: I take you page 92 of the SDS in relation to staffing for the ECQ. Has there been a Deputy Electoral Commissioner appointed?

Mrs D'ATH: There is an assistant appointed.

Mr WALKER: I am asking about the specific position of Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

Mrs D'ATH: No.

Mr WALKER: How long has that position been vacant?

Mrs D'ATH: I will turn to the Electoral Commissioner to answer that.

Mr van der Merwe: The Deputy Electoral Commissioner position has not been appointed under the Electoral Act for, I would imagine, the last eight or nine years. What the Electoral Commission has done is appoint an Assistant Electoral Commissioner, who is a public servant who is an SES officer. The Governor provides on a 12-monthly basis for the Assistant Electoral Commissioner to act as the Electoral Commissioner should the Electoral Commissioner for whatever reason vacate the position, be it for sick leave or recreation leave or whatever. The position of Deputy Electoral Commissioner under the Electoral Act has not been filled since before my time.

Mr WALKER: Is that impacting on the operations of the ECQ?

Mr van der Merwe: Not at all. The Assistant Electoral Commissioner is an SES officer and that position is of great support to me. They perform basically the functions of a Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

CHAIR: Attorney, I refer to the CCC's role in investigating serious crimes and page 48 of the SDS, noting that there is \$3.2 million in recent funding. Without wanting to compromise any operational sensitivity, could you please advise the committee what activities the Crime and Corruption Commission has undertaken in investigating child exploitation material and any emerging challenges and concerns?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. As all members are aware, this formed a really important part of our serious and organised crime legislation, which was enhancing the legislation in relation to offences and particularly getting access to that encrypted data and individuals working together—so sharing of information, sharing of images and videos. Sharing of information about how you can hide that sort of data also formed part of the consideration of the offences and the sentencing that we created.

The commission of inquiry into organised crime that we held very early in our term of parliament identified the child sex offending and child exploitation market as key organised crime threats in Queensland, and the commission of inquiry into organised crime highlighted a number of challenges authorities face when investigating the sharing of child exploitation material online. The task force on organised crime legislation and the serious organised crime legislation brought into the parliament last year addressed these issues identified in the commission of inquiry, and the laws we now have in Queensland are certainly operationally strong and legally robust. However, our commitment to ensure that children are protected from these rings did not stop after passing these laws. The commission of inquiry also raised concerns about the classification of child exploitation material.

You heard from my opening statement this morning that the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council have undertaken that work and just released the report today publicly, so everyone will be able to have a look at that report, and made recommendations around the classification. The recommendation of the commission of inquiry was for the government to consider moving away from the Oliver scale because it was seen as a very timely process in the identification of particular images and videos and classification of those. In talking with the Queensland Police Service and Task Force Argos, also talking with the Crime and Corruption Commission in the work they do, first and foremost their priority is identifying the children, because identifying the children gives them the ability to remove them from harm and also for them to be able to get the support they need. Even if these images were made 10 or 15 years ago, every time they are shared it is further abuse, further traumatising of these young people and it is possible that their parents never ever knew it was happening. These images are out there and the child may have never spoken about it. To be able to, first and foremost, identify the child is absolutely critical, but then, of course, it is about holding the individuals to account.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Crime and Corruption Commission and the people whose job it is in the CCC, Cerberus and forensic computing teams and Task Force Argos. It is incredibly difficult work they do. I have had the opportunity to be briefed—and I do not think I am breaching confidentiality when I say this because I have spoken to the chair of the CCC about us speaking more publicly about just how prevalent this is. When you walk into a room and you see the map of Queensland and you see the dots appear on that screen that shows at this point in time—right this minute—how many people are viewing child exploitation material, potentially grooming, it is horrifying to say the least. When they break that down to your suburb and you see how many in your suburb are looking at that material it is extremely disturbing. This is not just a problem for Queensland and not just a problem for Australia; it is an international problem. We know that some of this is made overseas. We know that some of this is made here and shared. It is disgusting that there is demand, there is a market for this in this state, and I am really pleased at what we are doing and the injection of funds that we gave to do the blitz last year out of the commission of inquiry funds to work with the police and the CCC.

That funding commitment meant that there was an increase in investigative activity by more than 30 per cent. It led to 19 criminal paedophilia investigations being finalised. Seventy-four per cent of finalised investigations resulted in arrest, charges, seizure or restraint of property. Seventeen people were charged with 62 offences relating to possession, distribution and production of child exploitation material. One person was charged with two counts of rape. One person was charged with 19 offences relating to indecent dealing of children under the age of 16 and, importantly, 11 children were identified in harmful environments and removed with the assistance of the Queensland Police Service Child Protection and Investigation Unit.

I have to say: this is the hardest part of my job when this comes across my desk. You do not have to be a parent, but when you are a parent you cannot help but think of your own children when you read about children, toddlers or babies being physically molested by grown adults in our community. It is just horrifying. Again I thank the people who have to sit there and view these images—the police who go online to help identify these people who are grooming and charge them. I thank them because it is a tough job. It is a really tough job. As technology evolves they get smarter and smarter about how to hide it, how to encrypt this data. I am very proud of the laws we brought in with the organised crime legislation to force people to divulge passwords for encrypted data. That it now an offence in its own right for which they could be sentenced.

Ms FARMER: My question is to the chair of the CCC. I refer to page 48 of the SDS and the CCC's role in targeting high-threat criminal networks trafficking in ice and other drugs. Can you please advise the committee of what support the government is providing to the CCC to tackle and disrupt this activity?

Mr MacSporran: We were provided with extra funding arising out of the organised crime commission of inquiry to facilitate our hearings powers. We use those both for hearings for intelligence purposes, to gather intelligence on these syndicates, and for investigative hearings. They form a very important part of our enforcement investigation activities and we work in conjunction with the Police Service to investigate, gather evidence in relation to and ultimately charge various syndicate members.

We had a series of three operations—Amulet, Gloss and most recently Altana—all of which targeted high-level organised criminal activity in respect of the ice-trafficking trade. The last of those, which was the Altana syndicate, was closed down and the operation concluded earlier this year and there have been a number of arrests and a large number of charges laid. All of those people are currently before the court. A large number of those charged were members of outlaw motorcycle gangs. They have a large presence in this field. We seized a significant quantity of drugs. We have also taken significant proceeds of crime confiscation proceedings designed to prevent them re-establishing and to take away their ill-gotten gains, as it were. All of that is an ongoing effort. It also deals with organised criminal activity in the cold-call investment fraud space, which I talked about earlier, as well as the usual range of offences including murder, attempted murder, infliction of grievous bodily harm and so forth.

There is certainly a major emphasis on ice trafficking, because, as we concluded in our fact sheets and our presentations, it is the current greatest threat to the safety and wellbeing of the Queensland community. It coincides, as it were, with the government's broader approach to the ice issue. We are part of the current government's initiative to bring in the health professionals to deal with rehabilitation issues if we cut off supply and so forth. It requires a much broader approach than just enforcement, but we encourage that and fully support it.

Mrs D'ATH: I would add that the issue of ice is prevalent everywhere I go in the state. I talk to our courts and magistrates and ask, of the matters coming before them, what is on the increase. Ice is a major factor. When you are trying to have a holistic approach and a whole-of-government approach to addressing crime and youth crime, you cannot do that without looking at the issue of ice and how we tackle it in relation to demand, supply and harm minimisation in the community, as well as mental health support.

The statistics are quite scary: 2.1 per cent of Australians aged 14 or over have used methamphetamines in the past 12 months; 50 per cent of those report crystal or ice as the main drug used. That figure goes to 2.9 per cent for 12- to 17-year-olds. Police are reporting that they have had a 31 per cent increase in charges in relation to ice use. You have more people being charged with ice, which creates psychotic episodes, and you have to try to manage and rehabilitate them. I know that in the youth justice space it is a major issue. Parents are using ice. It is taking a whole-of-government cross-agency effort. Recently, an ice forum was held on the north side of the Brisbane, which I attended with the police minister to hear some of the statistics and what it is doing in our communities. I am really pleased that, as a government, we are tackling this issue.

Mrs MILLER: My question is in relation to the youth offender support program. Minister, I know that you wear two hats as the Minister for Justice as well as the Minister for Training. It appears to me that there are two separate programs, in other words, the youth offender support program and Skilling Queenslanders for Work, that are targeting the same people. At the moment, they are competing against each other for funding. Why is that so and can it be streamlined?

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to look at whether there is any overlap and any competition there. There are more than enough disengaged kids out there to go across those programs. We have a range of different programs. Project Booyah often looks at early intervention and low-level disengagement. We have Transition 2 Success, which involves kids who are often entrenched in the youth justice system or are on the verge of being expelled from school. As you said, we have Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which includes Get Set for Work for disengaged youth and Youth Skills which is specifically for kids in the youth justice system. You also talked about the youth offenders support program.

There is no one size fits all. The idea is that these programs complement each other. There is no shortage of groups wanting to provide support and training through those programs. I do not necessarily see them competing with each other, but as I said I am more than happy to go off and see if there is any overlap. Sometimes we find they actually work together. I have Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs that are partnered with Project Booyah. Transition 2 Success is working with Skilling Queenslanders for Work. We are seeing collaboration, but as I say I am more than happy to look at that. If after estimates today the member has more information on how she sees that competition happening, I am happy to take that on board and talk to both of my departments about it.

Ms BOYD: Attorney, I refer to page 42 of the SDS. Can you please update the committee on what actions the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland has undertaken to improve community cohesion and social inclusion?

Mrs D'ATH: The head of the Anti-Discrimination Commission, Kevin Cocks, is here with us today and may want to add to this. The government is driving initiatives across government to build more connected and resilient communities where people feel a strong sense of welcome and belonging. The government provided to the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland additional funding of \$293,000 over three financial years until the end of 2017-18 to deliver community assistance activities. This includes supporting community connectedness through delivering inclusive community projects to build social cohesion.

As part of this initiative, the ADCQ has partnered with the Australian Human Rights Commission to deliver three regional community conversations throughout 2017. The first two occurred in June in Hervey Bay and on the Sunshine Coast and the third will be in Townsville in August. The purpose of those conversations includes connecting and working with communities to develop a better understanding of how racism is experienced in regional Queensland, informing and educating communities about racism and social cohesion, and assisting organisations to develop skills to prevent and respond to racism and discrimination and promote social cohesion.

We have to remember that, as much as we are a great state and a great nation and we are multicultural, we have to continue to work on respect and embracing multiculturalism, as opposed to dividing the nation and this great state by pegging one particular culture or religion over others. This effort has to be continually made by governments, not-for-profit organisations and schools working together to reinforce social cohesion. I think that is more important than ever when we look at what is happening globally with terrorism.

I know that in the Palaszczuk government it is not just about the great work that the Anti-Discrimination Commission is doing; it is also what Minister Grace is doing in the multicultural area with her wonderful connections to the communities, what Minister Furner is doing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and what Minister Fentiman is doing in relation to communities. It is all of those agencies working together to strengthen our collaboration. I understand the commissioner may want to respond. There have been partnerships with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council on these actions around diversity and inclusion. I know the ADCQ has commenced discussions with AFL Queensland and Surf Life Saving Queensland in relation to partnering further on diversity. I might pass over to Kevin Cocks to say a few extra words on that.

Mr Cocks: As we know, human rights are at the cornerstone of creating a civil society. One of the major mandates of the commission is to promote human rights. As the Attorney-General has outlined, we have been working very closely with a number of agencies in government. As one of our initiatives, two years ago we developed the Human Rights Month, which has involved the majority of government agencies, to focus on areas of discrimination, sexual harassment, inclusion and diversity. Last year, we added mental health to that.

Over 100 champions from government agencies have learnt skills in hosting conversations. You may think that sounds a bit trite, but really it gets down to having quite difficult conversations about the real issues that are going on in the workplace. That is the beginning of either a constructive and healthy workplace or a destructive and unhealthy workplace, which has big impacts on productivity, et cetera. We have partnered with Marsden Families to invite a leader in participatory leadership through the power of story, Mary Alice Arthur. In March, over 70 members of community and government attended a three-day forum in skilling people. We will follow that up in September this year, hopefully with the further addition of people from surf lifesaving clubs and other new partners.

This is about empowering people to have conversations with their neighbours, in their neighbourhoods and in their local communities about the issues that are directly affecting them. That may be coming to a better understanding of building relationships or offering pathways for new migrants. At one of the conversations we held on the Sunshine Coast, a group of elderly men talked about wanting to start a men's shed in Maroochydore. All they have is a tent at the moment. Their ambition is to be able to offer opportunities to work with young men to develop life skills, such as changing light bulbs and those sort of things, as well as other life skills in how you make your way through life and be a productive citizen.

Social cohesion has very broad impacts. When we start to treat each other with respect, we can mobilise our communities to promote the principles of human rights which are dignity, equal opportunity, being treated equally before the law and living life free from discrimination. We are really encouraged by the uptake. One of the conversations with the Queensland AFL has led to a citizenship ceremony to be held on 15 August, I think, at the Lion's game when new citizens will receive their certificates. I understand they will be matched with members of the Lions and invited to the next game. This is a way of building pathways for new migrants into the mechanisms of our communities that really go to integration. That is just a small example of our work.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. I call the member for Mansfield.

Mr WALKER: Can I ask for Mr MacSporran to come back to the table, please. Mr MacSporran, I take you to page 49 of the SDS. The Attorney-General has waxed lyrical about targeting organised crime. On the face of it, the figures do not look too flash to me. I am interested in your view as to why there was such a dramatic decline in the percentage of targeted criminal entities disrupted as a result of CCC investigations. I think it was 86 per cent in 2016-17 when the 2015-16 result was 100 per cent. What has caused the fall off?

Mr MacSporran: The simple answer is that that relates to, I think, five Cerberus or criminal paedophilia investigations that were commenced, but did not result in charging. There were a variety of reasons for that. The most obvious one in some of those five was that the police requested assistance with the investigation, for which we had a warrant to be executed. Before it could be executed, the police indicated they no longer needed the assistance and we were not required to go ahead with it. Having started it, it counts as an investigation that is opened, but it does not have a result. In all five of those, although they were not all identical, they were all for reasons beyond our control where there was no result. That brought the figure down. It is unusual. It the first year that it has happened for quite some time. Normally we have 100 per cent disruption and so on. That is the reason.

CHAIR: The time has now expired for this section of the hearing. Before we adjourn, Attorney, is there anything you would like to say briefly in conclusion?

Mrs D'ATH: I give my thanks to all of the statutory bodies that serve the people of Queensland. They do a tremendous job. I know only a small number have had the opportunity to speak today. I thank the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman, the Electoral Commission, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, the Prostitution Licensing Authority, the Public Trustee, Legal Aid and the Crime and Corruption Commission. I very much thank their staff who do a tremendous job every day serving the people of Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Attorney-General.

Mr MacSporran: If I could update the committee on an answer to a question I gave to Mr Nicholls earlier, which I took on notice. It was the question about the alleged leak from the Department of Environment. I have ascertained in the interim that, in fact, that has gone back to the police to investigate, so it is no longer with us.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. The committee will adjourn. The hearing will resume at 1 pm to continue the examination of the estimates of the portfolio area of Justice and Attorney-General.

Proceedings suspended from 12.15 pm to 1 pm

 **CHAIR:** Welcome back Attorney-General and departmental officials. The estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is now resumed. The committee will continue its examination of the estimates for the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio.

Mr BLEIJIE: My first question is to the director-general and follows a question I asked the director-general of Education and Training this morning. Mr Mackie, has the Attorney-General or any of her staff ever sent an email to you from a private email account?

Mr Mackie: Not that I know of, no.

Mr BLEIJIE: Could you check for us?

Mr Mackie: I can check for you.

Mr BLEIJIE: Attorney, are you happy if the DG takes that one on notice and comes back to this committee?

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy for that to be taken on notice.

Mr BLEIJIE: With respect to the government's alcohol fuelled violence policy contained in the SDS, I point out that years ago there was a *Gold Coast Bulletin* article which outlined the government's plan to breath-test patrons, there was an election policy with trading hours which is different from what has been implemented, you were against ID scanners, you introduced lockouts, you abolished lockouts, you have now introduced ID scanners, you have said that you did not know about managers or owners not being able to use the ID scanners yet correspondence shows that your office did know and so did the Minister for Employment, you changed the rules for State of Origin night—

Ms BOYD: I have a point of order, Mr Chair. I ask for your guidance in terms of the lengthy preamble to this question.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, carrying on from earlier this morning, you are continuing to ask lengthy questions. I ask you kindly to get to the point and ask your question, otherwise I will rule it out of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: With the flip-flopping on alcohol fuelled violence by you and this government, is it any wonder that consumers, patrons and government are confused about what the government's policy is on alcohol fuelled violence? There have been so many positions. Is it any wonder the community is confused and does not know there are ID scanners in clubs after 10 o'clock at night?

Mrs D'ATH: I disagree with the statement that you are making. From what we have witnessed, from the information we have had back from inspectors, from the information we have had back from the Queensland Police Service in the safe night out precincts and from what the director-general and I observed when we went out into the city and Valley on the Friday evening the week after the ID scanners came into effect, this is working. People are more than comfortable with producing their ID. There was no angst in the lines. People were preparing themselves—in fact, they already had their ID out waiting to be scanned.

There has been significant consultation and communication between the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation and me. There have been a number of forums at which large numbers of stakeholders, including licensed venue operators and operators of ID scanners, attended. What we have seen is a good transition. There were always going to be some issues that arose. That is the case with any new system implemented and no matter what date it is implemented. We have worked through those issues. Operators of the ID scanner units are working with licensed venues on any issues they raise to rectify them as quickly as possible.

Mr BLEIJIE: The government was originally opposed to ID scanners and voted against ID scanners, introduced lockouts—

Mrs D'ATH: In fact, that is not what the government said.

Mr BLEIJIE: Your government has been in for three years now. You decided to introduce ID scanners. How were these issues not ironed out prior to the commencement on 1 July? How were these issues even issues? Surely you tested the systems in clubs and pubs before you realised that American passports and American licences could not be read back to front—that is, they have the month before the day.

Mrs D'ATH: This government has never said that it was opposed to ID scanners. When we came into government the LNP had already deferred the implementation of ID scanners once. As I understand it, a commitment had been made by the previous government that there would be at least two operators

already signed up by the time the scanners came into effect, and that was not the case. The scanners could not take effect from the deferred date that the LNP planned because there was only one operator at that stage.

We said that we wanted to consult with the industry more and weigh that up against the other initiatives. That is what we said. That is why we deferred the implementation and the proclamation of the provisions. We did that over a significant length of time. We gave the industry six months lead-in. We announced it in January to come in on 1 July. There was consultation in relation to that. There was certainly testing done beforehand. In fact, these operators have been using these scanners elsewhere. They certainly were not new to the market.

The reality is that some licensed venues chose not to sign contracts until very late in the process. In fact, some licensed venues did not turn their machines on or in any way familiarise themselves or have their staff familiarise themselves with the operation of the equipment before the night that it started. When you turn the equipment on for the first time on the night you are going to operate it and on the night the laws come into effect and you have not had proper training on how to use the equipment, not surprisingly you are going to have some issues. What we have seen in a very short time is venues familiarising themselves much better with the equipment and addressing any issues with the scanners.

Something like 64 different US licences are recognised in the system. There is a very long list from the operators of what the ID scanners already recognise as far as international identification—passport and driver's licences—are concerned. You are never going to have a system which recognises every single driver's licence from every single country. As we know, within those countries each state would have a different licence scheme and so forth. The system can be adapted and new algorithms drawn up where there is a volume of international visitors whose licences or IDs are not recognised. That can be addressed through the system.

Having said that, any claim that a licensed venue cannot allow someone whose ID does not scan properly into their venue is false. If for whatever reason the international identification does not scan properly then the information can be entered manually so that that person can still enter that venue and enjoy a night out.

Mr BLEIJIE: With respect to State of Origin night, you put out a press release saying that you had granted ID scanning from 11 pm in the Caxton Street precinct but nowhere else in Queensland. Are you happy that people can manually enter the details of 50,000 people from Suncorp? What is going to happen when Paul McCartney is at Lang Park—

Ms BOYD: I have a point of order, Mr Chair. The member for Kawana just asked a question. He is going on to ask further questions.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is a sub question to the question.

Ms BOYD: No.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am sorry, you do not get to decide that member for Pine Rivers.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I ask that you deal with one issue at a time. You are straying into the territory of breaching standing order 115 which relates to asking hypothetical questions.

Mr BLEIJIE: Paul McCartney is coming out here to perform at Lang Park in November or December. Is the Attorney-General going to issue ad hoc extensions for the scanning system as she did for State of Origin night or is there a proper planning process for these sorts of events?

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to an ad hoc arrangement versus proper planning, I point out that an application was made for an exemption or partial exemption to change the commencement time for the ID scanners for State of Origin because of the large volume of people coming through. That application was considered by OLGR and was granted for 11 o'clock after consultation with the police. If the member for Kawana says that is an ad hoc approach then he should answer the question, not me, because when you go back and read *Hansard* and the response to the report of the parliamentary committee you will find that the member for Kawana actually set the system up.

Mr CRANDON: I have a point of order, Mr Chair. We now find the Attorney-General straying from answering the very straightforward question and wanting to draw on history yet again.

CHAIR: There is no point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: When this legislation was introduced in 2014—the then attorney-general, the member for Kawana, proposed that ID scanners operate from eight o'clock each evening—and the parliamentary committee recommended 10 pm and questioned whether there was sufficient flexibility, the then government's response was that there was sufficient flexibility built in for the commissioner of

OLGR to consider applications in relation to these matters. That is exactly what the commissioner did, and rightly so. With no interference from me as Attorney-General, an application went to the commissioner. The commissioner considered it, based on consultation with the police, and then made a decision.

The other point I want to pull the member for Kawana up on is that he made the statement that 50,000 people had to be manually entered. That is absolutely false. The reality is that, as much as some tried to beat up the queues at Caxton Street on State of Origin night, the reports from the inspectors on the ground and the police on the ground were that the majority of licensed venues in Caxton Street were at capacity before 11 pm and scanners started working. The queues that formed started to form before 11 pm. The queues were there because they were not letting anyone else into the venues.

The great businesses that have already started adapting and working out how this system works best for them were actually prescanning people while they waited. They knew they could not let them in. They had to wait for people to leave. They would see a group of 10 people and say, 'We will scan you now. You can wait here.' They were prescanning so that they could help those people get into the venues quicker. Any reports that those queues were as a consequence of delays in the scanning process are inaccurate. The queues were as a consequence of the facilities being at capacity and people having to wait.

Mr BLEIJIE: Are you aware of the incident that took place in Cairns in front of the Premier at the restaurant Salt House, which has a club at the front and a restaurant at back? Are you aware of the incident that took place in front of the Premier and her staff where a gentleman was refused access back into the restaurant after 10 o'clock at night because his ID was inside and he took a phone call outside? The Premier was dining in the same restaurant.

Mrs D'ATH: I am not aware of the specifics of that, no.

Mr BLEIJIE: Your answer to question on notice No. 5 has the budget for the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation for 2017-18 as \$29,981,900; for 2018-19 as \$28,257,900; for 2019-20 as \$29,057,300; and for 2020-21 as \$29,057,300. That is less. You are projecting less money to be budgeted for the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation in the forward years. Why are you cutting money from the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation when I would have thought you would be trying to make sure more money is invested in alcohol fuelled violence programs rather than cutting money to the very organisation that is administering it?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. As the member can see, for 2017-18 the budget is \$29,981,900 and for 2018-19 it is \$28,257,900 going forward. The explanation for that is that the funding goes through to the 2017-18 year. In the lead-up to next year's budget we will assess what the OLGR further needs in relation to the safe night out funding and the tackling alcohol fuelled violence funding that the government provided over the past three years including in this year's budget. I can advise the member very clearly that there is certainly no reduction in our inspectors who are on the ground in relation to the work they are doing in this year's budget. As far as future years are concerned, we will assess those needs as the year progresses and in the lead-up to next year's budget.

Mr BLEIJIE: I refer you to the same answer to question on notice No. 5 paragraph (c), where you have talked about full-time-equivalent staff in the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation. You talked about the compliance officers in 14 locations across the state undertaking activities under liquor and gaming legislation. Compliance officer FTEs for 2016-17 were 114. FTEs for 2017-18 are 114. In 2018-19 you are cutting them to 101 and in 2019-20 you are cutting them to 101. You have just mentioned that there will be no cuts to compliance officers, yet your answer to the question on notice shows that you are cutting compliance officers.

Mrs D'ATH: As you can see, in 2016-17 and in 2017-18 those compliance numbers remain the same. Over the following year we will assess the funding for OLGR and their needs in relation to compliance officers. Any claims that there is a cut to FTEs in this year's budget is inaccurate. As far as forward estimates are concerned, they are re-evaluated each year as we go forward and in the preparation of next year's budget.

Mr BLEIJIE: Why would you be budgeting for fewer compliance officers in the future when you are hoping that everything else that relates to this industry—population, tourism, employment opportunities—will go up? Your own department is budgeting for fewer compliance officers in this space, yet you say you have the toughest legislation with respect to alcohol fuelled violence. I suspect that the rollout of the ID scanners has been a complete bungled, botched up, stuffed up job.

Ms BOYD: There is no question there, Chair. I raise a point of order.

CHAIR: I take the point of order from the member for Pine Rivers. Did you have a question, member for Kawana, or will we move on?

Mr BLEIJIE: The question is: in terms of alcohol fuelled violence, how can you be budgeting for fewer compliance officers in the future? Minister, while we are talking about the ID scanners, you keep talking—

Mr POWER: I raise a point of order. The minister has already answered the question. This is a speech.

Mr BLEIJIE: We are talking about ID scanners.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I ask you to please ask a question; otherwise we will move to other members who will.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, with respect to the ID scanners and the statistics you are putting out on a weekly basis, can you please provide this committee with the Monday to Thursday statistics of people scanned across Queensland not just on a weekly basis. I would like for this committee's sake to know how many people are being scanned on Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday night respectively separate.

Mrs D'ATH: I certainly can take that on notice in relation to that data. I will say this in relation to the claims about Mondays to Thursdays being treated differently to Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Firstly, we should seek to keep patrons safe no matter what night of the week it is. To say that someone on a banning order for serious violence or drug offences should be banned from getting into a licensed venue on a Friday or Saturday night but it is okay if they enter venues on a Monday or Tuesday night is ludicrous. It is not keeping the community safe. Inevitably—

Mr BLEIJIE: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. The minister has said she has taken that question on notice. I am happy with that. I am happy to move on to the next question.

Mrs D'ATH: I can still speak to the actual issue.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you had a lengthy preamble that raised a whole lot of issues. The Attorney-General is answering the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: She has taken it on notice.

CHAIR: I will allow her to continue.

Mrs D'ATH: I have taken the figures on notice. I am still—

Mr BLEIJIE: Filibustering.

Mrs D'ATH:—dealing with the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Filibustering.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you are continuing to interject and being disorderly. I ask you—

Mr BLEIJIE: This should be a robust committee process, Mr Chair. This is not just for Dorothy Dixers for the government. This should be a robust committee process for members of the opposition to challenge the government on their budget.

Mrs D'ATH: Then you would think you would want an answer.

Mr BLEIJIE: You are continuing to filibuster with nonsense when you have already taken the question on notice—

Ms BOYD: I raise a point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE:—and filibustering from that end of the table.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I will hear the point of order from the member for Pine Rivers.

Ms BOYD: Chair, the member for Kawana is actually dissenting from your ruling and I ask for your guidance on this matter.

Mrs MILLER: I raise a further point of order. I note the comments made by the member for Kawana. I find his comments personally offensive to me because I am not asking Dorothy Dixers to any ministers.

Mr BLEIJIE: My apologies, member for Bundamba. I did not know you were sitting down the far end there.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I am right on the end.

Mr BLEIJIE: I apologise and I withdraw with respect to you.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you.

CHAIR: We will move on to further questions.

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, if I can, it is an important question. The opposition have been out there claiming that it should not be one size fits all at the same time complaining there is not consistency. They talk about 11 pm on a State of Origin night and complain that that is inconsistent with other safe night out venues at the same time as arguing that there should be a consistent approach. I am very unsure what the LNP's view is because they want consistency and then they want flexibility.

This is a very important issue about whether ID scanners should operate every night of the week or only some nights of the week. We should be keeping out people on banning orders every single night of the week, not just Fridays and Saturday nights. Inevitably the numbers of people going into licensed venues will be fewer during the week. That does not mean that they should get less safety and security when they go into venues than any other night of the week. It is important that it is across-the-board. I also point out that again the legislation when it was implemented in 2014 did not seek to preclude midweek. It applied to every night of the week.

CHAIR: I have a question in relation to page 12 of the SDS. Attorney, could you please update the committee on the number of charges for strangulation that have been lodged since this specific offence was created?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. On 5 May 2016 this government strengthened the criminal law response to domestic and family violence with the commencement of the new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting. The new offence is contained in section 315A of the Criminal Code and carries a maximum penalty of seven years. This new offence implements recommendation 120 of the report into the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, being the *Not now, not ever* report.

In the 13 months since the offence commenced, as at 31 May 2017, 851 charges have been lodged in the Magistrates Court in relation to 778 defendants. Of those 851 charges, 163 charges have been presented on indictment in relation to 125 of the 778 defendants in the District Court. So far 41 defendants have been convicted on 49 strangulation charges. The new offence sends a clear message denouncing this type of offending. It will improve identification of this predictive domestic violence conduct and deter perpetrators from this type of offending.

We know that this sort of conduct is a sign of escalation of violence. I have been really pleased with the police who have said to me, 'We didn't realise how much we needed this offence until it existed because we know that there was an offence for strangulation or choking in the Criminal Code but it required intent to take someone's life.' When it comes to a domestic and family violence setting, they are not necessarily seeking to take someone's life. They are just intending to show them that they can. It is about power and control—absolute control—'I can start and stop when I want and I can take your life if I want to.' I am really pleased that not only have we created this offence but the police are using this offence and charging individuals which I have no doubt as a consequence is making lives safer for victims of domestic and family violence out there.

Ms BOYD: Attorney, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, could you please update the committee on the number of charges that have been noted by the courts as having occurred and committed in a domestic violence context?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member. This is one of those issues where we sought—it is recommendation 119 of the *Not now, not ever* report—to put a notation on someone's file who comes before the court on charges about their history of offending. I know this is one that the opposition and government disagreed on in terms of making this retrospective. I want to reinforce the benefit of this law being retrospective. It means that people coming before the court now in relation to historical charges over a number of years can have those charges identified as domestic and family violence related. You might think that that was already occurring but in fact it was not. What may have appeared on people's files in relation to charges and convictions is assault or property damage or motor vehicle offences for running someone off the road. It could have been for punching a hole in a wall when they have had an argument or it could have been physically grabbing the person.

For the police to be in a position where they can go back and ask the court, with that person standing before the court right now, to note their past history and to have that recorded on their file now means that in considering bail and in considering sentencing of that individual the court will now know

whether this person has a domestic violence history, not just a history of offences. In the past they might have said, 'You do have a history of offences, but this is the first time you have a domestic and family violence offence.' Consequently, the sentence might be less or they may provide bail because this is the first time they have committed this offence. When they look at the history, they suddenly realise there is a whole history of domestic violence there.

To give some figures, from 1 December 2015 to 30 June 2016—seven months—6,113 charges were recorded with a notation that identified the offence occurred in a domestic violence context. From 1 July to 31 May 2017, the number of charges registered was 11,196 charges. What that means is that, since 1 December 2015 through to 31 May 2017, over 17,000 charges and convictions are now noted as domestic violence related on files that otherwise were not. That is significant when it comes to the police having that knowledge and importantly the courts having a much better picture of what the history of this person is in weighing up whether there is an unacceptable risk or risk of this person committing further violence against the alleged victim and whether they should be granted bail or not and in relation to sentencing.

Mr POWER: Attorney-General, having visited the Beenleigh courthouse with an applicant in a domestic violence process, I know how harrowing it can be. With reference to page 4 of the SDS, can you please update the committee on the staged rollout of the specialist domestic and family violence courts?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. As all members know, we implemented a specialist domestic and family violence court at Southport. As a trial, the workload of that specialist court escalated very quickly. We had to keep adapting that system and the wraparound support. We added a second specialist magistrate along the way. We then did a full evaluation as to the success or otherwise of that.

Success is not simply measured on the number of matters before the court. You would think that when it comes to a criminal sitting or a domestic violence setting you would only see success measured against a decline. When it comes to domestic and family violence in the current environment, an increase in matters is a success at this stage. Why? It means that the victims are actually coming forward. Victims are going to the police and having the confidence that the police will take them seriously. They are walking into a courtroom seeking a domestic violence order believing that the court system is now going to support them through that process.

The feedback we got from surveys, from both the offender and the victim, was extremely positive about the process and the wraparound supports. The duty lawyer service is not just for the victim; it is for the offender as well. What we know in this state is that there is a large number of breaches of domestic violence orders. If we are going to overcome that, we need offenders to better understand what the order means and what the conditions attached to the order mean. When it says 'no contact' it means no contact at all. You cannot pick up the phone. You cannot talk to the kids. It is not just no contact with the victim themselves.

We committed to rolling that out after we did a proper evaluation, and I am very pleased that in this budget we have committed \$69.5 million for that rollout over the next four years, \$20 million of which is capital over the next two years to do the capital works that we need. We will be rolling this out in five locations—in Southport as well. When you say, 'Southport was already there,' it was a trial. They did not have permanent magistrates. Now they are permanent specialist magistrates that we will fund in addition to the works to the court which I think are due to finish in September. It means that a person will walk in and go to the domestic and family violence registry—a specialist registry—and from that point on they are in a secure environment. They have private interview rooms where the duty lawyers can come in. They have a waiting area or a lounge area where they can talk to other people. There is an area for the kids. There will be a separate area which they can access from there directly to the court. They do not need to go back out. They do not need to walk past the public and, importantly, they do not walk past the alleged offender so they have that security.

Mr POWER: That was exactly the circumstance that the person I went with talked to me about, and we sat in the foyer and watched that process.

Mrs D'ATH: If they are a special witness and they are not even going to go into the court to give evidence, with the renovations we are making in Southport they will now be able to give that videoconferencing evidence in that private room as well. I am really pleased with what we are doing. We are rolling out to Southport, Beenleigh and Townsville, and we will have circuits from Townsville to Mount Isa and Palm Island. That is not the end of what we are doing in DV and supporting courts across

the state, but that is the rollout of our specialist courts. What that means once it is rolled out is that 28 per cent of domestic and family violence civil and criminal matters in Magistrates Courts statewide will be part of the new specialist DV court system.

Mr BROWN: Attorney, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, could you please advise the committee about the government's rationale for expanding the domestic and family violence court models and the evidence base informing this decision?

Mrs D'ATH: I think the rationale is really important to understand. The trial in Southport ran for 22 months. It went from 1 September 2015 to 30 June 2017, and we did extend it for that period for the reason I said. We had to keep changing it as we went along. We added the second magistrate. Once we got that bedded down and we were comfortable that this is the model, we needed adequate time for that model to work and to be able to evaluate that.

The Queensland government committed to evaluating the trial to ensure the model for expansion is based on best practice. I tabled the Griffith Criminology Institute's *Evaluation of the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court Trial in Southport: summary and final reports* in parliament on 13 June 2017, and the evaluation is available on the Queensland courts website. The evaluation analysed 12 months of quantitative and qualitative data, and the evaluation compared the Southport domestic violence court to the Ipswich Magistrates Court to assess the level of difference in outcome areas between specialist and traditional court approaches.

The evaluation involved 12 focus groups and 23 interviews with stakeholders and service providers. A total of 132 victims and respondents in Southport and Ipswich were surveyed on their satisfaction levels with the courts. The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the court process and the level of collaboration across agencies, safety of victims and their satisfaction with the court processes, and how the court provides information to parties and affords access to justice.

The evaluation also considered how the specialist court model may be applied to diverse communities and assessed the cost-effectiveness of the court model and the applicability of the model across the state. The evaluation found that the trial, when compared to traditional court processes, showed that the specialist court had high ratings of satisfaction by victims, higher levels of understanding of court outcomes for both victims and perpetrators, and higher perceptions that offenders were being held to account. In summary, the evaluation found specialisation provides a way of managing the complexity of domestic and family violence matters in courts as well as provides a client focused service to victims and perpetrators.

The evaluation results inform the decision to make Southport permanent and expand in four other locations. In choosing those locations, two major factors were considered: identifying the courts with the highest volume of domestic and family violence matters and identifying the courts that deal with our most disadvantaged Queenslanders. The specialist court approach in Townsville will also include a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander court users and ensure that the court approach is culturally appropriate in response to their needs.

Mr BROWN: Attorney, could you please update the committee on the additional funding and resources for the Land Court?

Mrs D'ATH: I am very pleased to say that in relation to the Land Court I have today announced that I have appointed Peta Stilgoe OAM as a new member of the Land Court of Queensland. Peta Stilgoe is a current senior member of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Land Court. She is a well-respected litigation lawyer with particular experience in planning and environment matters. What is more, she has specialised in mediation and was awarded an OAM for services to dispute resolution.

Peta Stilgoe has been a permanent member of QCAT since its inception and a senior member since 2012. She has a Bachelor of Laws and a Certificate in Mediation from QUT and a Master of Laws from London university. I appointed Peta Stilgoe after consultation with the President of the Land Court, Judge Fleur Kingham, as well as consulting the Bar Association and the Law Society on the best way to boost resourcing for the court and address the workload of the court. The appointment will take effect from tomorrow.

I know that the court has been looking at a range of measures, and I want to acknowledge President Kingham for the work that she has been doing since she took over the Land Court. She has done a significant amount of work in evaluating what is the best model forward, the way to create efficiencies and streamlining in the way matters are determined, and engaging with stakeholders and asking their views about things they believe can be improved as far as matters coming before the court.

On the basis of the workload and ensuring that our decisions are getting out as quickly as possible, I certainly accepted the proposition put forward by the president that she could benefit from an additional member, and that is what we have done by putting this member on today.

Mr BROWN: Attorney, with reference to page 6 of the SDS, could you please advise the committee how the Palaszczuk government's investment in reinstating the Drug Court will address offenders where drug and alcohol dependency is a feature?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. In relation to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to a Drug Court, new funding of \$22.7 million has been allocated over four years, based in Brisbane, and to provide court referral and support services. This is part of the government's \$32.6 million funding package to be delivered over four years. Reinstating a Drug Court has been a key election commitment of this government and was also recommended by the Sofronoff parole board review.

Our commitment to the Drug Court recognises that there is a strong connection between drug use and crime in our communities and that offenders with entrenched drug use issues need a different, more intensive approach to help break the cycle of offending. As I said earlier today, ice is prevalent in every community. Small and large, regional, suburban, metropolitan, inner city—ice is there. We need to be dealing with these issues and we need to ensure that we have these diversionary courts. I am very pleased that this complements all the work we have already done with our other diversionary courts—bringing back court ordered youth justice conferencing, bringing back the Murri Court and now announcing the Drug Court.

This government is very committed to intervening in these high-risk cases because we know that the best outcome for both the individual and the broader community is tackling addiction—turning people away from a life of crime and creating a safer community for everyone. Evaluation of drug courts consistently shows that, when properly structured, targeted and resourced, drug courts work. When compared with alternatives, drug courts are smart on crime as they stop the revolving door of drug use, crime and contact with the criminal justice system.

An evaluation of the former Queensland Drug Court estimated that reoffending was reduced by 17 per cent when comparing Drug Court graduates with a matched group of offenders exiting prison. Evaluation also shows that contact with drug courts can be beneficial and reduce risks of offending even when offenders do not complete the full program. Drug addiction is an extremely difficult issue to overcome, and we recognise that not everyone who goes through a Drug Court program will go on to live a life that is completely drug free or crime free, but drug courts provide the best chance for offenders to turn their lives around, with tangible benefits for participants, their families and the broader community.

The reason we chose Brisbane and one court to begin with was that was the recommendation of the evaluation. One flaw is where you try to go out too many too quick. You need one court and one model. Start there, bed it down and evaluate it over time. The obvious place to do it is not only where you have a large volume of people going through who would be eligible but also, importantly, where you have the wraparound services to support that court. That is what this new court will do. There will be a new magistrate allocated for it as well.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I am on page 15 of the SDS, which shows that the youth detention centre utilisation rate is already above the recommended level of 85 per cent. It shows an actual in 2016-17 of 88 per cent. That is where we are starting from. Attorney, what is the maximum level of capacity across our youth detention system and how many youth detainees are currently in detention?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The bed capacity across the two is 226 and the current capacity is 186.

Mr WALKER: The current actual?

Mrs D'ATH: Actual.

Mr WALKER: It is 186?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, how many 17-year-olds are set to transition into the youth detention centres and when is that transition going to occur?

Mrs D'ATH: The transition is proposed for mid-November, which is 12 months from when the act passed. It is upon proclamation, but that is certainly the 12-month anniversary. The number of 17-year-olds can be estimated but, because of fluctuations in relation to the number of youths coming through, we can never give a precise number. We can do an evaluation of what is in the system now,

because the average length of time that a young person is in youth detention centres or adult prisons—the 17-year-olds—is around 30 days. In terms of projecting what the numbers will be in mid-November, it is safe to say that, if not all, the majority of youths who are 17 in an adult prison system right now would not be the ones who would transfer over in November.

If we base it on the numbers right now, there are 44 17-year-olds in the Queensland Corrective Services service now and 193 in the community. Having said that—and we said this when we announced the proposal to shift 17-year-olds into the youth justice system—the intention is to have all 17-year-olds who are coming before the courts under new charges come into the youth system at that point in time, but when it comes to transitioning those particularly in the prison system there would have to be a staged approach to ensure the safety of the staff and the young people within the youth detention system.

Also, in development right now are transitional regulations which will look at how long they have left to serve and when they are turning 18. Under the current legislation, once they turn 18 if they have six months still to serve they would move into the adult system. If someone is turning 18 two weeks after this commences, you would not shift them because you would be shifting them again in two weeks time, depending on the length of time they have got to serve. If they are due to be released in a week's time, you would not necessarily disrupt them by moving them in that time. They are the issues we are working through as far as the transitional regulation is concerned. It is fair to say that I would not expect the number of 17-year-olds in the adult system at that point in time of transition would automatically be transferred over. There would be a staged approach. Some may not move simply because of their age or because they are about to be released anyway, and there are a number of other issues we would consider.

Importantly, at that time, every 17-year-old coming into the system would be treated under the youth justice system. It is our intention to look at transitioning those from the community service orders over at around that time as well. We would just be checking the safety, security and management as far as transferring the ones who are on community based orders back over to the youth justice system, and there would be the same sorts of considerations about how long they have to serve on their community orders, their age and so forth.

Mr WALKER: In broad terms, you have 226 beds available, 186 of them are already full and you are looking at 44 over a period of time coming across. Those figures may change a bit but that is roughly it.

Mrs D'ATH: No, that would not be an accurate way to assess this.

Mr WALKER: Why is that not accurate?

Mrs D'ATH: Because the 44 would not transfer over. You would only have a portion of the 44 coming over, and it would be a transitional phase. Some of those 44 will be turning 18, and some of those 44 will have a short period of time left to serve.

Mr WALKER: At the same time, you are having new 17-year-olds coming directly into the system so you are essentially balancing that out. You still have to cope with that sort of number.

Mrs D'ATH: The average number of 17-year-olds coming before the court and likely to be convicted and required to serve detention is certainly less than the number that would be transferring over, so it is not like with like. It is not a case that you would have the same number coming in as the same number going out. The numbers that are there now fluctuate. The 186 who are there now will not necessarily be the numbers we have in November.

Mr WALKER: Okay. You have budgeted for a \$16.9 million capital injection. How many extra beds does that get us and in what sort of context? What is being built? What is provided for the \$16.9 million?

Mrs D'ATH: We are developing the plans around what we are looking at as far as capital costs. Some of it will go to ensuring the safety and security of the individuals. I know the member has previously talked about the 10- to 13-year-olds and we are looking at ways to ensure the management of those 10- to 13-year-olds. They are already separated when it comes to programs and a whole range of things, including obviously accommodation areas. We will be ensuring that we maintain that separation, particularly with this older cohort coming in. We should say that there are 17-year-olds in the system now. Prior to the LNP's changes which lifted it to 18, the previous system actually allowed for youths who came into the system at 15 or 16 years old to actually stay there well beyond 18. We used to have people in there who were 20 years old. The system that is there now is much better, where they transition when they are 18—

Mr WALKER: How many extra beds do we get for the \$16.9 million?

Mrs D'ATH: We are building a new accommodation block in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre for a couple of reasons. It was already part of a plan in relation to the security upgrade, so we will be able to accommodate in that new bed capacity—

Mr WALKER: How many extra beds? It is a very simple question. Is it 10, 20, 30? How many extra beds?

Mrs D'ATH: We have not allocated specific additional bed numbers at this stage because when it comes to the capital cost we are still working through those processes. Not everything is about the number of beds in a detention centre.

Mr WALKER: Of course not, but your SDS shows you are already over what the desired occupancy rate is. The 17-year-olds coming in must add more and you are not adding any more beds. Is that what you are saying?

Mrs D'ATH: First of all, there will be 12 new beds in the building that I just talked about.

Mr WALKER: Sorry, is that a change to what you said before? There are 12 new beds?

Mrs D'ATH: There are 12 new beds.

Mr WALKER: There are 12 new beds for the \$16.9 million, or it goes towards that, does it?

CHAIR: Member for Mansfield, you have repeatedly asked the same question.

Mr WALKER: I am repeatedly getting a different answer. I am trying to get a sensible answer. Something that makes sense would be good.

CHAIR: I am going to give the Attorney-General a chance to respond.

Mrs D'ATH: The approach that the LNP are taking when they talk about the transition of 17-year-olds is sort of missing the point. You are not simply picking up a number of 17-year-olds and moving them into the youth detention centre and that is it. Our approach is much broader than that. We are not simply transferring 17-year-olds. We are actually looking at a broader approach, a holistic approach, about dealing with youth crime and offending, which includes programs outside and dealing with remand and remand numbers.

We have the highest remand levels across the country in our youth detention centres—the highest remand numbers. When you talk about how many young people are going to be in our youth detention centres at any point, the fact is that 83 per cent of the kids in our youth detention centres right now have not actually been convicted of a crime—83 per cent. Governments in the past have failed to do anything to address remand numbers. That is what we are working on so we can reduce remand numbers and we can get matters heard more quickly.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Mr WALKER: So there is a plan to reduce—

Mrs D'ATH: I have to take that interjection from the member for Currumbin—'Don't you still need a bed on remand.' If you reduce remand numbers, you actually create bed capacity which can accommodate 17-year-olds.

Mr WALKER: Attorney-General, let us put that to one side for a moment. Page 154 of the McMillan report which you commissioned—the second report, the less redacted one—referred to a 2015 youth justice internal briefing where it is noted that, even without the inclusion of 17-year-olds, there is a forecast need for an additional 20 beds by 2020 and 50 beds every seven years after that. Are you planning for that?

Mrs D'ATH: If you did nothing else but simply transferred 17-year-olds into the system, that would be the bed demand absolutely, but we are not doing that. We are actually looking at programs, systems and other solutions that will reduce remand numbers and will actually in the long term reduce offending recidivism with young people. If you want to address crime, you do not just build extra beds and extra prisons; you actually have to reduce crime and that is what our programs are seeking to do.

We are seeking to have bail and remand programs and other initiatives that will help us deal with those capacity constraints that are now there, that will help us in relation to 10- to 13-year-olds and that will importantly deal with this remand. If we can deal with this remand, if we can create remand levels in this state that every other jurisdiction has, we will have the capacity to accommodate 17-year-olds. That is what we should be doing. We should not be at 83 per cent. Other states are 50 per cent or lower and we are at 83 per cent for remand. Why? Because there has been no focus on early intervention and prevention of young kids in the criminal justice system. It has all been about how do we lock them up.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, what you are really saying is that you have rashly committed to transfer 17-year-olds in and you have to find a way to keep kids coming into the system because you cannot accommodate them. That is what you are saying.

Mrs D'ATH: No, that is not it at all.

Ms BOYD: Chair, I have a point of order. The question includes an imputation

CHAIR: The question does contain an imputation. I ask you to recast your question, member for Mansfield.

Mr WALKER: Maybe the best way to deal with it is this: Attorney, will you commit to releasing the 2015 briefing about the capacity requirements without 17-year-olds moving in?

Mrs D'ATH: Any work that was done in 2015 had a range of options and has well and truly evolved. You have to recall—

Miss Barton interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: The announcement was made in 2016 in relation to transferring 17-year-olds.

Mr WALKER: That is right, and you had this report in 2015.

Mrs D'ATH: The member talks about a report, but the fact is that 2016 was when the government made the decision.

Mr WALKER: That is right and I am asking whether you will release the 2015 report.

Mrs D'ATH: The 2015 report is not relevant to what we are talking about today.

Mr WALKER: So you will not release it?

Mrs D'ATH: The 2015 report is not relevant.

Ms FARMER: Point of order, Chair. The member for Mansfield and other LNP members—and I cannot tell which of the other LNP members it is—continue to interrupt the Attorney-General without making a point of order. I seek your guidance on asking people to adhere to standing order 251.

Mr CRANDON: I have a point of order as well, Chair. A question has been put to the Attorney-General and the Attorney-General is refusing to answer. It is a yes or no question. Yes, you will release it. No, you will not release it. The reason why members on this side are asking—

CHAIR: Deputy Chair—

Mr CRANDON: I am just making a point of order.

CHAIR: You have made your point. There have been non-government members to my left, in addition to the member for Mansfield, making continued interjections. I suggest to them that if they want to ask a question during this committee process they should indicate that to me and I will allow that to happen.

Mr WALKER: I will move on to another question.

CHAIR: I will give the Attorney-General a chance to conclude her answer to that question if she wishes and then we will move on.

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to move on.

Mr WALKER: That paragraph which related to the briefing you had on the ability of the system to cope with the growth without 17-year-olds was initially redacted from the report that you tabled. Attorney, no-one could say that that went to any legal issue or any issue of any kind that would justify redaction. Why was that paragraph redacted from the report? It relates to government policy. It had no legal sensitivity. Why was it redacted?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I think we are getting very much off track in relation to the SDS because we are talking about a review report now which the member has had every opportunity to ask me about in the parliament.

In relation to that, this has been answered a number of times and I am happy to answer again. In relation to the first report, the full report from the reviewers was provided to crown law for consideration as to what could be released to ensure that we were not breaching any legislative requirements in relation to confidentiality or privacy in relation to the young people and also in relation to operational issues with the safety and security of the detention centres themselves. The report that was released was released very shortly after crown law provided it to me as a redacted document. As to why that particular issue was redacted by crown law, it is an answer for crown law. At the end of the day, I took their advice at that time.

As the member knows, there was criticism in relation to that report and the level of redactions. I myself have said that I believe they were extremely conservative in their approach in relation to those redactions. To ensure that we were doing everything possible to release as much information as we could, I then had the chief inspector of the Queensland Corrective Services do a further review of that with the support of a QC. That process was undertaken. The chief inspector provided me with his version of the report. He acknowledged in that report that he understood why crown law would have formed the view they did because of the complexity of the issues, but he formed the view that there was more information that could be released, and I released that as it was provided to me

Mr WALKER: It was substantially more. There was no difficulty with this particular paragraph. In rough terms, 200 pages were out of the first report and 180 or 170 went back after the review. We are not talking about small changes here. How much did it cost the department for the initial crown law advice that saw about a third of the initial report redacted?

Mrs D'ATH: I will just get you that figure.

Mr WALKER: While that is being searched for I might table the executive summary to the inspection report—

Mrs D'ATH: I can answer the member's question—\$26,000.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. I seek leave to table that report. It is the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre March quarter 2017 inspection report.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I think you will be aware of it, but I will see if we can get a copy brought over to you.

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, can I ask how going into the detail of this report is relevant to the SDS?

Mr WALKER: It finds its way towards capacity concerns that the staff have expressed that go specifically towards the budget that you have put forward for 12 extra beds. Attorney, that report states—

There was widespread staff concern about the centre's readiness to receive this cohort. Population numbers were already high, and there were manifold considerations yet to be worked through in relation to security, structured day movements, the capacity and siting of accommodation units, and the provision of age-appropriate education and vocational training.

What is your reaction to those concerns?

Mrs D'ATH: There are always going to be concerns with a major reform like this, but that should not be the reason we do not proceed with something that is well and truly overdue. I have a stakeholders group that has been operating for many months with key external stakeholders in the youth justice space. I have key agencies across government working together on this initiative. I have the department and Youth Justice working on this initiative. I am very confident that the work we are doing and the funding that has now been allocated will allow us the ability to transfer these 17-year-olds, as we committed to doing, and deliver on our commitment. These concerns are obviously being considered as part of our overall evaluation assessment of what we are going to do and the initiatives we are going to implement.

The fact is that we needed to ensure we had the funding allocated in this year's budget to now implement some of the initiatives we want to progress with. We needed to ensure we have this funding. We have it from 1 July. Now we can press ahead with the sorts of initiatives that we want to pursue to ensure we can deliver on this, and we will continue to work with the staff. The director-general and I have gone out to the centres. We have met with staff. We have talked with them about any concerns they have—not just about 17-year-olds but also about any general concerns. We will continue to work with the staff, the unions and all the relevant agencies to ensure we deliver on this implementation.

Mr WALKER: Given your inability—

CHAIR: Member for Mansfield, you have had an opportunity to ask some questions. I am going to give the member for Pine Rivers the opportunity to ask a question.

Ms BOYD: Referencing page 6 of the SDS, could you please advise the committee how the new Murri Court and Queensland court referrals are achieving positive outcomes for Queensland communities?

Mrs D'ATH: I briefly touched on the Murri Court earlier as one of the diversionary courts we brought back. As I have gone around the state I have heard nothing but praise from our Indigenous elders who are involved in those Murri Courts. The Murri Court and the Queensland Integrated Court

Referrals system achieve an outcome for participants and the broader community to help participants address the underlying contributors of their offending. Participants in both the Murri Court and the Integrated Court Referrals are provided with opportunities to address issues such as substance abuse, mental health and homelessness by engaging with services such as men's group, drug and alcohol counselling, mental health treatment or accessing homeless shelters and other crisis accommodation options. Murri Court participants are also encouraged to reconnect or strengthen their ties to cultural elders.

By helping defendants connect with appropriate treatment and support services, their health, wellbeing and quality of life are certainly improved. By linking defendants to the support services and providing information about the personal cultural circumstances of the person to the court, these programs also ensure equal access to justice for all coming before the courts, as we talk about time and time again, to actually target the root causes of offending. Safer communities are certainly created by that.

I will give some specifics about the Murri Court. It provides an opportunity for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including elders and victims, to participate in a court process that respects and acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. From July 2016 through to June of this year, 486 defendants were referred to Murri Courts. On average, defendants spent 107 days in the program working with elders and service providers to address underlying contributors to their offending and connect with culture.

In addition, in relation to the Queensland Integrated Court Referrals, the number of defendants who identified problematic substance abuse, mental illness, homelessness or impaired decision-making capacity as a contributing factor to their offending and who were linked to treatment and support services from July last year to July this year was 390 defendants who were assessed for the program across five locations, and 229 defendants entered the program. Defendants were connected to 378 different treatment and support services during this time.

There was a lot of disappointment when the Murri Court was scrapped. The elders really felt like they were being abandoned when it came to dealing with what we all know is a significant issue in the justice system, which is the overrepresentation of Indigenous people. I see it in the youth justice system, I see it in our courts and I know it is in our adult prison system. When we look at the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and compare that to how many are in our youth justice system, we have a significant issue. I know in youth justice it is 73 per cent. Currently, it might be four per cent of our population who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 73 per cent of the youth in the youth justice system are Indigenous. We have to have these sorts of initiatives. We need to have culturally appropriate programs working, and the Murri Court is certainly one of those initiatives that I know is warmly welcomed by Indigenous elders and is working well out in our communities.

CHAIR: Attorney, with reference to page 5 of the SDS, could you please update the committee on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to improving infrastructure in the state's courthouses including improvements in courtroom audiovisual capabilities?

Mrs D'ATH: In this year's budget we have committed \$16 million in funding to be spent over two years upgrading and maintaining courthouse infrastructure across Queensland. We will provide improved additional courtrooms and interview rooms; domestic and family violence facilities; courtroom dock security, access and support for people with disability; security for the public, victims of crime, staff and the judiciary; and workplace health and safety standards. We have some beautiful courthouses but at the same time we have some very ageing courthouses. They might have met the needs when they were first built, but certainly they are not appropriate for the sorts of services we need now, especially when we talk about having security and places where victims can sit separately in private rooms. Not all of them have that. You find they are all sitting out in front of each other—both the defendants and the applicants—when it comes to DV matters, so we need to be working on those issues.

As part of this \$16 million I am very pleased to say there is an additional \$7.5 million allocated to the Rockhampton Court House to address water ingress issues. It might sound like a lot as far as water ingress issues are concerned. I can assure you that anyone who has ever been to the Rockhampton Court House understands there are major problems with the way it was constructed. Water flows back underneath the door upstairs. It actually pours all the way into the sitting area and goes down stairwells. It goes into offices, where they have to lift things off the floor. This is not a once-in-100-year flood; whenever there is heavy rain, it floods. We are addressing this once and for all. A lot of patchwork has been done on this. After the assessment was done we realised that the existing building needed a

comprehensive revamp. The funding will redesign and replace the whole roof and the facade of the building. It will have new glazing on all the windows, improved disability access and air-conditioning upgrades. Following engineering investigations we have decided to increase the capital investment in this building to have these issues addressed once and for all.

A similar process informs our approach to technology that enhances user experiences and utility. I am really pleased to say that in this budget there is \$31.6 million over five years to update and expand the audiovisual capabilities of our courts. Again, people might not think when we talk about IT upgrades in courts it is a big deal, but having videoconferencing in our courts creates greater efficiencies. It means that when you talk about justice for all and accessibility for all, you have to actually make sure those services are there. There have been situations in this state—and I will talk about the youth justice system—where a youth offender may be picked up in Mount Isa and, because a magistrate cannot hear the matter that day, they are put on a plane, they are flown to Townsville and they are held in the youth detention centre only to appear before the court the next day and be released on bail. They are then put on a plane and sent back home again. If you want efficiencies, set up videoconferencing so that no matter where you are in the state the magistrate can hear the matter and deal with it quickly. Now we will have people on remand in our prisons who can have videoconferencing; matters can come on for mention via videoconferencing. We do not need Corrective Services or police transporting them back and forth, which means improved safety for everybody, improved efficiencies for the court and less disruption in the prisons as well.

Audiovisual equipment is extremely important. It was even utilised during Cyclone Debbie because we had to shut some of our courts down. It meant that we could actually hear some matters via videoconferencing. I am really pleased with this investment. It is a significant investment. It is really important. I do believe that it will help improve access to our justice system through making sure that we have modern technology in all of the courts. I remember 2½ years ago visiting Townsville and walking in and still seeing the big fat TV on a stand. They would wheel it from courtroom to courtroom with all these wires hanging out of it, as opposed to having a fixed screen and a camera on the wall that can do the whole thing. This is a great initiative and one that will benefit all of Queensland.

Mrs MILLER: My question is in relation to the youth offenders support program. This program recently went out to tender and then it was suddenly withdrawn. This has resulted in quite a significant cost to many not-for-profit organisations, particularly in relation to the development of submissions. I am asking whether the department will reimburse those not-for-profit organisations for the costs that have been forgone in this process. If so, will that be done as soon as possible? We are looking at significant money here from these not-for-profit organisations.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. I am not aware of that particular contract that she is talking about and the withdrawal. I am happy to follow that up.

Ms FARMER: I refer to page 28 of the SDS. You have talked a bit—in fact, I think we were a bit taken aback by the description of the Rockhampton facilities. Can you please give us an update on the capital works completed, underway and planned for Townsville Court House?

Mrs D'ATH: A number of works have already been completed on the Townsville Court House. It was one of those ones I have mentioned. It is a big building, but it is certainly in need of work. When I first visited it there were real issues around the jury assembly, IT equipment—as I mentioned earlier—and access areas. In 2015-16 asbestos was removed from courtrooms and air-conditioning upgrades were done—a million dollars was spent on that. The refurbishment of the jury assembly and vulnerable witness areas is underway now, which I am very pleased to say because they were not closed areas as far as vulnerable witness areas go.

The projected budget for that is \$1.4 million and it is estimated that it will be completed by September this year. Design and documentation has commenced for the courtroom joinery upgrade, which is estimated to be \$2.6 million, and that construction is due to commence in 2018-19. I am pleased to say that, in addition, as part of the rollout of the specialist domestic and family violence court \$9 million will go to the Townsville courthouse for refurbishments. This process will occur over two levels of the courthouse. It is quite a complex, staged approach. Design is underway and due to be completed in November this year. I have seen the concept drawings, but the builder wants to consult further with the court and stakeholders before they finalise those plans to make sure they are absolutely right and meet the needs of everyone involved. Construction is due to start early next year and will be completed in the 2018-19 year. It will involve new waiting areas or improvements to waiting areas, a safe room, interview rooms and registry refurbishments in addition to the construction of a new courtroom, so we will have a new courtroom and a specialist magistrate operating from that new courtroom as well.

Mr BROWN: With reference to pages 5 and 28 of the SDS, can the Attorney please provide an update of the capital works planned for the Rockhampton courthouse?

Mrs D'ATH: I probably do not have anything to add to the detail I went into before with regard to Rockhampton. Most of it is around water ingress, and that is critical work. Some temporary work has been done, but the substantive work will happen this year with this new injection.

Ms BOYD: I refer to page 12 of the SDS and I ask: can the Attorney please advise the committee what action the government has taken and will take to provide equal treatment and protection for LGBTI Queenslanders?

Mrs D'ATH: I am very pleased that it is the Palaszczuk government which introduced the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Act back in 2015. It commenced on 22 March 2016 and delivered on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to reinstate civil partnerships and civil partnership ceremonies by enabling adult couples, regardless of their gender, to hold a ceremony prior to registering their relationship as civil partnership. As an aside, I really hope they are using our new Births, Deaths and Marriages facilities, which are absolutely stunning with incredible views right over Roma Street. If you know anyone planning a wedding or civil ceremony, we have beautiful facilities in our marriage registry. When we launched it we held a competition for a free wedding ceremony. It is a gorgeous place, so I will give a plug to Births, Deaths and Marriages for the wonderful work they do. The legislation also supports equality and dignity for all couples, regardless of their gender, by providing legal recognition of their relationships and providing them with the ability to have a formal ceremony to celebrate their relationship.

The Civil Partnerships Act 2011 also has a framework for recognising similar relationships in other jurisdictions as civil partnerships under the act. This framework provides for corresponding laws in other jurisdictions—which can be overseas jurisdictions—to be prescribed by regulation. Work is occurring on amendments to the regulation to recognise not only civil unions in other Australian states and territories but also certain overseas same-sex marriages and civil unions as civil partnerships in Queensland.

In addition, I am very pleased that it is a Labor government which standardised the age of consent under the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016. Even though this sat under the Criminal Code, the fact that it was approached from a health perspective shows that is what it should have always been. It was not a criminal offence: it is about health. It is about young people being willing to go to their doctor to seek advice on sexual activity and staying safe and not being afraid that they were committing a criminal offence in doing that. Also, as members would be aware, in March of this year the Queensland parliament honoured the Palaszczuk government's election commitment and passed legislation which removes the so-called gay panic defence from the Criminal Code by amending section 304 of the Criminal Code, removing unwanted sexual advances as a partial defence of provocation for murder. In the past an unwanted sexual advance could be used as a partial defence, leading to a murder charge being reduced to manslaughter.

Although I am careful not to in any way infringe on the anticipation rule, there is a bill before the House in relation to the expunging of convictions. I understand the committee has just handed down its report, and I look forward to debating the proposed legislation and passing the bill in the parliament, because it is long overdue as well. I am very proud of the fact that, in addition to all of the legislative changes we have made and are making in this space, it was during this government under my portfolio responsibility that, when we announced funding for the community legal centres for the next three-year, we also funded the LGBTI Legal Service. This is the first time they have ever received any government funding for their service. This funding means that they can continue to provide specialist support for people from the LGBTI community who may face discrimination in various parts of society and who need legal support in a general way within the community. I want to acknowledge the tremendous staff and volunteers at the LGBTI Legal Service for the great work they do. I was very pleased to provide them with funding out of the CLC funding this year.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I refer to page 12 of the SDS. I seek leave to table an excerpt from Budget Paper No. 4 2015-16 concerning the independent body to publish crime statistics.

Leave granted

In relation to the independent body to publish crime statistics, page 73 of Budget Paper No. 4 2015-16 states—

In keeping with the election commitment, the Government is providing additional funding of \$3.1 million over three years for an independent body to publish crime statistics for all criminal offending across Queensland. This funding is to be held in a contingency pending finalisation on the details of this body, expected by the end of 2015.

Attorney, until this morning we had heard nothing about the independent body to publish crime statistics. How is it that, on the morning of estimates when you might expect a question on this matter, we suddenly have a press release claiming that a model has been settled upon?

Mrs D'ATH: I think the member should be pleased that we have announced what the body is. The fact is that we have been working for some time in relation to the model for establishing an independent crime statistics body. We have been evaluating what sort of model would work and looking at whether it would be external stakeholders such as a university or whether it would be with the Government Statistician's office. It is fair to say that there was some delay because we were aware last year that the Queensland Audit Office was undertaking work in relation to the collection of crime statistics and data. You may be aware that the Queensland Audit Office handed down two reports on this. Once we became aware that the Queensland Audit Office was doing this work, it was important to ensure that we did not implement a model that may be in conflict with recommendations the QAO may come out with about how crime stats should be delivered and reported going forward.

While we have continued to look at our models, we have been waiting for those QAO reports to come down—which was in November 2016 and April of this year—and finalising in this year's budget what that model should look like. It is mentioned in the SDS today. You have just taken us to the 2017-18 service area highlights. This will now transfer over to Treasury, because it is the Treasurer's office who oversees the Queensland Government Statistician's Office. Once the new unit is established it will be overseen by the Treasurer's office. This is to ensure that we have independence from the bodies that collect crime stats. When we talk about crime stats we are not just talking about the police. We are talking about courts and court data, youth justice data and bringing all of that data together and having it independently assessed. Having research done in relation to that data I believe will strengthen that data a lot more in relation to how that is reported and how people can utilise that data in developing policies going forward.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, this was an election commitment for you. Your ministerial charter letter says that you will prioritise election commitments. Two years ago we have this document saying that it would be ready by the end of 2015. Two years later we hear about it. Surely that is an unacceptable performance.

Mrs D'ATH: We made an election commitment in the 2015 that we would deliver on a whole lot of initiatives including bringing back diversionary courts and reversing many of the offensive things that the LNP government did in relation to youth justice and civil partnerships. We said that we would establish a new crime stats body. We are still in this first term of government and we are delivering on our election commitment.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, you said that you had spent a fair bit of time looking at this. Question on notice 900, which we asked on 14 June, stated that only \$31,485 had been spent on the initiative at the time of asking that question. That is just a tad more than you paid Crown Law for the advice on the redaction. It is hardly a significant investigation of what was said to be one of your priority election commitments.

Mrs D'ATH: Are you criticising us for spending not enough money? I think earlier you were criticising us for spending too much money in establishing a body but now we are not spending enough on this one.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, say that you have done wonderful work in the background, but all you have done is spend \$31,485 of an \$8.4 million budget to set this up.

CHAIR: Member for Mansfield, this is not a forum for you to make statements. Do you have a question?

Mr WALKER: The Attorney-General asked me a question and I am just responding to it.

CHAIR: Do you have a question, member for Mansfield?

Mr CRANDON: Point of order. The Attorney-General was asking a question. The Attorney-General was entering into a series of debates with the shadow Attorney-General, so I think it is quite reasonable for—

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to address the issue. With regard to the funding, it is because there were no additional consultants or outsourcing. This was done by policy people within my department working and consulting with relevant stakeholders. I think it is a good thing we were able to do it in the budget that we had, which means there is more funding to carry over for the establishment of the crime statistics body. If the member is trying to claim that nothing has been done, as we said, it was important to await

the Queensland Audit Office reports. We knew that the Audit Office was undertaking this review, and once we became aware of that it was important to await the outcome of those two reports to ensure that whatever model we adopted was consistent with any recommendations.

Mr WALKER: While we are talking about things that have not been done, I refer to page 6 in relation to the Drug Court. It is again an election commitment of yours. With regard to your response to question on notice 893, which we asked on 14 June, how is it that your department has so far spent almost \$1.2 million on a court that has not yet heard a case?

Mrs D'ATH: We have not spent enough establishing the independent crime stats body and we are spending too much establishing the Drug Court?

Mr WALKER: You have not done enough in either of these cases to progress something that is said to be close to your heart and an election commitment.

Mrs D'ATH: Member for Mansfield, we are not at an election yet and I can assure you we are delivering on our election commitments.

Mr POWER: Point of order. Again, you ask the question and wait for the answer, not editorialise or interject constantly during the answer.

Mr CRANDON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Just wait, Deputy Chair. I am hearing the point of order first from the member for Logan.

Mr POWER: You put the question and receive the answer. The Attorney-General can put as many rhetorical questions as she likes—

Mr WALKER: I am being grievously provoked, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, do you still have a point of order?

Mr CRANDON: Yes, I do. My point of order is that the member is deliberately wasting time and interjecting—

CHAIR: Which member are you referring to—the member for Mansfield or the member for Logan?

Mr CRANDON: The member for Logan was deliberately interjecting—

CHAIR: Okay. It was a point of clarity; thank you.

Mr CRANDON: Yes. The member for Logan was deliberately interjecting to waste time and to give you direction on how to manage affairs in this place. He has form on that too, by the way.

Ms FARMER: Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR: I will take the point of order from the member for Bulimba.

Ms FARMER: The LNP members have repeatedly today shown disrespect for the standing orders of this parliament. The points that have been made on a number of occasions which the member for Kawana or the member for Coomera or some other such member then refers to as frivolous are quite inappropriate. The standing orders are there to be complied with and all members should respect that.

Mr CRANDON: Including the one about debate?

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, you have had a chance to make your point of order, and all members of the committee get an opportunity to make points of order. Member for Mansfield, that time you did actually ask a very clear question. The Attorney-General was in the process of answering it and I am going to give the Attorney a chance to answer your question.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you. I just want to take the member through what process has been undertaken in relation to this. The review involved comprehensively looking at best practice in specialist court and court diversionary processes and approaches in Australia and internationally to address alcohol and other drug use associated with offending and analysed a range of criminal justice system and program data and involved extensive consultation and collaboration with over 140 government and non-government stakeholders. Two expert consultancy teams were engaged to lead the review. These teams involved experts in their field to ensure that the reforms would place Queensland at the cutting edge of building more effective responses to drug related crime. Delivering intensive, evidence based programs to these who need it the most and are responsible for committing the most crime is the best way to ensure we keep our community safe.

We engaged the Australian National University and the Australian Institute of Criminology. They were asked to provide advice about best practice in court based alcohol and other drug interventions in Australia and internationally to address issues linked to offending, including in support of the

reinstatement of a Drug Court in Queensland. Emeritus Professor Arie Freiberg AM and Dr Karen Gelb were engaged to review best practice in specialist court and court diversionary approaches in Australia and internationally and the legal framework that supports the current suite of specialist courts and court programs and to develop options for the reintroduction of the Drug Court.

On 13 June this year I tabled the report of the review which contains 39 recommendations to support a future Drug Court and improved court based program responses and broader justice system responses to drug related crime. This evidence based approach reflects our government's commitment to building an effective justice system that responds to drug related crime and delivers better long-term outcomes for offenders and the community.

The overall costs of this work and the implementation of these recommendations from the review's commencement in late 2015 through to 30 June 2017 was \$1.3 million over that period. I consider this to be an excellent investment in the future of Queensland's justice system and in building our safer communities. The overall costs were just over \$162,000 in review consultancy fees, just over \$58,000 in general supplies and services including stationery and travel costs and statewide consultation, and \$1.04 million in employee expenses for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General Drug Court team, who provided essential support to the consultants undertaking the review, worked to support implementation, including development of support operational policies, procedures, systems, forms and planning for capital works, and worked with partner agencies to identify assessment and referral tools.

Mr CRANDON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: What is your point of order, Deputy Chair?

Mr CRANDON: Under standing order—

Mrs D'ATH: There was almost \$69,000 spent on IT.

Mr CRANDON: That is a point of order as well: the Attorney-General continues to talk when a point of order is called for.

Mrs D'ATH: I am just trying to finish answering the question.

Mr CRANDON: Under standing order 118, the witness is not answering the question. The material that she is reading from is not relevant to the question that was asked and I ask you to—

CHAIR: There is no point of order, Deputy Chair, and the minister may answer a question in whatever way she deems appropriate. I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: I had very little left to go, but how I can be asked about the expenditure—

Mr CRANDON: Filibuster.

Mrs D'ATH: I am asked directly about the expenditure on the establishment of a Drug Court and I talk about the evaluation and the cost of the establishment of the Drug Court—

Mr CRANDON: And on and on and on and on.

Mrs D'ATH:—so the breakdown of that cost.

Ms BOYD: Point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: You complain I do not give enough of an answer or I am giving too much of an answer, but that is the answer. That is the breakdown for you, so that is addressing that.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, will the court be open by the end of the year, almost three years after your government was elected?

Mrs D'ATH: I am just checking. As I understand it, it is the intention for the court to be opened by the end of the year, but I will just double-check that. That will be subject to legislation that will need to come before the parliament, but that is the intention, yes.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I take you to page 13 of the SDS in relation to the Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation. Attorney, in the table against 'Child protection legal services' we have a blank followed by a blank followed by a blank followed by a blank. Given that that office has been operating for over a year, why have no effectiveness and efficiency measures been developed yet?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. It has been operating exactly a year—it commenced on 1 July 2016—so obviously there are no measures that would have been applicable to it for the 2016-17 year.

Mr WALKER: I understand that.

Mrs D'ATH: When the member talks about all the blanks, I am sure the member also notes that there is a notation number there—No. 6—and when the member reads that notation it says—

Child protection legal services is a new service from 2017-18. The Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation ... commenced on 1 July 2016 ... is currently developing effectiveness and efficiency measures and will ensure any new measures align with the Queensland Government Performance Management Framework definitions, and represent how it supports the Government's objectives and its responsibilities under the Director of Child Protection Litigation Act ...

The office of the director is currently developing those efficiency measures and will ensure any new measures align with that performance framework and represent how it supports the government objectives. Because of the changing nature over the last 12 months, as I say, it was deemed certainly by the Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation to not be appropriate to try to establish those 2017-18 targets because we are still looking at what the average numbers are going to be. There are still those fluctuations happening and there needs to be further work in developing what those measures should look like.

Mr WALKER: That effectively means, Attorney, that it will be two years before we have any benchmark to measure the performance of this office against.

Mrs D'ATH: Certainly, as you can see, there are not those measures for 2017-18. I would hope that there would certainly be measures in next year's budget.

Mr WALKER: Question on notice No. 471 asked on 23 March states that the budget for this office in 2016-17 was \$7.464 million. Was that amount fully allocated?

Mrs D'ATH: I will check that for you. While I have my office checking that for you, I do have the answer to the question earlier from the member for Kawana in relation to ID scanners broken down from 1 July through to 18 July and collectively how many patrons have been scanned into licensed venues on any given evening. I am happy to read them into the record if you want.

Mr WALKER: Could you table it perhaps, Attorney?

Mrs D'ATH: Sure. I can table that.

CHAIR: Is leave granted to table that document? Leave is granted.

Mr WALKER: Going back to my question in relation to the Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation, I asked whether the amount of \$7.464 million was fully allocated.

Mrs D'ATH: I am just getting that advice now.

Mr Davis: That was from 2015-16?

Mr WALKER: For the year just concluded.

Mr Davis: I believe that was over two years. That was the initial funding provided for the director of child protection. We are just trying to find those figures now.

Mr WALKER: Is it okay, Attorney, if I direct these questions to Mr Davis? They are along the same lines.

Mrs D'ATH: Sure.

Mr WALKER: I am also keen to know the budget for 2017-18 and the number of matters that the 2016-17 budget allocation was based on.

Mr Davis: The budget for 2017-18 is \$8.15 million.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Do we know the number of matters that the 2016-17 budget allocation was based on?

Mr Davis: We do not really base the budget on the number of matters. It is more about the resourcing that the office needs to actually make an effective service, to service all our cases that come up before it.

Mr WALKER: If we did not have a budgeted allocation, how many matters were actually pursued by the office in 2016-17?

Mr Davis: The number of child protection matters referred to the Director of Child Protection Litigation was 2,494 during 2016-17.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Can you just advise me of the total FTE count for that office and how many of those are lawyers?

Mr Mackie: I can answer that one for you. There is a total of 35 staff. Twenty-nine of those are lawyers and six are support staff. I will add on to that that there has been some increased funding for the office this year just to deal with the initial workloads that came in during the year, so that will go back down but the establishment is 35.

Mrs D'ATH: With regard to the member's question, in relation to 2016-17 the adjusted budget was \$5.697 million with the estimated actual budget of \$9.324 million.

Mr WALKER: Thank you.

CHAIR: Member for Mansfield, you have had a good go at asking some questions. We will have questions from other members. I am sure you will get another opportunity. Attorney, with reference to page 12 of the SDS, could you please provide an update on the measures introduced as part of the victims of crime assistance amendment act 2017 to assist victims of violent crime in Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the chair for his question. On 23 March 2017 the Queensland parliament passed the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Act which demonstrates this government's commitment to strengthening the rights of victims, including victims of domestic and family violence. The victims amendment act implements all 15 recommendations of the statutory review of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 including expanding access to the victims financial assistance scheme to all victims of non-physical domestic and family violence such as emotional and economic abuse, because obviously we know when it comes to domestic and family violence it does not have to be physical violence to be domestic and family violence.

The act also streamlines the application process for victims and removes pools of financial assistance so all applications for assistance are considered on its merits. In the past what may have happened was, if it was a family member, potentially there were delays because it was pooled funds, but now each application stands alone on its merits, which means they can have their application considered much quicker and it is not subject to other applications. The act also increases the amount of funeral assistance that is now provided and also increases the amount of financial assistance under some categories.

The victims amendment act establishes the new charter of victims' rights and this charter applies to all government agencies as well as non-government agencies receiving funding from state, territory or Commonwealth governments to provide services to victims. The charter contains a number of rights to which a victim is entitled. For example, under the charter a victim has a right to be informed about relevant court processes such as the date and place of a hearing or a charge against the defendant or the details of an application made by the defendant for bail. A victim also has a right to be informed about the outcome of a bail application made by the defendant.

These amendments of the act commenced on 1 July this year. These changes certainly demonstrate the government's commitment to victims and its willingness to embrace change, to effectively support the needs of victims in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to leading a program of reform to end domestic and family violence.

Ms BOYD: With reference to page 12 of the SDS, can you update the committee on the equitable briefing policy?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. This government is committed to supporting the progression of women barristers in the legal profession in Queensland by increasing the number of briefs and the value of brief fees paid to women barristers by the government. Women must be encouraged to aspire and progress to the highest echelons of the legal profession. We know that, when it comes to the number of women going into legal study at university, we have no problem, but we are not seeing those numbers progressing to the higher levels in their law firms, in the legal profession, going on to becoming partners, associates, going to the bar and becoming QCs.

In 2015, the Palaszczuk government reinstated the Bar Association of Queensland's equal opportunity briefing policy when briefing counsel. To my surprise, the former Attorney-General in the previous government scrapped the equitable briefing policy. I was very pleased to bring back that policy. As at 8 June this year, at the private bar in Queensland 193, or 20.9 per cent of the bar's 956 barristers, are women and 21.5 per cent of barristers who have expressed an interest in performing Queensland government work and who are on the government list are women barristers.

Under the Queensland government's engaging barristers to undertake legal work for government departments policy, barristers are requested to express an interest in performing government work and nominate a government rate up to a cap of \$300 per hour and \$3,000 per day for junior counsel and a cap of \$500 per hour and \$5,000 per day for senior counsel. For the calendar year ending 31 December 2016, 23.7 per cent of barristers' fees across the whole of the government, totalling \$3.4 million, was paid by the government to women barristers at the bar. This was in comparison to 23 per cent for the previous calendar year.

Importantly, the dollar figures went from \$2.85 million to \$3.4 million. The reason that is more important than the number of women being briefed is that female barristers were saying to me, 'We would get briefed, but we would get all the small stuff. We might be asked for written advice, but when it comes to the big complex cases the dollars were going to our male counterparts.' You may say that 23 per cent were getting the work, but they were getting a lot fewer dollars. It is really important that the fees and the money going out starts to go up. That is what I am really concentrating on.

For the calendar year ending 31 December 2016, 52, or 26.9 per cent of the 193 barristers briefed by the Queensland government, were women. The Queensland government supports in principle the Law Council of Australia's National Model Gender Equitable Briefing Policy, which it released in 2016, which aims to achieve a nationally consistent approach towards bringing about a cultural and attitudinal change within the legal profession. The Law Council's policy sets benchmarks of 20 per cent of all briefs and 20 per cent of the value of all briefs to be paid to women senior counsel and 30 per cent of all briefs and 30 per cent of the value of all briefs to be paid to women junior counsel by 21 July 2018.

We are close to that mark, but when it comes to junior counsel, we are not hitting that 30 per cent mark. With only nine, or 8.7 per cent, of the 103 Queen's Counsel and senior counsel holding current practising certificates in Queensland being women, it is unrealistic for the Queensland government to move beyond an in-principle commitment of the law council's policy at this stage. The policy, such as the 2004 equal opportunity briefing policy and the 2016 Law Council's equitable briefing policy, can facilitate the progression of women in the law by helping to address the underrepresentation of women at the private bar. By briefing more women barristers in diverse areas across the government, the Queensland government will optimise practice development for women, creating more opportunities for women to be promoted to senior counsel. I look forward to seeing that progression.

Mr BROWN: With reference to page 14 of the SDS, can you update the committee on the progress of the Transition 2 Success project?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. This is certainly one of those programs that truly is showing success and one that this government should be very proud of. The Transition 2 Success program—or T2S as it is known—is about working with young people in the youth justice system and getting them back into education, training and skills. T2S prevents youth crime by working in partnership with schools, registered training organisations, not-for-profit organisations and private businesses to get young people educated, skilled and ready for real work.

The budget in 2016 was \$5 million, committed over two years, to expand the program throughout Queensland given its success. It is now running in 10 sites: Cairns, Atherton, Aurukun, Townsville, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast, Logan, Gold Coast and the western districts in Brisbane with more to come. There have been 161 graduates who have obtained certificates in agriculture, landscaping, construction, hospitality, literacy and numeracy, automotive, first aid and job readiness. These are kids who ordinarily could have ended up in the youth detention centre or adult corrections—and some, in fact, were in the youth justice system—or, as I say, as I have spoken to many trainers and youth justice staff over the past 12 months, who were probably days away from being expelled, or suspended from school.

What has been the outcome? A 70 per cent non-reoffending rate compared to a 75 per cent reoffending rate for boot camps or youth detention centres. Ninety-two per cent have returned to school, gone on to further training, or now have jobs. Forty-two individuals have gained employment in construction, scaffolding, carpentry, agriculture, panel beating, landscaping and hospitality.

In terms of cost, we had 36 young people complete a sentenced youth boot camp program at a cost of \$13.4 million, which was calculated to be \$400,000 per completion for each individual which, as I say, had a reoffending rate of 75 per cent. More than 1,500 young people could have been put through the T2S program for this cost and received qualifications, employability skills and jobs.

This government is taking a long-term approach to youth crime by addressing the underlying causes. Programs such as T2S get young people into education and training and jobs and divert them away from crime. I have been to a number of graduations. This is a fantastic program that has the flexibility. If a kid drops out of the system, they may even end up in detention because, when they come to the system, they are on bail, they are still awaiting for their matter to be considered. They may end up having to go into detention for some time. They come back out. We pick them back up. We continue with the program. We continue until they get through the program.

It is that wraparound support, the engagement with non-government organisations, with RTOs. The qualification is one thing, but it is building their self-confidence, showing them that they can achieve things, letting them know that people believe in them. When you see 15- or 16-year-old boys sitting

there crying because they are hearing their parent or their carer say to them via video, 'I have never been more proud of you,' they are moved. They know that they can achieve. They believe in themselves. They all have ambition. When you talk to these kids at the beginning of the program, they are staring at their feet. They will not make eye contact. They are grunting. Sometimes they are swearing. They are very angry. You meet them at the end and every one of them has a goal. In Townsville, every single one of them had a goal—'I want to be a plasterer,' or, 'I want to go and work in the mines with my brother and my dad,' or, 'I want to be a scaffolder.' A young Indigenous girl said, 'I want to go into the Defence Force.' She had already been accepted into one of the programs. One of the young boys attended his graduation because his boss drove him. He had already got a job in scaffolding and that boss said, 'I'm really keen to get some more. I'm really impressed with what I see here.'

These are great programs. We can talk about increasing sentencing and locking more kids up, but they serve their time and, eventually, they are back out again. If there are no programs for these kids, if there is no change, if it is simply about how long you can sentence them, you will not reduce offending and recidivism rates. These are great programs resulting in a 70 per cent non-reoffending rate. That is a fantastic result.

We will keep evaluating this, because I do not want it to just be, 'Have you offended after one month, or six months?' I want to know where these kids are in 12 months, two years and five years. When they are still out of the criminal justice system, they are working and they have productive lives, then I know that we have real success in these programs. I am really pleased with the early success that we are seeing. I thank the youth justice workers and everyone else who works on these programs. I know that it is a tough job, but it is an extremely rewarding job as well.

Mr Mackie: May I respond to a question on notice that I received earlier from the member for Kawana?

CHAIR: Sure, director-general.

Mr Mackie: That was a question in relation to whether I had received any emails from the Attorney-General from a private email address. Since that question was asked, I had my IT department scan my email system. I can report that there are none. All emails were received from the minister's ministerial address.

CHAIR: Thank you, director-general, for clarifying that. Attorney-General, with reference to page 14 of the SDS, could you provide examples of the positive impact that youth justice initiatives are having on the lives of young offenders?

Mrs D'ATH: I very happy to follow on with what else we are doing in the youth justice space. As I said earlier, when we are talking about tackling youth justice, it is not just one program. There is no one size fits all. It is across government, it is across agencies and it is multifaceted approach.

I am very pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government brought back the court ordered youth justice conferencing, which the previous government scrapped. The process allows for a young person, victim and others concerned to discuss the offence and reach an agreement on the way to make amends. It is about the young person taking responsibility for their actions and seeing firsthand how their behaviour has affected others.

People might see youth justice conferencing as a soft option but, again, to them they do not know who the victim is. They just stole something. They broke something. They do not see who the victim is. They have to sit in a room and see the elderly person whom they have impacted and what the impact has been on them, what effect that has had in relation to them no longer feeling safe in their home, or to go out into their community. That elderly person sitting across from them reminds them of their grandparents. Suddenly they see a face and this person has a name. It does not just help the young person better understand the crime and be held accountable for it; it also helps the victim, because they suddenly realise that here is a 12-year-old kid, or a 14-year-old kid who may have gone through a whole lot of trauma. They start understanding that there is a whole lot behind that offending. They also realise, 'This is just a kid. I don't have to be scared. I can go home. I'm okay.' It is amazing the benefit that this conferencing has for both the victims and the offenders.

The reoffending rate six months post the conference is 40 per cent compared to the detention post release reoffending rate of 90 per cent. In 2016-17, overall participant satisfaction is high, with 93 per cent of participants, including victims, reporting satisfaction with the process. An example of one of these success stories was recently reported in the *Townsville Bulletin*. This story involved a young person who had been in a group of youths who had stolen cars belonging to victims, Ms Negrin and

her partner. The boy, aged 15 at the time, acted as a lookout while the other offenders broke into her house. The boy was given a court order to participate in a youth justice conference. Ms Negrin jumped at the chance to participate. As part of the process, Ms Negrin discovered that the boy had left school at 10 and could not read or write. As a result, Ms Negrin offered to tutor the boy in English. Ms Negrin said she thought that it was important to help the boy with his English so that he can help himself in the future. Ms Negrin said—

If you don't have an education it's easier to make uneducated decisions like crime.

The boy has recently started a boilermaker apprenticeship which he said he would not have done without Ms Negrin's help.

Ms BOYD: Attorney, with reference to page 16 of the SDS, could you please update the committee on action the government is taking to curb alcohol fuelled violence?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. As the member certainly is aware, international research indicates that for every hour of reduced liquor trade there is a significant decrease in alcohol fuelled violence. Through the passage of two amendment acts, the government has taken action to tackle the issue of alcohol fuelled violence. Through the tackling alcohol fuelled violence legislation, assented to on 4 March 2016, we reduced available liquor service hours to 2 am statewide and 3 am in safe night out precincts from 1 July 2016. Initially it was the intention to have a 1 am lockout in 3 am safe night out precincts from February, stop new approvals to sell takeaway liquor from 10 pm and ban the sale of rapid intoxication drinks after midnight from 1 July last year.

We committed the government to an independent evaluation of the tackling alcohol fuelled violence policy initiatives from July next year. The interim evaluation report we received in January 2017 questioned the impacts of lockouts and identified problems with the overuse of temporary late-night extended trading hours permits. The government refined the tackling alcohol fuelled violence policy. In March of this year we repealed the statutory 1 am lockout in safe night out precincts and increased the rigour around the grant of temporary late-night extended trading hours permits by reducing the maximum number of temporary late-night extended trading hours permits that may be issued to licensees from 12 to six each calendar year; we placed restrictions on the duration and frequency of temporary late-night extended hours permits; and we established criteria to only allow temporary late-night extended hours permits to be issued for special occasions—that is, certain private functions and special public events that are unique or infrequent and of local, state or national significance. We did that because we noticed a pattern of behaviour whereby extended permits that were to be used for genuine events were being used just to game the system so that they did not have to stop serving liquor at 3 am on a Friday or Saturday evening and were actually being used across different venues, being used across precincts, so that you are guaranteed there are venues still open until 5 am serving alcohol.

The enforcement of the mandatory ID-scanning obligation in safe night precincts commenced on 1 July of this year and we have already seen beneficial results. In the weekend before the network went live there were 50 licensed venues testing their new ID scanners. Of those 50 venues, 22 contraventions of banning orders were identified—22 occasions where someone who has a banning order for a serious violent offence or drug trafficking was seeking to get into a licensed venue. Last weekend it was two trying to get into venues.

I have heard that there is some commentary out their publicly that this is going to kill off licensed venues, that it is going to kill off our night-life. I do want to say that as at 30 June 2015 there were 7,526 liquor licences in Queensland. On 30 June 2016, the day before our changes came in in relation to the reduction in the service of alcohol and the rapid alcohol content drinks, there were 7,865 licensed venues in Queensland. As at 30 June 2017, when you would think that, if you believe some of the commentary that we were killing off night-life and licensed venues in the state, there would be a decline in licensed venues—and seeing that we announced in January that we were moving to mandatory ID scanners and you would think that licensees were getting out of the business—there were 8,185 licensed venues. From June 2015 to June this year we went from 7,526 licensed venues to 8,185 licensed venues, many of them pubs and hotels in our communities. I think that is a clear sign that, despite some of the commentary out there, our licensed venues are thriving. We are seeing an increase. People see that there is a business demand there and that they can operate within the government's regulations in relation to tackling alcohol fuelled violence and, at the same time, we can keep the community safer by making sure that those people who have convictions for violent offences are not standing side by side next to us or our children who are out having a drink at night and being safe in licensed venues.

CHAIR: I call the member for Mansfield.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I refer to page 4 of the SDS in relation to building safe, caring and connected communities. We heard the chair of the CCC this morning mention the continued prevalence of organised criminal gangs and he mentioned bikies in a number of the contexts there. When the Premier made the case for new organised crime laws she said that she wanted more convictions. How many convictions have been achieved under Labor's new laws, which have now been in place since November last year?

Mrs D'ATH: While I get that answer for the member, I do have an answer in relation to a question that was asked by the member for Mansfield earlier today to the chair of the CCC in relation to his budget bids. The chair himself had formed this view after giving his evidence this morning, but also I said I would go back and check whether that information was part of the CBRC process. I can advise that the question concerns matters considered by the CBRC so consequently is cabinet-in-confidence and, accordingly, the question will not be taken on notice.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. It is the number of convictions, Attorney.

Mrs D'ATH: I can advise in relation to the organised crime gang groups—and Task Force Maxima was brought in under the organised crime gangs group—that the investigations that have been undertaken have resulted in 87 matters being referred to the CCC for consideration of proceedings; 63 restraining orders have been obtained over property to the value of \$16.729 million; 29 charges which were under VLAD have been proffered against outlaw motorcycle gang office bearers—remembering that those provisions are still operating side by side; 367 outlaw motorcycle gang participants have been charged with 13,473 offences; drugs have been seized to the estimated value of \$11.479 million, including over \$3.5 million in ice—this is in addition to cash and assets seized or restrained by the group; 327 weapons have been seized—

Mr WALKER: If I can interrupt. The question was very clear, that the Premier set the bar at convictions.

Mrs D'ATH: Sorry, I can give some more information to the member. As at 11 July, 233 verified consorting warnings have been issued across Queensland.

Mr WALKER: It is convictions that we are after, Attorney.

Mrs D'ATH: One charge for the offence of habitually consorting under section 77B of the Criminal Code was heard on 15 June 2017 resulting in the first successful conviction for this offence type in Queensland, which is one more conviction than I believe the LNP ever received under their VLAD laws; and 10 charges have been proffered for the new offence of wearing or carrying a prohibited item in a public place, since December 2016. I can go on and talk about the 38 charges—

Mr WALKER: No need to go on.

Mrs D'ATH: It is all part of organised crime.

Mr WALKER: The question was convictions and I think you have got to one so far.

CHAIR: Member for Mansfield, the Attorney is answering your question and you are interrupting.

Mr WALKER: She is not answering the question, with respect, Mr Chair. She is answering everything but the question. The question was the number of convictions. Is the answer one, Attorney?

Mrs D'ATH: I am still going through. I had already taken the member to child exploitation charges, because child exploitation and financial crimes also form part of serious and organised crime.

Mr WALKER: As did our legislation, but the question is convictions. How many convictions have there been? I know what you are taking me to, but you have mentioned one conviction. Is that the totality of it?

Mrs D'ATH: As of July 2017 there has been a conviction in relation to the habitual consorting offence, a successful conviction.

Mr WALKER: One consorting conviction?

Mrs D'ATH: One more than the member for Mansfield's government had in 2½ years.

Ms BOYD: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: I will take the point of order from the member for Pine Rivers.

Ms BOYD: The member for Mansfield is persistently interjecting. They are frivolous interjections and I would go so far as to say that he is simply quarrelling with the Attorney-General. I ask for your ruling on this matter.

CHAIR: Member for Mansfield, it has been a long session. You are getting the opportunity to ask some questions and I ask that you do listen to the answers.

Mrs D'ATH: I have not finished. I did want to go to child exploitation, which the member said also applied under them, but he asked about our new laws and I am telling him—

Mr WALKER: I asked about convictions under your laws.

Mrs D'ATH: I am advising the member: under our laws, as at 17 May 38 charges have been referred to the QPS in relation to child exploitation and access orders carrying maximum penalties of five years imprisonment. These charges have been referred. The member can talk about convictions, but remembering this legislation has been in for a short period of time so far and the fact that we have so many charges with the police or the courts right now and confiscations already obtained, I do believe that it already is evidence that we have stronger laws than the previous government had.

Mr WALKER: I now go to pages 6, 7 and 8 in relation to court clearance rates. Can you explain why only six of the 14 clearance rate measures have met their target in 2016-17?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. In relation to clearance rates, certainly we have seen a significant increase, as is highlighted in the SDS, in relation to a range of matters, particularly going to an increase in criminal matters before the court. What we have seen is that the courts have met or exceeded targets for the following areas, which is the backlog measures: the Supreme Court trial division, criminal law, District Court civil law, District Court criminal law, Land Court and tribunal. The member has gone to the areas where the courts have not met their targets, being District Court appeals, civil law and criminal law, Magistrates Court and Childrens Court. I just want to go to each of those.

In relation to Supreme Courts, this involves one matter greater than 24 months old. In relation to the criminal or Supreme Court of Appeal this involves three matters. As at 31 May 2017, 173 matters were greater than 24 months, remembering that there are a number of factors that come into why matters might be delayed within the courts that are completely outside of the control of the courts themselves.

I have to say that the clearance rates, however, when you look at the increase—if I take the Supreme Court criminal law matters, for example, we have seen a 45 per cent increase from 2015-16 to 2016-17 which followed an increase of 35 per cent from the year before that, so a significant increase in the Supreme Court. Although we are not getting the clearance rates that we would like to get, considering the clearance rates we are getting when you have such significant adjustments I think it shows that our courts are operating extremely efficiently in relation to the services they provide and the hearing of matters before the courts.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. In relation to page 4 of the SDS, how much did the Sentencing Advisory Council spend in 2016-17 and, in particular, how much did the Judge for Yourself program cost to develop and produce?

Mrs D'ATH: Can you repeat the last part of the question, please?

Mr WALKER: How much specifically did the Judge for Yourself video program cost to develop and produce?

Mrs D'ATH: The Judge for Yourself or You be the Judge program was based on the You be the Judge program out of the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council. To let other members know, the program comprises three case studies of real-life sentencing across the supreme, district and magistrates courts, depicting through video sentencing hearings and reconstructions of offending. People get to judge before they hear any of the facts and are asked what they would sentence. Then they hear all of the facts and are asked what they would sentence.

In relation to the cost, the online program was complemented by face-to-face seminars and online webinars. The total project cost was \$287,100. The 2016-17 adjusted budget was 1.20 and for 2016-17 the estimated actual budget was 1.821700.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. The time for this session has now expired.

Mrs D'ATH: A question was taken on notice about the youth offenders support program going out to tender. The member for Bundamba asked about that. I understand the member was referring to the tender process in the Goodna-Ipswich area, where the Department of Justice and Attorney-General funds family and youth support services. The funding contract of \$131,000 will end on 31 December 2017. The department will then go through a complete and thorough recommissioning process to ensure the most appropriate services are delivered to young people. We also want to make sure that

the services are funded to complement the work under the Social Benefit Bonds pilot program. The government wants to make sure that the funding gets the best possible service and it is important that the recommissioning process is based on needs. The organisations affected have been consulted and have worked closely with the department throughout the entire tender process. They understand the importance of providing the best possible service to young people. If the member has any other concerns, I am happy to have a conversation with her in relation to that, as I have already said.

CHAIR: Thank you. Attorney, is there anything further you would like to add before we adjourn?

Mrs D'ATH: I have been advised that I need to make a correction. My answer in relation to the Drug Court and the government's investment in it suggested that the Sofronoff review recommended a drug court. I meant to say that the Sofronoff review, in recommendation 4, recommended a review of sentencing options and the government response to the Sofronoff review included the rollout of the Drug Court.

I would like to thank the committee for the hearing. Thanks to the parliamentary and committee staff for everything that goes into making estimates work. I thank the dedicated team who coordinated estimates work across the department. Thank you so much to my Department of Justice and Attorney-General for the great work that they do every day to deliver fair and accessible justice to the people of Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. The transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within the next few hours. I thank the Attorney-General and departmental officers for your attendance. I thank Hansard. We will adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 3.30 pm for the examination of the estimates within the portfolios of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services.

Proceedings suspended from 3.18 pm to 3.32 pm

ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE— POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES

In Attendance

Hon. MT Ryan, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services

Mr M Biddulph, Chief of Staff

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Mr D Mackie, Director-General

Queensland Corrective Services

Ms K McDermott, Acting Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner

Queensland Police Service

Mr I Stewart, Commissioner

Mr P Martin, Deputy Commissioner, Regional Operations

Mr S Gollschewski, Deputy Commissioner, Specialist Operations

Mr A McCarthy, Organisational Capability Command

Mr A MacCracken, Manager and Parliamentary Liaison Officer

Mr B Codd, Assistant Commissioner, South Eastern Region

Public Safety Business Agency

Mr P Griffin, Chief Operating Officer

Office of Inspector-General Emergency Management

Mr I Mackenzie, Inspector-General Emergency Management

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Ms K Carroll, Commissioner

Mr D Smith, Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Corporate Services

Mr M Wassing, Deputy Commissioner, Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience

 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services. I will introduce the members of the committee. I am Duncan Pegg, the member for Stretton and chair of the committee. Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera, is the deputy chair. The other committee members are: Nikki Boyd, the member for Pine Rivers; Don Brown, the member for Capalaba; Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin; and Verity Barton, the member for Broadwater, who is replacing Jon Krause, the member for Beaudesert. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 7.30 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a break from 6.15 pm to 6.30 pm. The visiting members present are: Mr Tim Mander, the member for Everton; Mr Steve Dickson, the member for Buderim; and Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, the member for Bundamba.

I remind those present that these proceedings are similar to parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply here. I refer in particular to standing order 115. Therefore, questions should be brief, relate to one issue and not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored without imposing artificial time limits and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the director-general, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or the

director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

We will focus on the proposed expenditure in the Police portfolio until 5 pm, immediately followed by Corrective Services until 6.15 pm. Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of up to five minutes

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Chair, and good afternoon, members. Thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement. Joining me this afternoon are Police Commissioner Ian Stewart, Chief Operating Officer of the Public Safety Business Agency Peter Griffin and members of the leadership team of the Queensland Police Service. Firstly, I must say how proud I am to be here delivering on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to not only keep all Queenslanders safe but also support and keep safe the outstanding men and women of the Queensland Police Service. For the 2017-18 financial year, the Queensland Police Service has been allocated a record operating budget of \$2.37 billion, which is an increase of \$121 million on the 2016-17 adjusted budget.

I think all Queenslanders will agree with me that our policemen and women have one of the toughest jobs in the state. In the current world security environment, they are facing more challenges than ever before, including the need to be increasingly vigilant following recent international terrorist attacks and the potential for home-grown threats. That is why I am proud that the Palaszczuk government has delivered a widely praised enterprise bargaining agreement during the 2016-17 budget year that acknowledges and values the outstanding work of our police officers.

In this budget, our government has injected over \$2 billion into community safety, including continuing our \$39.1 million commitment to tackle all forms of serious organised crime, including child exploitation and drug trafficking, and \$16 million to advance our counterterrorism capabilities. In addition, we have committed \$46.6 million over three years for a world-class counterterrorism and community safety training centre at Westgate.

Since we came to government in 2015, this government has delivered an additional 266 police officers, with another 50 of them to join our streets this year. The Palaszczuk government has not only boosted police numbers and delivered two strong law and order budgets; we have also ensured our hardworking men and women on the front line have what they need to protect our communities while keeping themselves safe. That is why I am pleased to announce today the commencement of stage 2 of the Queensland Police Service statewide rollout of body worn cameras for our police officers.

The stage 2 rollout of body worn cameras will see the total number of devices in use across Queensland increase to 5,100. Our government has allocated more than \$6 million over three years to provide body worn cameras to our front-line men and women to keep them safe. With this announcement, we will see an additional 2,400 new body worn cameras distributed throughout the state. This is the largest rollout of body worn cameras in Australia and the third largest in the world. The stage 2 rollout will see body worn camera equipment and training rolled out to an additional 142 police stations by the end of the year. This is a significant advancement for the Queensland Police Service and will almost double the existing fleet of body worn cameras and delivers on this government's commitment to keeping our front-line officers safe.

As well as providing our police with the resources and infrastructure they need to keep Queenslanders safe, we have also introduced the toughest and most effective laws in the nation to deal with all forms of serious organised crime. While we have targeted, disrupted and dismantled outlaw motorcycle gangs, we are also focused on eliminating all types of serious organised crime in our state. We have introduced tough new laws to tackle child exploitation material on the internet and to pursue those who use technology to promote and distribute that horrific material. We have also allocated \$4.1 million over four years to significantly expand our roadside drug testing program. With about 11,000 motorists already testing positive to driving while affected by drugs, this commitment will enable police to conduct even more roadside drug testing.

I am sure all Queenslanders will agree that our police do a fantastic job. I take this opportunity to thank them for their dedication and hard work for the job they do every day keeping our communities safe. This budget delivers on the promise we made to support our police officers as they target all facets of crime, ensuring Queenslanders can rest easy at night knowing the men and women in blue are out there, keeping their communities safe.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Everton.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Good afternoon, Minister. Minister, could you advise whether you have ever used your personal email account for ministerial business?

Mr RYAN: No, I have never used my personal email for ministerial business.

Mr MANDER: Could you advise when the current Police Commissioner's contract expires?

Mr RYAN: Yes. The commissioner's contract expires in October this year.

Mr MANDER: With due respect to the current commissioner, I assume, in the interests of selecting the best person, you will be advertising widely to ensure a fully open and merit-based application process?

Mr RYAN: There is a process always undertaken in respect of the appointment of a police commissioner. Those processes are really important. Those processes are contained in the Police Service Administration Act. Ultimately, the decision about appointing a police commissioner is a decision for government and government will follow those processes and make a decision in due course. Of course, I must emphasise, as well, that when we came to government we undertook a process about ensuring that our heads of department were selected on the basis of merit. There will not be an exception in this particular case.

Mr MANDER: You are saying that it will be a fully open and merit-based application process?

Mr RYAN: I am saying there will be a process in place. The government will follow that process and we will make an announcement in due course.

Mr MANDER: I am sorry, Minister, but that is not clear. You said there is a process. What is the process?

Mr RYAN: The process is that we will follow the requirements under the Police Service Administration Act for appointing a commissioner.

Mr MANDER: Does that include—

CHAIR: Member for Everton, the minister has answered the question. You are simply repeating the question for the third time. I ask you to move on to another question or we will give other committee members an opportunity to ask a question.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Mr Chair. You did not clear that up very well for us, Minister.

Mr RYAN: It is pretty clear. The process is in the act and we will follow the act.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS in relation to serious organised crime. Can you please explain, in layman's terms, what behaviour constitutes a consorting offence under the new laws your government introduced late last year?

Mr RYAN: To start off, I have to highlight our government's commitment to addressing serious organised crime in the state of Queensland. This follows some significant work by the commission of inquiry around the previous government laws and, of course, ensuring that our laws are not only the strongest, most comprehensive and toughest but also the most workable laws in the nation. We are seeing results already in respect of our laws. We are also seeing results already in the proactive nature of our police to issue consorting notices—

Mr MANDER: Point of order. Mr Chairman, my question is quite specific. I would like to know what constitutes a consorting offence. Minister, I am happy for you to defer to an operational officer. What constitutes a consorting offence under the new laws?

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Everton. The minister is answering the question and is able to answer the question in whatever way he deems appropriate. I ask the minister to continue to answer the question, please.

Mr RYAN: They never like hearing about the strongest, toughest and most comprehensive serious organised crime laws in the nation.

Mr MANDER: That is what we are about to prove; they are not.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, you are getting the answer to your question.

Mr RYAN: They are laws that are working, laws that are making a difference and laws that are supporting our police officers to do the job they need to do not only to keep the foot on the throat of members of outlaw motorcycle gangs but also to address all forms of organised crime. This is the interesting thing about—

Mr CRANDON: Point of order. We are not getting the answer to that question at all. The question was very specific.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, firstly, the member for Everton and now yourself are interjecting or raising points of order. The minister is answering the question.

Mr RYAN: As I was saying, our laws are effective, they are workable and they are supporting the work of our police every single day. Our police are issuing consorting notices to those people who are the target of our police activities in respect of organised crime. The great thing about our legislation, as well, is that it does not target just one narrow form of organised crime in the state; it does not just target outlaw motor gang activity. It targets all forms.

Mr MANDER: Minister, what constitutes a consorting offence?

Mr RYAN: I am getting to it, member.

Mr MANDER: Please get straight to it. I do not need the added commentary. I will give you an opportunity to answer that question.

CHAIR: You have had your say, member for Everton.

Mr RYAN: Your question is about organised crime legislation. That legislation sits under the Attorney-General, but nonetheless is used by the Queensland Police Service to help keep Queensland communities safe. In respect of that legislation, the offence of consorting is an offence that can be triggered in respect of anyone who is engaged in organised crime, not just a member of an outlaw motorcycle gang group.

Consorting means to associate with another person in a way that involves seeking out or accepting the other person's company. It is more than coincidental. Consorting does not have to relate to criminal activity and includes associating electronically. The important thing about our legislation in respect of consorting is that police can issue a consorting warning pre-emptively if found consorting or after the consorting event has occurred. A pre-emptive consorting warning is given where police reasonably suspect a person is likely to consort with a recognised offender. For example, where the person is a member of a criminal organisation—not just an outlaw motorcycle gang—and they are likely to consort with other members of that criminal organisation who are recognised offenders, police may pre-emptively warn the person. Police can also give a direction to move on if persons are located consorting and served with a warning.

The reason I had to give the preamble, which the member did not really want to listen to—he was a bit too impatient—is that these consorting notices are able to be issued in respect of all forms of organised crime. One of the most heinous forms of organised crime is participating in the distribution of child exploitation material. These consorting notices can actually prohibit contact between people who might be engaged in the distribution of child exploitation material—like saying, 'Do not email a person and if you are caught emailing then you will be in breach of the consorting notice.'

These tools are important tools for our police to have. Not only do they enhance the powers of the police in respect of tackling organised crime; they also ensure that our laws are workable, that they are tough, that they are comprehensive and that they address all forms of organised crime.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Minister.

Mr RYAN: I have a little bit more.

Mr MANDER: That is fine.

Mr RYAN: I am allowed to answer the question however I wish.

Mr MANDER: I have plenty more questions to help you elaborate because I am still no clearer what a consorting offence is.

Ms BOYD: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, please cease interjecting. I will take the member for Pine River's point of order.

Ms BOYD: The member for Everton as well as other members from the opposition team have made frivolous interjections on numerous occasions while the minister has been trying in earnest to answer the questions. I ask for your ruling on this.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, you are consistently interjecting. You may not like the answer that you are receiving from the minister, but in my view the minister is clearly answering the question.

Mr RYAN: The member wanted more information so I am happy to provide more information. I am also advised that specialist units will use consorting provisions as a tool to proactively target and disrupt serious criminal behaviour. Similarly, police within our policing regions will be able to use consorting provisions as valuable tools to deal with local organised crime issues such as the unlawful supply of drugs and firearms.

As I have said previously, our consorting notices are being used by police and they are effective in their operation. I am pleased to report to the committee that as at 11 July 2017, 233 consorting warning notices have been issued across the state and one person has been charged as a result of contravening the conditions set out in the consorting warning notice.

Mr MANDER: Is it true that a consorting offence is only committed if a person consorts with two or more recognised offenders on at least two occasions and only after they have been given an official warning?

Mr RYAN: There is a process in place for the issue of a consorting notice. One of the valuable aspects of the consorting notice process—and these are some learnings that we have had from New South Wales, which has successfully been using consorting notices and the consorting offence for quite a few years now—is the process of engagement with people who are participating in organised crime, the establishment of the expectations around their behaviour and the outlining of consequences of the contravention of those notices.

The consorting notice is a thorough process. I am not sure if the member has been informed about what police go through when they issue a consorting notice. They literally sit down with the offender and say, ‘You cannot consort. You cannot associate with these people’—there are photographs on a board—‘and you are required to comply with that notice.’

It is my understanding in respect of the habitual consorting offence—so this is the offence if someone does not comply with the consorting notice—that that offence occurs when a person consorts with at least two recognised offenders after having been warned by police not to consort with those persons. Under the previous government the antiassociation provision was in respect of three people as well.

Mr MANDER: That is absolutely correct. I am going to direct my next question to the commissioner because I want some succinct answers. Is it true that Taskforce Maxima has advised officers not to take action until someone has been warned on four occasions for fear that it will not survive a court challenge?

Commissioner Stewart: Mr Mander, could I just clarify your question? You are saying that our officers from Taskforce Maxima are advising our officers not to take action unless there are four warnings?

Mr MANDER: That is correct; I was asking whether that is correct.

Commissioner Stewart: Not to my knowledge because that is not the legislation.

Mr MANDER: I know it is not the legislation, but do you know whether that is the advice that Taskforce Maxima is giving other officers?

Commissioner Stewart: I have not heard that that is the advice that Taskforce Maxima is giving, but I doubt it because it is not the law.

Mr MANDER: In terms of the 233 consorting warnings that have been issued, do you know how many of those have been issued to the same person? Is that 233 individuals?

Commissioner Stewart: I am sorry, I do not have that information.

Mr MANDER: Do you know what percentage or thereabouts of those warnings were issued by officers from Taskforce Maxima?

Commissioner Stewart: Again, I do not have that level of detail, but we can find out.

Mr MANDER: I would like for you to take that on notice, if you do not mind, because that is very important information.

CHAIR: As I understand it, it is up to the minister whether a question is taken on notice. Minister, are you willing to take that question on notice?

Mr RYAN: We are happy to take that on notice.

Mr CRANDON: There were two parts.

Mr RYAN: We are happy to take both questions on notice.

CHAIR: I understand the member for Everton was asking for that to be done in accordance with standing orders.

Mr MANDER: I want to understand the consorting laws and a breach of the consorting laws. Is this an accurate description? To be charged with a consorting offence under the serious and organised crime laws you need to have been in the company of two others, the same two people, on at least two occasions and those people have to have been convicted of an indictable offence—that is, a sentence of at least five years—and that offence has not been expunged under the rehabilitation of offenders act?

Commissioner Stewart: There is a minimum requirement and I suggest that what you have just said is pretty correct, but it can be more than that. It can be one person consorting with a large number of habitual criminals. That is possible as well.

Mr MANDER: Does it have to be the same offenders on each occasion?

Commissioner Stewart: There has to be at least one, as I understand it, same offender. Again, I am happy to follow up on that and get that information for you, if the minister allows me to.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy with that?

Mr RYAN: I happy to do that. This is legislation that sits under the Attorney-General, but obviously our police officers use that information so I am happy to report back.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I caution you in relation to your line of questioning. Of course you would be aware that under standing order 115 you cannot seek a legal opinion. I just remind you of that provision of the standing orders.

Mr MANDER: These very tough and effective laws have led to one conviction; is that right?

Mr RYAN: They are tougher than yours. Under your legislation there were no convictions.

Mr MANDER: It has led to one conviction?

Mr RYAN: Under your legislation there were no convictions.

Mr MANDER: That was not my question. There has been one conviction; is that correct?

Mr RYAN: They have only been in for a few months. They are pretty effective. They have been in for a few months and they are already kicking goals. Under your laws there were no convictions. That is how successful you were—bloody hopeless.

Mr MANDER: I beg your pardon?

Mr RYAN: I withdraw.

Mr MANDER: Can you explain to me how any police officer on the beat who is not doing this every day—unlike someone from Taskforce Maxima—could actually implement these laws and have a thorough understanding of them?

Mr RYAN: When the laws came into operation we had an extensive training program which was rolled out to our front-line police officers. This involved an online training tool as well as refreshers. Our front-line police officers are supported by our specialist units every day—units like Taskforce Maxima and the organised crime gang group. I am sure the commissioner will be able to provide you with some more information about the training package that was provided.

Commissioner Stewart: I reiterate that one of the decisions we made around this was because of the nature of the people we are dealing with—people who are often members of organised gangs. Our intent was that front-line officers were able to give warnings. In other words, if they found an offender consorting or a person consorting they could then register that and follow through with advice to provide an official warning to that person. Obviously those warnings are then able to be provided to our specialist units that then do the follow-up work. That was the way we made sure we were getting appropriate compliance with the legislation. As you know, this is important legislation in the fight against organised criminals.

Mr MANDER: Minister, in a statement to parliament on 24 May 2017 you proudly boasted that patched OMCG membership had 'plunged from 1,158 in late 2013 to 695 as of last week'. How many of the 463 decrease occurred from 29 November 2016?

Mr RYAN: What was the date?

Mr MANDER: The date that you introduced your legislation.

Mr RYAN: I have some information before me. In terms of the date you have mentioned, I do not have that information. I can report that as at 12 June 2017 the figure was 697. From the time we came to government, 14 March 2015, the figure is 791. They are the figures that I have. I am happy to take it on notice if you want particular—

Mr MANDER: I would ask that you do that.

Mr RYAN: The thing to highlight is that key aspects of the former government's legislation are still in place. There are transitional periods in place. There are still powers under that legislation for police to act. Our laws are workable, tough and comprehensive and continue to support the work of our police to keep their foot on the throat of outlaw motorcycle gang members. They are continuing to have success. Where people—

Mr MANDER: You would concede that the major reason for that decrease is the tough LNP laws?

Mr RYAN: No, I am not conceding that at all. The information I have before me is that as at 12 June 2017 confirmed OMCG membership is 697. The advice we have from our front-line police officers is that the laws they have now are workable laws. They are laws that are supporting them in the work they are doing. Superintendent Mick Niland said only a month or two ago that the laws are working. The laws are assisting the police with the work they are doing in keeping their foot on the throat of outlaw motorcycle gang members. It is also helping them broaden their approach, because OMCG members do not just participate in riding motorbikes and bad behaviour in that respect; they are also involved in other forms of organised crime. There are also other people who are involved in organised crime who are not outlaw motorcycle gang members. The broader, more comprehensive approach that we have under our laws is helping the police not only keep their foot on the throat of OMCG members but also attack all other forms of organised crime, and that is a good thing.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I am going to give other members of the committee an opportunity to ask a question.

Ms BOYD: Page 5 of the SDS talks about how the government is planning to build a new state-of-the-art counterterrorism facility. Would you please inform the committee of the benefit to Queensland expected from this facility?

Mr RYAN: This is a very important announcement and an important project for Queensland and the Queensland Police Service. It is an unfortunate reality that terrorism is impacting democracies around the world. This government is meeting that challenge head-on. I often say, and I am very proud to say it, that our police are world-class and world-leading when it comes to adopting new technologies and methodologies in order to ensure the safety of all Queenslanders. That is why I am proud to see our government investing \$46.7 million over three years into a world-class counterterrorism and weapons training facility at Wacol for the Queensland Police Service.

The benefits for Queensland are considerable and ongoing. Queenslanders will have a better trained and equipped Police Service at the front line. That is exactly what the Palaszczuk government promised to deliver at the last election. What the world is experiencing in terror attacks now are unforeseeable, random and short-term incidents which are resolved by our everyday police men and women in their own beats and communities. These attacks can and do occur anywhere. We are stepping up the training for all of our officers so that they can be instructed, practise and rehearse how to overcome these dangerous criminals.

The new state-of-the-art counterterrorism facility will include replica houses, shops, trains, buses and streets. Our officers and police will benefit from being able to practise their skills in real-world environments. This includes working hand in glove with their partners from other jurisdictions and from the emergency services and the military. The main firearm ranges are indoor so police can train 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and in any weather. Our specialist police officers will also have realistic training environments in which to practise their methods and tactics. Our new state-of-the-art counterterrorism facility is being co-located with the police driving skills section.

We have all seen the damage that can be inflicted by terrorists using vehicles as weapons. The proximity of vehicles and weapons skills for our police is invaluable and allows them to recreate terrorist incidents and train in a way to prevent and overcome them. The counterterrorism facility will be jointly located with the Police Service Leadership Centre and Detective Training School at Wacol. This is another first and means we will soon be able to train our leaders and commanders of major incidents in real time and alongside their police and emergency services colleagues.

The counterterrorism centre will also be used to train our police in everyday incidents. Its location at Wacol means that it is within 100 kilometres of 70 per cent of all police officers in Queensland. We are providing the professional training facilities that our police need to have the skills and capabilities critical to respond appropriately to a range of complex and evolving public safety incidents now and into the future. This centre is an excellent investment by our government in the Queensland Police Service and in the safety of all Queenslanders for many decades to come.

Mr BROWN: Minister, in addition to the new state-of-the-art counterterrorism facility, page 7 of the SDS highlights the threat of terrorism as a challenge facing the Queensland Police Service. Will the minister provide an update on the Queensland Police Service counterterrorism initiatives?

Mr RYAN: Thank you, member. Thanks for your interest in the topic. It is a very important topic. The Palaszczuk government and the Queensland Police Service is committed to the safety of all Queenslanders. A key aspect of this commitment is the effective management of the complex and dynamic safety risk that is associated with terrorism. In such a changing world security environment, our police, as well as all levels of government, are being tested more than ever with a need for increased vigilance. In recognition of this, the Palaszczuk government continues to enhance the Queensland Police Service's capability and capacity to respond to these threats and maintain community safety.

In 2016-17, the government provided \$16.2 million in funding over four years to improve the Queensland Police Service's counterterrorism capability and capacity. This funding has enabled the Queensland Police Service to undertake a range of significant activities including training a further 75 front-line police based in the regions in contemporary counterterrorism strategies. The training has a strong focus on intelligence sharing, recognising indicators of radicalisation, cultural awareness, prevention of terrorism and the importance of early intervention. This takes the total number of police who have been trained in this program to over 500.

We also have seen significant activities include the security and counterterrorism group working in partnership with local councils and industries conducting vulnerability assessments on significantly crowded places across the state to minimise the risk of hostile vehicle attacks as seen recently in London. The response capabilities of the security and counterterrorism group have been strengthened further with additional specialist resources. This enhanced capacity will also assist with the ongoing management of any associated risks to the community. Also, to be able to better respond to the threat posed by vulnerable people influenced by the security environment, the current joint multi-agency front-line approach with Queensland mental health is being expand.

Member, you would be interested to hear that the Palaszczuk government funding has also facilitated counterterrorism forums for industry to ensure industry partners are equipped to prepare, prevent respond and recover from terrorism. They have enabled specialist training to develop a cohort of counterterrorism security coordinators highly skilled in developing protective security plans to minimise, manage and mitigate the risk of terrorism at major events. These plans have been implemented at numerous major events across Queensland, including Anzac Day this year, the State of Origin, Riverfire and New Year's Eve celebrations, and have underpinned community safety more broadly.

We have also supported a number of activities undertaken as part of preparation for Exercise Jarvis, a cyberterrorism exercise designed to test the Queensland Police Service and key government agencies' ability to respond to and recover from a cyberterrorism incident. We have also increased the capacity of the Living Safe Together intervention program, which continues to link referred individuals and their families with appropriate support services. This initiative integrates with the current social cohesion program and, in partnership with other government agencies and the community, works to further support individuals at risk of radicalising to violent extremism.

The increased capacity of the Queensland Police Service's Intelligence, Counter-Terrorism and Major Events Command will also enhance its capacity to support the Queensland Police Service's Commonwealth Games Group and the subsequent preparation for the Commonwealth Games. Our government is committed to providing our police with the resources they need to respond to any threats to community safety.

CHAIR: I have a question in relation to page 7 of the SDS which refers to the importance of providing police with world-leading technology and equipment. Can the minister please update the committee on the role of SERT in the Queensland Police Service and how the recent rollout of a robot is enhancing the safety of the community and the SERT team?

Mr RYAN: As many members would have heard me speak before, I am very proud that our Queensland Police Service is a world-leading organisation, a world-leading policing service. It is world-leading not only because of the world-class people that we have that make up our Queensland Police Service but also because of the world-class resources and training that we provide to our people.

Member, you would be interested to hear that the Specialist Emergency Response Team is a specialist unit of the Queensland Police Service and contains highly trained police officers who are tasked to provide a tactical response to high-risk emergency situations which are generally beyond the operational capacity of other policing units. Situations to which this team may be deployed include terrorist incidents, incidents of politically motivated violence and high-risk domestic situations requiring special operational capabilities.

These officers frequently provide support to police operations to contain threats, provide emergency tactical interventions and ensure a safe environment for negotiators. The Queensland Police Service's SERT technical support unit and Deakin University's Institute for Intelligent Systems Research have collaborated on a joint project to develop the Titan, which is a large, forced entry tactical robot. The Titan robotics platform is specific to the management and successful resolution of firearms and weapons related high-risk incidents. The latest upgraded model robot was received by the SERT team in January this year.

The Titan robot has been deployed operationally on a number of occasions and has proved invaluable to the resolution of these incidents. Titan provides SERT with the capability to effectively deliver a safe negotiation platform to deploy thermal and digital imaging, lighting, remote breaching, forced entry and forward ballistic protection. It also provides remote capability to pull victims away from harm. Titan also provides enhanced real-time situational awareness and remote observation and recording capabilities. The addition of Titan to SERT's capability has enhanced community safety and delivered improved officer safety and the capacity to further negotiate with violent persons without personal risk, and has increased options when responding to high-risk situations. Our government is committed to ensuring police have the resources they need to not only keep Queenslanders safe but also ensure that our police men and women remain safe.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, I listened intently to your answer to the opposition question before in relation to the appointment of the Police Commissioner. It is July now and you answered that the contract is up in October. The commissioner does an excellent job on behalf of the people of Queensland, is widely supported in our community and does our state proud. Can you please get on with the job of reappointing him and stop dithering and get on with the process? I support the police command. I support the commissioner. He does not deserve to be in this limbo. I believe that you have the perfect right and the ability to go to cabinet and have him supported now. Will you please confirm that either you will be advertising in Queensland nationally or internationally or you will reappoint this good man who has led the Police Service proudly for several years now which is your only other option?

Mr RYAN: I thank the honourable member for Bundamba. On behalf of the commissioner, I thank you for those kind words about the commissioner.

Mrs MILLER: He is listening. He knows.

Mr RYAN: I agree with your assessment of the commissioner. He is a very good commissioner. He is doing a great job in difficult circumstances. He is a great Commissioner of Police. As I mentioned to the member for Everton, there is a process to follow. Government will follow that process and make an announcement as soon as possible. I note your concerns, member. I give you a guarantee that the government will work as quickly as possible to resolve this matter.

Mrs MILLER: As a follow-up question to that, what do you mean by 'as quickly as possible'? Does that mean that the commissioner and the senior police command here in Queensland will have to wait until it suits the government one way or another when to make this appointment? Are we looking at July, August or September, or will it be a day out from when the commissioner's contract is up?

Mr RYAN: I thank the honourable member again for the question. Honourable member, as I outlined, there is a process to follow. The matter of the contract for the Police Commissioner is a matter between the government and the commissioner. The commissioner remains fully informed about that process, and the government will make an announcement as soon as possible in due course.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, with respect—

CHAIR: Member for Bundamba—

Mrs MILLER: No. I ask to keep going on this. With respect, this appointment is not only between the government and the Police Commissioner; the community of Queensland has a right to know. Therefore—I am sick of the weasel words—I would like an indication of when this might happen, please?

Mr RYAN: Member, what I can say—and I am sorry to be repetitive and I am sorry you do not like the answer—is that there is a process to follow. The matter is a matter between the government and the commissioner. The commissioner remains fully informed about the progress of this matter, and the government will be making an announcement in due course.

CHAIR: I call the member for Pine Rivers.

Ms BOYD: Minister, page 4 of the SDS refers to the QPS focusing resources to prevent, investigate and disrupt crime. Tackling crime in Townsville is a top priority for this government. Can the minister please provide advice on what progress the Queensland Police Service is making in addressing this issue?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. The government is serious about tackling crime not just in Townsville but all across Queensland. We have been working particularly hard in Townsville because we are serious about tackling crime in Townsville. We agree with the local Townsville community that we need to continue to do all we can to reduce crime in Townsville and in the surrounding areas. This determination is backed up by our government by providing more police to Townsville than ever before.

In the budget, member, you would have noticed that we have recently announced an extra 20 police officers who will join the Townsville Rapid Action and Patrols group to expand the rapid action and patrols' group capability and target crime hotspots in the Townsville area. This will expand the current 25-officer Townsville RAP group to a total of 45 officers, allowing police to be more agile, visible and flexible when addressing specific crime in the community.

The flexibility of the RAP model enables the development of a tailored policing response to address changing crime and other issues in any location, promoting a borderless approach to deploy resources to the right place at the right time. The Townsville RAP conduct rigorous checking of offenders to enforce compliance of curfews, court and probation and parole orders. All of the hardworking police in Townsville continue to conduct targeted task force operations to tackle crime.

Operation Papa Advance commenced in April 2017 and is ongoing as part of a place and case management strategy to coordinate the deployment of police to target property crime. Since the commencement of the operation up to 30 June 2017, 163 persons have been arrested and charged with 405 charges.

The government's approach to crime is making a difference in Townsville. Since this government was elected, our police have increased actions against offenders in the Townsville local government area by 10 per cent and increased the offence clearance rate from 66 per cent to 68 per cent compared to the same period before we took office. The Townsville RAP is also the operational arm of the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group. I take this opportunity to recognise not only the members of our Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group for the work they do but also our local members in Townsville who have been supporting the work of the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group day by day, ensuring the success of that particular initiative.

RAP officers perform joint visits with members of the action group to locate and engage vulnerable persons in the community. The Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group is aimed at breaking the cycle of youth crime by dealing with the underlying causes. This multiagency group is led by the Queensland Police Service and includes senior staff from the departments of justice and attorney-general, communities, child safety and disability services, health, housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, and education and training.

The Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group was formed as a subcommittee of our Queensland Police Service community policing board and has commenced intensive case coordination for young people and their families to get young people back on track and lead more productive lives. The Stronger Communities Action Group addresses the underlying causes of crime such as family dysfunction, substance abuse, homelessness and lack of engagement with schooling by coordinating services to at-risk young people and their families. The action group has also implemented a number of projects involving early intervention strategies at the Townsville court and coordinating services offered to young people leaving custody.

Another initiative to address youth offending is the new specialist high-risk youth court which commenced in Townsville in February this year. In this initiative, young repeat offenders see the same magistrate each time they face court, enabling the magistrate to better understand the offender and determine the best way to hold them to account for their offences. This has been effective in other courts such as the Drug Court, the special circumstances court and the Murri Court. We know the best way to keep Queenslanders and the people of Townsville safe is to reduce the incidence of crime and the levels of reoffending.

Mr MANDER: Mr Chairman, I want to make a comment to the minister. Minister, I contend that you misled the parliament in one of your previous answers and I want to give you a chance to correct the record. You said that there were no convictions under the VLAD legislation. That is not correct. I seek leave to table the *Hansard* of 20 August 2015, which is the record of estimates when the then shadow police minister asked the commissioner about this and he confirmed that there had been a conviction under the VLAD legislation. In fact, it was not for bikie gangs; it was for drug offences. I seek leave to table that, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Minister, the advice that I have received in relation to this question is that you can answer it if you so wish. However, it is also the case that the member for Everton can be asked to put this question in writing, and I appreciate that it has just been produced now.

Mr RYAN: I am happy to check the transcript but I am also happy to clarify that my comments were—

CHAIR: Sorry to interrupt you, Minister. Is leave granted to table the document from the member for Everton? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr RYAN: Can I have a look at it?

CHAIR: Yes, sure.

Mr RYAN: I am happy to take it on notice and to check the transcript. I am happy to clarify also to the member that the line of questioning was around consorting notices, and I was contrasting the previous government's equivalent offence, which was antiassociation. The advice I have is that there were no convictions under the antiassociation provisions—

Mr MANDER: Is that the law you called 'bloody hopeless'?

Mr RYAN: I withdrew that. To provide clarity—and I am happy to check the transcript and the comments there—I was contrasting against the consorting notice equivalent, which was antiassociation under VLAD. On the advice I have received, there were no convictions for an antiassociation offence under the VLAD legislation.

Mr MANDER: I am happy to move on.

Mr RYAN: Because the document tabled refers to a statement made by the commissioner last year, I will ask the commissioner if he has anything to say to also clarify matters.

Commissioner Stewart: My understanding was that it was back in 2015 when the statement was made. I cannot recall the specifics of this, but we will check it and I am happy to come back to you on it.

Mr MANDER: I have a question for the commissioner. Commissioner, can you confirm that the notorious bikie gang the Comancheros have now established a presence on the Gold Coast?

Commissioner Stewart: Thank you for the question. I will have a look at the brief on this, but we have been working hard for a long period of time to dissuade OMCG members from establishing anywhere in Queensland. I will in a moment defer to my colleague the deputy commissioner for regional operations to see if he has anything further about it, but I would also say this: a lot of our work now, particularly in relation to organised crime, has been broadened because we know that not every organised criminal is a bikie. We know that there have been a large number of other types of operations involving organised criminals that have operated in other parts of Queensland but also on the Gold Coast and we are targeting them. In addition to that—

Mr MANDER: With respect, Commissioner, I accept all of that. It is a specific question. I want to know about the Comancheros. Have they established a presence on the Gold Coast?

Commissioner Stewart: As I said, I will defer—

Mr MANDER: I am happy to go straight there now if you want to.

Commissioner Stewart: I will defer to my colleague in a second, but the Comancheros are not the only bikie group that we look at. There is the European bikie group Satudarah—

Mr MANDER: Satudarah.

Commissioner Stewart: Absolutely.

Mr MANDER: I will come to those in a minute.

Commissioner Stewart: They are of significant interest to us as well. We do not want any more bikie groups anywhere in Queensland and we are working very hard to dissuade them through very, very intense action, but crime in Queensland is not only the focus of OMCGs and I think that is a very important point to make. Our front-line police are arresting more people than ever—

Mr MANDER: With respect, Commissioner, it is a specific question about the Comanchero outlaw motorcycle gang. Have they recently established a presence on the Gold Coast?

Mr RYAN: Mr Chair, I raise a point of order. The member is allowed to ask his question and the commissioner is allowed to answer it how he seeks to answer it. It is very rude to interrupt.

Mr MANDER: Mr Chairman, standing orders talk about the relevance of answers. I do not need an education about the level of criminal activity on the Gold Coast. I am asking a specific question. It is quite straightforward.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, the commissioner is answering the question. You are interrupting the commissioner. I call the commissioner and I ask you to familiarise yourself with the standing orders.

Commissioner Stewart: Again, I appreciate the opportunity to provide an answer. I am going to go to the specialist operations deputy, Mr Gollschewski, who should be able to give us some advice in relation to that.

Deputy Commissioner Gollschewski: Mr Mander, in relation to your question, yes, we are aware of the presence of Comanchero associated people on the Gold Coast. We have many members of outlaw motorcycle gangs present through various parts of this state who are subject to ongoing investigations. I do not particularly want to get into the details of individual investigations that we have running at the moment, but we are fully aware of the movements of these people. We are focused on them and we will continue our investigations into them. The issue around presence versus an established bikie chapter that has put up a clubhouse is a completely different thing. If you want to get into the nuances of that investigation, we have the AC state crime and the AC intel command here who may be able to give us even more information if that is required.

Mr MANDER: Deputy Commissioner, would you say that the presence of the Comancheros is stronger now than it was before 2015?

Mr RYAN: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. The member has been in the House long enough to know that he can direct questions to me or the head of agency. He cannot direct them to any other person. Of course, we can refer questions to other people. I ask you to make a ruling on that point of order.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I was going to rule the question out of order on the basis that the member for Everton was seeking an opinion in any event.

Mr MANDER: That is not an opinion; that is a fact. Is the presence stronger now than it was before 2015? That is a simple statement of fact.

CHAIR: Are you making a statement of fact or are you asking a question, member for Everton?

Mr MANDER: I am asking a statement of fact. Is the presence of the Comancheros stronger now on the Gold Coast than it was before 2015? I do not mind how they answer that, but I think it is a straightforward, factual question.

CHAIR: I call the minister.

Mr RYAN: I am happy to provide that information and the commissioner has indicated to me that he is able to assist.

Commissioner Stewart: As you would well understand, the numbers of any group involved in organised crime vary from time to time, so there will be different perspectives on this. My understanding is that our intelligence right at this moment says no, so it is less.

Mr MANDER: Comancheros?

Commissioner Stewart: As I understand it. That is what I have been advised. However, that may differ because the numbers of actual members now are such small numbers. We are not talking about those who may fall outside that—associates or what have you—but the actual members of these groups. The numbers are relatively small so the difference of one or two coming over the border for a couple of months does make a difference.

Mr DICKSON: To all members of the police force, thank you so much for what you do—I need to get that out there—particularly the commissioner and the minister. Minister, I note in your department's 2017-18 SDS that the Public Safety Business Agency is mentioned approximately 30 times. Regarding the PSBA, how many contracts have been issued by this agency since 2014? Have all those contracts been issued following a tender process? If not, how many have been issued without formal tender processes? What is the total cost of those contracts individually? If you wish to come back with an answer, I would be very happy with that.

Mr RYAN: That is a very big question and I note that it dates back to 2014. As you would expect, I do not have that information on me. I am happy to seek some advice from the Chief Operating Officer of the PSBA, Peter Griffin, who is here today, but we will take that on notice and come back to you.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate it.

Mrs STUCKEY: My question is to the Police Commissioner. I am hearing that an announcement regarding a school based police officer to be shared between Palm Beach-Currumbin State High School and Elanora State High is imminent. Can the commissioner provide an update on the progress of appointing this officer? This means a heck of a lot to our community, I might add. It has been supported by our local police and formally applied for through the proper channels earlier this year. Could the commissioner please advise when this position will be determined?

Commissioner Stewart: Thank you very much for the question. The assistant commissioner for the south-east region is with us. I will ask him if he can provide that information right now to you.

Assistant Commissioner Codd: I am not aware of an imminent announcement that might be occurring. I have been involved in discussions about the way to deliver school based policing in that part of the Gold Coast with our Elanora Police Beat, but I am not aware of an imminent announcement that I can assist you with today. I would be happy to have discussions with the Gold Coast district command and get you an answer as soon as possible.

Mrs STUCKEY: I would really appreciate an answer back. Is that all right, Minister?

Mr RYAN: We are happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

CHAIR: The question has been taken on notice.

Mr MANDER: I refer to page 11 of the SDS regarding weapon licensing. Minister, Gary Smythe is a 65-year-old farmer from Westbrook and Doug Browne is a 71-year-old farmer from Dalby. They have both had category H gun licences for over 30 years. They have both had them successfully renewed every five years. Both these gentlemen are upstanding, law-abiding citizens and pillars of their community, and they have had their renewal applications rejected with a standardised two-sentence reason. I seek leave to table that document.

CHAIR: Is leave granted to table that document? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr MANDER: Minister, why does your government continue to treat law-abiding primary producers with total disdain by robbing them of an essential tool of trade that they have legally held for the last 30 years?

CHAIR: Member for Everton, it has just been pointed out that the document you have sought to table actually contains personal details.

Mr MANDER: I have sought permission from those individuals and they are happy for those to be made public.

CHAIR: I have been advised that, notwithstanding that undertaking you have just provided, the document you are seeking to table actually provides personal address details, which this committee would not publish in the ordinary course.

Mr MANDER: I am happy to blank it out. Do you want me to do that?

CHAIR: The committee can provide it to the minister and then resolve to redact it after the meeting. Is that satisfactory to committee members?

Mr MANDER: That is good.

CHAIR: I will allow the member for Everton to continue.

Mr MANDER: I will ask the question again because the minister might have been distracted. Minister, why does your government continue to treat these law-abiding primary producers with total disdain by robbing them of an essential tool of trade that they have legally held for over 30 years?

Ms BOYD: Point of order, Mr Chair. The question contains an imputation and I would ask for your guidance on the matter.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, there was a clear imputation. I ask you to recast your question.

Mr MANDER: Minister, why does this government continue to deny primary producers of an essential tool of trade that they have legally held for over 30 years?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. In the first instance, can I say that if any member of the public is aggrieved by a particular decision made by any government agency, including the Weapons Licensing Branch, there is a process for them to go through should they seek to appeal that.

Mr MANDER: Many of them are, if not most.

Mr RYAN: I encourage people, if they are aggrieved, to follow those appeal rights. The member will know full well that there has been no change to the Weapons Regulation in respect of category H. There have been some QCAT decisions which provide some clarity around definitions in the Weapons Regulation and some clarity around particular definitions in respect of category H. I have been working very closely with the weapons community through my Weapons Advisory Forum. This is a topic that we discuss and it is a topic that the Weapons Licensing Branch is working with key stakeholders about to ensure that people know the requirements under the Weapons Regulation in respect of holding that particular category of licence.

In Queensland, we fundamentally follow the National Firearms Agreement. However, in certain instances, we vary from the National Firearms Agreement and one particular instance is in category H weapons. We allow primary producers on a case-by-case basis to hold category H weapons. Other states, like New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, do not issue this type of licence for primary producers. Other states which do issue that type of licence have fewer than 100 on issue. The current number of concealable firearms—which are the category H weapons—licences issued as at May this year for primary producer use is 2,134 licences for 2,524 concealable firearms.

Historically, these types of licences have been issued to primary producers for use on large properties to destroy sick and injured animals to prevent prolonged suffering for the animal if the owner returned to their residence to gain access to a long arm. A number of these licences have recently been refused on the basis that the applicants do not meet the genuine reasons requirement under the regulation for the issue of the concealable firearm for a variety of reasons, including failing to meet the occupational requirement. I support the decision of Weapons Licensing to act independently of any political interference in respect of these matters. Their job is to work in accordance with the law. The regulation has not changed. Weapons Licensing will continue to take guidance from the courts about how to interpret the particular regulation. Weapons Licensing is also happy to work with any Queenslanders, in particular any Queenslanders who hold a weapons licence, to ensure that they understand the Weapons Regulation and the requirements for holding that particular weapon and what that person might need to demonstrate to satisfy the Weapons Regulation.

In respect of the process that Weapons Licensing goes through, any application to possess a category H firearm undergoes vigorous scrutiny and a thorough vetting of the applicant. Applicants, as I said, must demonstrate a genuine reason, supported by documentation, to use a particular class of firearm. The types of handguns that are available in Queensland are not just available for use by primary producers; there are people who hold handguns with a category H firearm for sports target shooting at approved pistol clubs and also security guards.

I support the work that the Weapons Licensing Branch does. They act in accordance with the law. If anyone is particularly aggrieved about a decision of the Weapons Licensing Branch, there are appropriate processes for them to follow to appeal those decisions. I emphasise, once again, that the regulation has not changed during this term of government in respect of category H weapons.

CHAIR: I call the deputy chair to ask a question.

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the commissioner. With a significant population growth in the northern Gold Coast—and that is evidenced by 10 new schools since 2008 and another couple on the way in 2018 and 2019—could the commissioner please advise the status of the search for land to build a new police station in the Ormeau-Pimpama region? I have been advised that the search has been occurring in recent days. I am happy for you to take it on notice.

Commissioner Stewart: I thank you for that question. I am hurrying to try to give you the answer to that. We also have members of PSBA who undertake that work for us. This is particularly about the search for land on the northern end of the coast?

Mr CRANDON: Yes.

Commissioner Stewart: You are well aware that we have increased the number of officers temporarily on the northern end of the coast. That has had a good effect, as would any task force approach, and that is what we use quite regularly. We are practising more and more borderless policing and that is why our people are utilised wherever they are needed.

In relation to the building of facilities, we are very much interested in looking for facilities that are multipurpose so we can consider the use of RAP type policing arrangements. You would know that mobility is at the heart of our policing strategies both now and into the future. We know that using QLITE is able to give our people the information they need when and where they need it so we get a leveraging of our people in terms of the time that they are out in the public. The use of the RAP style of policing—where police arrive at work, grab their gear, get briefed and get out on the road and are basically out on the road for the rest of the day during their shift—is working for us. In terms of specific buildings, our philosophy has been to potentially not buy and build but to look to lease and also perhaps utilise multipurpose type buildings for that type of—

Mr CRANDON: How is that progressing in the Ormeau area?

Commissioner Stewart: I am going to ask Mr Codd to come forward again because he has been at the forefront of looking at creating a secondary RAP on the Gold Coast and potentially in the Coomera area.

Assistant Commissioner Codd: We have been exploring obviously the huge growth that exists in the area of the northern part of the Gold Coast. It is similar to being responsible for the south-eastern region, with similar growth in the Yarrabilba, Jimboomba and Flagstone areas in the Logan district, but I will specifically relate to the northern part of Coomera. We are in the process at the moment—some of which I am advised is a commercial-in-confidence arrangement—at looking towards the acquisition of some land on the Gold Coast. I would not go so far as to say that that exists directly in the Pimpama or Ormeau area; it is a little more central. That is for a new facility that we hope would allow us to develop a multipurpose facility more central on the Gold Coast that would be very capable of serving the northern part of the Gold Coast.

More recently, I have entered into discussions through the regional managers network with other departments to start exploring our three-year, five-year and 10-year horizons about where joint opportunities could occur for land or facilities acquisition, including the fire service and other government departments. We are involved in that planning—the three-year, five-year and 10-year outlook. In the interim, we are obviously investing as much time as we can in flexibility and agility of existing resources so we can place those people in the facility we currently have at Coomera to serve those growing areas.

Mr BROWN: Page 4 of the SDS talks about preventing crime. There is a fantastic Project Booyah run out of the Capalaba PCYC and I have seen the outcomes of that program firsthand. Will the minister provide advice on initiatives being progressed to tackle youth crime, including progress with Project Booyah?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for Capalaba. I am glad you used the word ‘fantastic’ when describing Project Booyah because it is a fantastic program. I know the member for Pine Rivers is a strong supporter of this program as well. They do great work in Pine Rivers as well as in the electorate I represent in the Caboolture-Redcliffe area. I have had the opportunity to meet with not only many people who are involved in the delivery of Project Booyah but also many of the young people who are participants. These young people for one reason or another are on the wrong path in life and Project Booyah is the circuit-breaker that they need to live a productive and constructive life and to contribute to our community and the common good.

As you may be aware, our government is building a youth justice system to address the causes of offending, to be smart on crime, to ensure young people are being held responsible for their behaviour and to draw on the positive benefits of rehabilitation to build stronger communities. In support of this, the Palaszczuk government has approved \$1.6 million in funding for this financial year to continue Project Booyah as part of our \$7.4 million five-year commitment to this initiative. This funding package started last year.

This support will enable Project Booyah to continue at nine locations across Queensland—in Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, the Redcliffe-Caboolture area, Pine Rivers, Redlands, Logan and the Gold Coast. Project Booyah is an early intervention program for at-risk young people

who are disconnected from their communities. It is a Queensland Police Service led initiative that relies on partnerships with government and public and private sector organisations to achieve real change in a young person's life.

The primary goals of the program include re-engaging young people with school or assisting those young people to transition into the workforce and reduce the risk factors that are likely to lead to criminal offending. This is achieved by promoting seamless service delivery across whole-of-government and establishing effective strategic and operational partnerships with private enterprises which hold a capacity to extend and sustain change for these young people. Early intervention and improved relations with police and the authorities is an important step in helping to eliminate antisocial tendencies, improve health, education and employment opportunities, and reduce crime and the incarceration rights of young people.

Project Booyah establishes disconnected youth as a shared local concern and coordinates government and non-government agencies as well as families, communities and businesses to cooperatively address the individual, social and structural factors influencing our young people. The intensive 20-week Project Booyah program incorporates wilderness adventure based learning, decision-making and problem solving exercises, and it includes resilience training. It also includes policing strategies, targeted community integration, family inclusive principles, and vocational education and training to assist young people aged 15 to 16 to make better life choices.

Project Booyah has a youth support focused approach that ensures ongoing mentoring and support is available within and beyond the program. Staff also work closely with the young person's family in recognition of the complex interplay of individual, structural and social factors that contribute to a young person's life trajectory. Project Booyah has already had great success, including an overall reduction in offending by participants, with a significant number of graduates engaging in further education and/or gaining employment within six months of graduation. An interesting fact is that, since the program began in 2012, 535 young people have entered the program with 463 young people graduating the program, which is a rate of about 86 per cent.

The Palaszczuk government is genuinely committed to prevention and reinvestment strategies that would see young people turn away from crime. Our youth justice strategy creates an increased focus on addressing identified risks of offending including disengagement from education, poor health and complex family support needs. I am very proud to say, as I know the member will be, that the success of Project Booyah was recognised at the national level, with Project Booyah being awarded the gold award in the police led category of the 2016 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards. Our government is committed to Project Booyah and providing ongoing support for this program. This demonstrates our commitment to sustaining positive changes for at-risk young people in our community and improving community safety for all Queenslanders.

Ms BOYD: Page 4 of the SDS refers to the QPS strategies to prevent, investigate and disrupt crime. In 2016, following the commission of inquiry into organised crime, the government announced the allocation of \$3.2 million to enhance QPS's capacity to investigate peer-to-peer online crimes against children. Minister, would you please update us on the progress of Taskforce Orion and how it complements the work performed by Task Force Argos?

Mr RYAN: That is a very good question. Thanks very much for acknowledging the good work of Taskforce Orion and Task Force Argos. The members of these task forces do extraordinary work and work on very difficult matters investigating some of the most heinous crimes we could ever imagine. I also thank the member for the opportunity to inform the committee as well as all Queenslanders tuning in about the great work being done by our Queensland police officers, particularly those officers who are members of Taskforce Orion and Task Force Argos, in keeping Queensland children safe from predators who use the internet to facilitate appalling crimes.

As the member may be aware, Taskforce Orion was established in 2016 to complement the work performed by Task Force Argos and to support the work of child abuse investigators across the state. The objective of Taskforce Orion is twofold. The task force provides a statewide response to people using file-sharing networks to trade images depicting child sexual abuse. It also ensures our investigators are resourced and trained to meet the challenges of this crime type into the future.

Since the commencement of Taskforce Orion up until the end of this financial year, 30 June 2017, there have been 209 search warrants executed resulting in 222 offenders being charged with 958 offences. Very importantly, as a result of this great work, 71 children have been removed from potentially harmful living situations—an extraordinary number, I am sure the member agrees. That is 71 children who now have the opportunity of a better life as a result of our hardworking Queensland Police Service officers.

To enhance regional capability and consistency statewide in the arrest and prosecution of offenders sharing child exploitation material, online investigator training has been provided to relevant officers along with the provision of appropriate equipment. To date, 19 advanced investigation courses have been delivered across all regions in Queensland involving 178 investigators and 16 electronic evidence examiners. A total of 27 forensic triage toolkits have also been allocated to the regions.

The nature and exposure to child harm and exploitation material leaves officers at a high risk of psychological injury. The QPS has a clear policy to manage the welfare of our officers through psychological assessment, and an increase in officers undertaking Taskforce Orion investigations will result in an increasing demand for these services. As part of the rollout of Taskforce Orion, a training program has been designed for supervisors who were overseeing the work of investigators within the Child Protection and Investigation Unit and Taskforce Orion. This program is being rolled out right across the state and is aimed at raising awareness about mental health in the workplace and the pivotal role that leaders can play in the wellbeing of their staff. Behind every one of these crimes detected by officers from task forces Orion and Argos is a child who is a victim, and it is vital that police have every resource that they need in order to identify and locate these children to bring them to safety.

To further enhance the operational capability of Taskforce Orion, officers with a specific skill set were recruited to complement the highly skilled team already assembled within Task Force Argos's Victim Identification Team. The resulting appointment of two highly regarded and internationally recognised specialist investigators to the Queensland Police Service's Child Victim Identification Team means it is one of the strongest in the country, if not the world. The member might recall the announcement we made in respect of those appointments at police headquarters which, from memory, was late last year. These are topnotch people. We are appointing a lady, Adele Desirs, who used to work with Interpol. She is a member of the French Foreign Legion. We appointed her to work in the Queensland Police Service along with Scott Anderson, who used to work in the US Department of Homeland Security. Again, that is reinforcing our focus as a Police Service to be world class. The Victim Identification Team ensures that the analysis of images and videos seized by police is thoroughly investigated and it shares operational information with international colleagues to help progress local investigations. Since 2009 the Victim Identification Team has been responsible for identifying over 400 child victims of sexual exploitation.

I would like to report now also on the exceptional work being done by Task Force Argos and its recognition as a world-leading investigation unit. During the last 12 months the victim identification coordinator for Task Force Argos was invited by Europol to set up a task force in The Hague to focus efforts on seized child abuse images and videos. The officer in charge of Task Force Argos was selected to chair the Interpol covert online investigators group, and a Task Force Argos lead investigator who successfully led a major operation into the darknet was invited to train investigators in Finland.

In April 2017 Task Force Argos hosted the fifth annual Youth, Technology and Virtual Communities Conference. A total of 450 delegates representing law enforcement, prosecution and industry partner delegates from 27 countries representing over 70 agencies met to discuss key issues and challenges involved in the investigation and prosecution of child exploitation offences across borders. The conference continues to enhance and formalise a global network of professionals committed to protecting children.

Since July 2016 investigations conducted by Task Force Argos detectives have resulted in the arrest of 192 child sex offenders on 2,277 criminal charges. The unit has also generated 155 cases that were referred to law enforcement agencies nationally and internationally resulting in the rescue of children in the United States and across Europe. Many of the investigations undertaken by Task Force Argos investigators are protracted and achieve significant results. One particular example is the recent arrest of a Brisbane offender on nearly 1,000 child exploitation related offences for grooming children online, which also resulted in the identification of 157 child victims globally.

Our government remains committed to tackling this heinous crime and will continue to support members of our Queensland Police Service, particularly those in the child protection and investigation units and task forces Orion and Argos.

CHAIR: I have a question in relation to page 5 of the SDS, which refers to preserving the legitimacy of policing through fair and ethical service delivery. A key election commitment for this government was to deliver body worn cameras to Queensland police. Can you please provide advice on the progress of this initiative and the benefits arising from the rollout of the body worn cameras?

Mr RYAN: What an exciting day for announcing the progress of this particular initiative! As I mentioned in my opening statement, today I announced the rollout of a further 2,400 body worn cameras to our Queensland Police Service officers, taking the total number of body worn cameras

statewide to 5,100. We see those cameras deployed all across the state. It is an exceptional resource for our police officers because not only does it support them in gathering the evidence they need to assist with prosecuting crime and keeping our streets safe; it also helps deal with complaints that members of the public may raise against our police officers.

This is a significant investment in our front line. It is an investment that a Labor government is making and we should be proud of it. Under the former government our police officers were forced to buy their own body worn cameras. We had a situation where there was a variety of different cameras, there was no consistency and there were questions around the evidentiary value of the footage that might have been captured on those cameras. Not only do the cameras that we are rolling out ensure that the evidence collected on those cameras is treated with integrity and can be used in court proceedings; they are also topnotch. They capture audio and they support the work that our Queensland police are doing.

As I said in my opening statement, the rollout of body worn cameras means that Queensland leads the nation when it comes to providing body worn cameras for our police officers. We have the third largest deployment of body worn cameras in the world. They are fantastic statistics, and that goes again to prove that Labor governments provide the resources that our police need to do their job. As I said, stage 2 of the Queensland Police Service rollout of body worn cameras commences this month and will deliver another 2,400 new body worn cameras throughout our state. They should all be deployed by the end of the year and that deployment will extend those body worn cameras to an additional 142 police stations.

The rollout of body worn cameras provides significant and enhanced capability for our police, and the new technology delivers improved performance and services for the community. We will see front-line police, including general duties officers, specialist police, Road Policing Command officers, tactical crime units and officers in the Rapid Action and Patrol Group, all benefitting from body worn cameras. Significantly, we have actually seen that there are some productivity and efficiency outcomes for rolling out the body worn cameras because it enhances evidence-gathering techniques. We have found that police officers save a minimum, on average, of 10 minutes per shift when it comes to work because of the body worn cameras. Again, we are delivering more for our officers, ensuring they can do more policing work, be on the police beat more often and be more visible in our community.

This government will continue to support our police. There is no greater evidence than the rollout of the body worn cameras through stage 2.

Mrs MILLER: I have a couple of questions briefly to the minister and then I have one to the commissioner. Minister, have you read the Fitzgerald report?

Mr RYAN: As a student of history I read the Fitzgerald report many years ago, during my university days, and when I was appointed minister I went through the recommendations once again. I do not have them to hand, though.

Mrs MILLER: I think you need to read them. In relation to the Ipswich police comms centre, is the minister aware of current and past close relationships between the Ipswich police communications centre and the Ipswich City Council including the knowledge that the Premier was personally advised of alleged corruption of the former mayor of Ipswich and alleged relationships with staff of the Ipswich police communications centre?

Mr RYAN: I do not have any knowledge of those matters other than what I have seen in the media.

Mrs MILLER: I think you need to avail yourself of that information. Commissioner, would you consider police liaison officers having their own command? I say that because there is great concern that the police liaison officers do not have the appropriate resourcing. As you are aware, they have quite a large crime prevention role in their own community, particularly in this era of terrorism. Would you consider appointing more police liaison officers in addition to appointing more police—or instead of—as well as consider recommending to the government that it amends the Police Service Administration Act so that police liaison officers have recognition for being an important part of the Police Service?

CHAIR: Before you answer, Commissioner, I would note there are two minutes remaining in this session.

Commissioner Stewart: I thank the member for the question because it is a very good question. It may even relate to conversations that we had when the member was my minister some years ago. PLOs are regarded very, very highly within our organisation. Certainly I have argued with successive

governments and ministers that having more PLOs would be of value to not only the Police Service but also the whole community due to the role that they play. The member knows better than many that PLOs are often that wonderful bridge across the cultural divide and certainly across the religious divide as well for those different groups within our community. The simple answer is yes.

Mr RYAN: Assistant Commissioner Codd took one question on notice. He has the information and is happy to provide that to the committee now.

Assistant Commissioner Codd: Thank you for opportunity to provide an update on the question in relation to school based police officers. I was aware there were discussions held in relation to the future of support for a school based police officer in the Palm Beach and Currumbin area. I can advise that the approach being taken by Gold Coast district is looking at maximising the coverage of existing school based police officers rather than individual officers being assigned to specific schools. The head of the CPIU on the Gold Coast, together with Sergeant Foessel at the Elanora Police Beat, have been in meetings with the principals to discuss a different approach rather than the appointment of a specific school based police officer. This will also engage the support of our district crime prevention coordinators and the PCYC. There has been some progress in the discussions with the principals. The principals expressed their satisfaction with that approach. That is the decision for now, and we will continue to look at opportunities to enhance our relationships with the schools wherever we can.

Mr RYAN: We did take another question on notice and the commissioner can supply that now.

Commissioner Stewart: The member for Everton asked us to follow up and double-check on the process that occurs within the consorting legislation, and basically what he said is correct. The way that we train our people is what we call the 'two plus two plus one rule': there has to be two people who meet; a warning is given to both; those two people must at some time in the future meet again; and it is only then that action can be taken for consorting. There must be a warning that they are consorting after the first warning. For the member's edification, to help our people we are also developing an app on our QLITE program which will provide that information and identify people who have already received a warning.

CHAIR: Minister, is there anything further you would like to say before we move to the next session?

Mr RYAN: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Queensland Police Service who are here, those who are tuning in and those who have assisted with preparing for these estimates. I am very proud to be the Minister for Police, and I am proud because of the people who make up the Queensland Police Service so I extend my thanks them. I also acknowledge those from the PSBA who assist our police in the good work that they do and I thank them for their assistance.

CHAIR: We will now focus on the proposed expenditure in the Corrective Services portfolio. Minister, if you wish you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Mr RYAN: I welcome this opportunity to inform the committee of the work that the Palaszczuk government is doing to keep Queenslanders safe from the perspective of Queensland Corrective Services. Earlier this year we saw a watershed moment for Queensland Corrective Services with the delivery of Walter Sofronoff QC's review of the state parole system. The Sofronoff review was unequivocal: the most effective way to secure the safety of our community is by ensuring that offenders are successful on parole through structured supervision and rehabilitation. The Sofronoff recommendations provide the blueprint for a groundbreaking and powerful plan to make our streets safer by breaking the cycle of re-offending. In support of this reform program, our government invested an extra \$265 million over six years and committed to the swift implementation of the recommendations. I am very pleased to report to the committee that the report's reforms have begun, including, among other things, the establishment of a new independent professional parole board and the expanded use of GPS monitoring on parolees.

We are committed to being tough and smart on crime and the causes of criminal offending. While there are some prisoners who will never leave prison due to the nature of their criminal offending, the majority of prisoners will be released at some point. We understand that there is more to stopping the cycle of crime than just building more prisons. An effective and efficient correctional system must be evidence based, and that is why the Palaszczuk government is investing in initiatives that are proven to work. Let us not forget the record of the previous government, which gutted rehabilitation programs, slashed prison industries, shut down the Darling Downs Correctional Centre and the dairy farm at the Capricornia Correctional Centre, sacked public servants whose job it was to ensure our prison system ran smoothly and abolished diversionary programs in courts. Under the LNP's watch prisoner numbers rose by almost 30 per cent, and they sat on their hands and failed to act.

We have acted to ease prisoner capacity pressure with a number of infrastructure projects including: \$200 million for the expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre, which will deliver a minimum of 164 beds with work expected to commence three months ahead of schedule in August this year; delivering up to an additional 52 beds across 26 cells in the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre; and fully commissioning the remaining 244 secure cells at the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre by June 2018. I am pleased to announce today that the Palaszczuk government is also increasing prisoner bed capacity at Queensland correctional centres by commencing construction on 1,000 new bunk beds. What is more, the installation of these new bunk beds has already started, with the first 150 bunk beds being installed at the Brisbane Correctional Centre. The commencement of the installation of a further 300 bunk beds at Borallon Training and Correctional Centre and Lotus Glen Correctional Centre will also begin this year. There is nothing more important for the Palaszczuk government than the safety and security of our front-line staff and community, which is why additional long-term capacity options will be explored through progressing the business cases for the expansion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct and the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

Let me be clear: the government has zero tolerance for violence in our prisons, but it is inevitable that instances can and do happen. To achieve better outcomes for our staff we are also rolling out additional body worn cameras for Queensland government-run correctional centres. Further, we are delivering improved safety for our staff by developing initiatives through working with Queensland Corrective Services senior management and the Together union to address concerns about prison violence and overcrowding in our prisons.

Let me finish by making this perfectly clear: the safety of our staff and the community is always a priority for the Palaszczuk government, and we will continue to examine every option available to us to ensure the safety of all and that our correctional systems operate effectively to do the job they have to.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, what is the forecast net increase in the prison population over the next 12 months?

Mr Mackie: While we are finding that information, can I take this opportunity to acknowledge the workers, particularly in our correctional centres in the criminal justice system, who do an extremely difficult job. We have been talking recently about first responders such as police, fire and ambulance. They certainly have a difficult job, but our people in those facilities who look after these people 24/7 do a remarkable job as public servants. Based on projections at the moment, probably 9,300 within 12 months.

Mr MANDER: Is that 9,300 in 12 months?

Mr Mackie: If the current trends continue, yes.

Mr MANDER: Is that in both secure and low-security prisons?

Mr Mackie: Yes, that is total numbers.

Mr MANDER: What is the total at the moment of both those figures?

Mr Mackie: As of today—the number changes on an hourly basis—it is 8,467 prisoners.

Mr MANDER: The projection is over 9,000; is that correct?

Mr Mackie: About 9,300 based on the current trending.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, can you outline the current consequences of overcrowding in our prison system, which is operating in our secure facilities at 120 per cent?

Mr Mackie: If you want to look at some of the performance information in the SDS, some of the performance targets which we have not achieved at the moment are around incidents. That is an obvious consequence of having more people in prison. The number goes up and proportionality obviously applies in those cases, but our people are trained and we deal with the demand management side of things quite well. Everyone is professionally trained, they have the right equipment and we have the right infrastructure et cetera. Certainly it does place pressures inside the prison in terms of prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-officer incidents, but they manage them very well.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, the announcement made by the minister today about the 1,000 extra bunk beds—

CHAIR: Would you like to table the news article you are reading from?

Mr MANDER: Yes, I would; thank you.

CHAIR: Or at least reference it for the benefit of committee members.

Mr MANDER: I seek leave to table that.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr MANDER: In terms of the bunk beds, can you explain what they actually are? Are they built into the cell, are they? Is that the idea?

Mr Mackie: Yes. We look at cells where we can put an extra bunk, and it would be up on the wall. That will allow us to get people who are in double-up situations—two people in cells who are either on the floor on a mattress or otherwise—to have a proper facility for a double-up.

Mr MANDER: That is 450 new bunk beds initially for \$1.3 million; is that correct?

Mr Mackie: Yes. The bunk beds have to be fabricated to ensure safety standards in terms of hanging points and all sorts of things.

Mr MANDER: My quick calculation is that that is \$2,888 per bunk bed. Would that be about right?

Mr Mackie: We believe that is the quote, yes.

Mr MANDER: That would seem to me to be an incredibly expensive figure to put a bunk bed into a cell.

Mr Mackie: Prisons are incredibly expensive places.

Mr MANDER: Right. Do you think that will ease any tension with regard to the overcrowding that is there at the moment?

Mr Mackie: It will not directly impact upon overcrowding, but it will certainly hopefully have an impact upon prisoners' behaviour inside those correctional institutions. When you live 24/7 in a correctional centre and a cell, space is very important to you and certain incidents inside of a prison are about prisoners not feeling comfortable in their environment. Hopefully this will alleviate that and have an impact at least on behaviour.

Mr MANDER: If we have a forecast prison population of around 9,300 in 12 months time, that is 850 extra prisoners than we have at the moment, or thereabouts. The 450 beds initially are not really going to ease the overcrowding. It might make it a little bit more comfortable. We still have a dire situation with regard to overcrowding and we will still have that in 12 months; is that correct?

Mr Mackie: Prisoner growth is definitely an issue, and not just in Queensland but in most jurisdictions at the moment. As I said before, prisons are incredibly expensive places to build and to run. The three paradigms in any correctional setting that we try to run, and that includes the youth justice setting as well and detention centres, would be about how you manage demand, how you manage supply and how you manage harm. They are the three basic things. The government could decide to build more and more prisons. Again, they are an incredibly expensive option. There are a lot of things happening at the moment that I am quite hopeful about—around the child protection reforms, around the domestic violence reforms and around the parole reforms et cetera—that try to impact on supply. Whilst that money might seem expensive, when compared to future forecasting, that, if you are just looking at an infrastructure build on prisons, is nothing to invest to save billions down the track.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, on that point with regard to the building of new prisons, when are the 164 extra beds that are planned for Capricornia expected to come online?

Mr Mackie: The Capricornia works are going to start in August this year, in the first part of it, but the final job will be finished in July 2021.

Mr MANDER: 2021? Are the beds all available at that time?

Mr Mackie: Yes.

Mr MANDER: We still have four years until they come online, so this chronic overcrowding that we have at the moment is going to continue for at least another four years under the current growth rates and with the facilities that we have?

Mr Mackie: Projections at this point, not only in Queensland but also in other jurisdictions, are definitely going to continue to increase. It is the blend, again, between trying to do things that manage the demand as it increases and doing things that actually cut off the supply simultaneously. The intention I think long term, from any correctional facility in Australia or overseas, would be to have to use those facilities less.

Mr MANDER: Minister, can you rule out letting prisoners out early or home detention to ease prison overcrowding?

Mr RYAN: Absolutely. I have said it before: if you do the crime you will do the time. The decisions about releasing people from correctional facilities are made by the courts by setting the sentence and prisoners will serve that sentence or, if they choose to apply for parole, the decision around granting parole is made by the independent parole board.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Director-General, of the 4,987 corrective services officers full-time-equivalent forecast for 2017-18, how many of those are front-line officers in our prisons who actually come in direct contact with prisoners?

Mr Mackie: I will just see if we can break those figures down for you, if that is possible. Certainly a lot of it is coming out of the parole review from Walter Sofronoff. Whilst the premise of the review was about how you make our parole system safer for the community in terms of better decision-making, at the end it was also about how you orientate the system to address offending behaviour. Part of that was saying, 'Unless you have a parole system that is trying to address the root cause of offending, you might as well throw it out.' Part of that is actually bringing our parole services into the front end of the prison system, so as soon as someone enters the prison that role—

Mr MANDER: Director-General, that is fine; I know about the parole system. I am interested in how many of your officers have absolute front-line contact with prisoners.

Mr Mackie: I am just being advised that I need to take that on notice to find the actual figure, but my point before was that parole, which normally starts after they have left prison, is being brought into prison, so there will be numbers of parole officers who are going to have front-line contact inside the prison.

Mr MANDER: With regard to the recent announcement by the minister about the 110 body worn cameras, is that the first time that has been done with prison officers?

Mr Mackie: We have been trialling them already, so they are in service at the moment. This is expanding it, and I think we are looking at having about 142. Sorry, but I have just been advised that it is 147.

Mr MANDER: So we are going to have 147 body worn cameras for probably a couple of thousand prison officers? I know that you are coming back to me, but I would have thought the vast majority of these people are on the front line. Do you have that figure?

Mr Mackie: Yes.

CHAIR: Director-General, just before you answer, in relation to the last question, in accordance with the procedures we just have to check with the minister about taking that previous question on notice. The minister is indicating that he is happy for that to occur.

Mr RYAN: May I say as well that of those 4,987 mentioned in the budget all of them are front-line and front-line support officers. That was the point the DG was making when he was talking about the Probation and Parole unit coming inside the prison. We will have more and more members of our team—members of Queensland Corrective Services—engaging one on one with prisoners to support their rehabilitation and enhance supervision. All of those officers—the 4,987—are front-line and front-line support, but we can get the particular number around how many are custodial officers.

Mr MANDER: Minister, if that is the case, with serious assaults against prison officers increasing by 200 per cent in the last financial year and there being 140-odd body worn cameras for nearly 5,000 corrective services staff, is this not just a token gesture to keep the prison officer unions happy? Of course it is.

Mr RYAN: No.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I am ruling that question out of order. There is a clear imputation. I ask you to rephrase your question or move on to another topic.

Mr MANDER: Minister, how can you say that you are keeping prison officers safer by having only 140-odd body worn cameras for nearly 5,000 staff that you claim are front-line staff?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. Not all of those 4,987 are on shift at the same time and body worn cameras are not the only cameras in correctional centres. We have a vast array of CCTV cameras in our correctional centres.

Mr MANDER: So are they ineffective?

Mr RYAN: Excuse me, member?

Mr MANDER: Are those CCTV cameras ineffective?

Mr RYAN: No, they are very effective. This is an additional way that we are investing in the safety of our officers and it adds additional capability to what we can get through video recordings. The body worn cameras have audio ability. They also have the physical presence of a camera on a custodial officer, and that not only supports the work that officer does but also helps the officer gain other evidence around potential misbehaviour by prisoners.

Mr MANDER: So will there be a lucky dip every shift to see who gets the body worn cameras and who does not?

Mr RYAN: Those are operational matters about how those body worn cameras may be allocated, and we have guidelines in place through Queensland Corrective Services about how they will be deployed. The fact of the matter is that they are not personal-issue body worn cameras. They will be allocated by the correctional centre to people on shift at the beginning of their shift and will be shared amongst other custodial officers who work at that particular centre.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I am going to give other members of the committee a chance to ask questions. I am sure you will get another opportunity.

Mr RYAN: Just one thing: when asked about the number of body worn cameras I did whisper to the DG that it was 147. It is actually 143, so I just wanted to correct that.

CHAIR: Thank you for clarifying the record, Minister.

Mr BROWN: Minister, I turn your attention to page 18 of the SDS which makes reference to the management of privately run prisons, and I do note your opening statement about body worn cameras only being rolled out in public prisons and not private prisons. Can you outline what steps the government has taken to manage Arthur Gorrie centre effectively to ensure the safety and security of staff and the community and whether providing ice-cream to inmates is an adequate strategy?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. As the member has correctly identified, the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre is a privately operated correctional centre in Queensland. It is operated by the GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd. As many members would be aware, there is current industrial action taking place between the employees of GEO Group and GEO Group, and of course as a government we support the rights of workers to take industrial action. That is their right and we support them in their right to take industrial action and we hope that the employees and their union, United Voice, are able to resolve the matter with GEO Group as soon as possible.

I want to talk a little bit more about the requirements on GEO in operating a private correctional centre here in Queensland. GEO is required to carry out centre functions in accordance with the terms of a contract and the associated standards which include observing legislative requirements and mandated directions from Queensland Corrective Services as well as complying with the policies and procedures of Queensland Corrective Services. Queensland Corrective Services provides daily contract oversight that considers the private operator's adherence to its obligations under the contract. Each quarter a contract performance meeting is held with the private provider, tabling a performance report and summation of quarterly activities. This meeting is chaired by the commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services and includes relevant representatives from both parties, including the chief executive of GEO Group.

Queensland Corrective Services has two on-site monitors embedded at the centre five days per fortnight—two days one week and three days the following week—on a rotational basis. During this time the role of the on-site monitors includes extensive daily incident analysis, with escalation of identified issues; oversight and integrity tests of contractually required centre self-audits against contract standards; operational compliance checks against the Queensland Corrective Services practice directives and legislative requirements; ad hoc engagement and observance of centre staff, prisoners and visitors to the centre; and quarterly follow-up and endurance tests of remedial activity that follows identified compliance issues. The monitors can attend and remain on site to ensure adherence to Queensland Corrective Services' procedures in the event of any withdrawal of labour by union staff.

With regard to the recent industrial issues at the centre, Queensland Corrective Services does not engage in the enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations for a private business, and that of course includes the private operator, GEO Group, of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre. That function contractually falls of course to that private business, GEO Group. QCS also does not seek to interfere or influence these proceedings and GEO is not contractually obliged to devolve or discuss these details with Queensland Corrective Services. That being said, however, Queensland Corrective Services contract monitors have been on site to monitor GEO's management of the recent industrial action.

GEO provides Queensland Corrective Services with operational plans in the event of a withdrawal of labour. The operational plans provide an immediate, effective and coordinated response to the withdrawal of labour while maintaining the safety of all persons and the security and integrity of the centre. These plans are similar to those in place for publicly run prisons—those run by Queensland Corrective Services—ensuring continuity of operations to ensure the security and good order of the facility.

It is important to note that no essential services—for example, medical services and the provision of meals—were compromised during recent industrial action and normal visiting schedules were maintained. Queensland Corrective Services will continue to work closely with the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre to ensure the safety and security of prisoners, staff and the community. I want to confirm as well that Arthur Gorrie has body worn cameras in operation at the centre.

Ms BOYD: Page 18 of the SDS talks about this government's funding commitment to provide additional prisoner capacity. Can the minister advise whether the 650 beds that were announced under the previous government have been delivered? Can the minister also provide clarity around whether the government's additional capacity will be above the 650 beds?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. What a good answer I have here for members of the committee. These beds plus many more have already been delivered or are in the process of being delivered by this government. The Palaszczuk government inherited a prison system from the previous government that was beyond its capacity, with prisoner numbers increasing by almost 30 per cent under the previous government. It had no plan to address the causes of criminal offending and reduce recidivism.

This government is recommissioning the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre. That recommissioning is almost complete, with the remaining 244 cells expected to progressively come on line throughout this financial year. The other prisoner beds announced by the previous government have all been delivered, including 30 cells at Numinbah Correctional Centre, 72 cells by refurbishing and recommissioning the Howard Greg Unit at the Townsville Correctional Centre and 72 cells by commissioning additional cells at the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre.

Mr MANDER: All fully funded, too.

Mr RYAN: This government has gone further. In addition to adding extra bed and cell capacity, we have a clear plan to address recidivism and reoffending. The Sofronoff review provides the Palaszczuk government with a blueprint of reform for our corrections system. Its recommendation provides us with the right balance of rehabilitation and infrastructure needs, which we are acting on with our commitment to expand cell and bed capacity.

The Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre will see up to an additional 52 beds across 26 cells, created with the Palaszczuk government committing \$27.4 million to construct that expansion. The Palaszczuk government has also brought forward approval for a \$200 million expansion to deliver at least seven new prisoner units, totalling a minimum of 164 cells at the Capricornia Correctional Centre, which will ease prison overcrowding and generate much needed jobs in Central Queensland. The expansion will provide infrastructure for the increased prison industries, an expansion of the car park and upgrades to wastewater, mechanical services and electronic security. The Capricornia Correctional Centre project has commenced planning and work on site is scheduled to commence, as I said, three months early in August in 2017 with an estimated completion date of June 2021.

As you would have heard in my opening speech, this government has also committed to increase prisoner bed capacity at Queensland correctional centres by commencing construction on 1,000 new bunk beds. We have already committed \$1.3 million to get the ball rolling on the construction of the first 450 new bunk beds as part of our response to managing prison capacity. We are also continuing to work with Building Queensland on progressing the business cases for 628 new cells at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and 1,004 new cells at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre.

The Palaszczuk government has recognised the need for additional infrastructure to accommodate the increased number of support and ancillary service staff that are required to support the growing prisoner population. These services are essential. As such, funding has been committed over four years to provide for additional non-custodial infrastructure at correctional centres across the state. Our commitment to increase bed and cell capacity is also backed up by our commitment, which we have demonstrated since coming to government, to ensure that we have appropriate staffing at our correctional centres. A figure that has not been canvassed widely before is the number of additional correctional officers who have been employed since we have come to government. That number is 700.

Ms BOYD: Thank you.

CHAIR: My question is in relation to page 18 of the SDS, which refers to the additional capacity at Capricornia Correctional Centre. Given the increase in prisoner numbers, can you update the committee on the progress of the Arthur Gorrie and Southern Queensland Correctional Centre business cases?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. It is a very important process to go through—ensuring that we have business cases for major infrastructure projects. Business cases for major infrastructure projects are complex and take time to prepare to ensure that the best possible value for money is achieved from investments. Under the Building Queensland Act 2015, where Building Queensland is engaged to assist or lead the preparation of department business cases, Building Queensland is required to publish project summaries and cost-benefit analyses on its website.

The business case for the expansion of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre will assess the construction of 628 additional cells to meet growth in remand prisoner numbers across Queensland's corrective services system. The project is expected to cost in the order of \$560 million to \$610 million. The business case for the expansion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct stage 2 will assess a 1,004-cell development for the precinct. The project is expected to cost up to \$740 million. Building Queensland is leading the development of these business cases in partnership with Queensland Corrective Services, which are due to be completed by the end of the first quarter of the 2017-18 financial year.

Mr BROWN: I refer you to page 18 of the SDS, which refers to expanding bed capacity at the Capricornia Correctional Centre. Can the minister advise the committee of Building Queensland's involvement with this project and the progress of the expansion?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question and for the opportunity to provide more information to the committee about the progress of the expansion of Capricornia Correctional Centre. Earlier this year, the Palaszczuk government brought forward the \$200 million expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre to help ease prisoner overcrowding and generate much needed jobs in Central Queensland.

The Capricornia Correctional Centre is experiencing capacity constraints and is currently operating at 136 per cent of capacity. There are currently 557 high-security prisoners in the centre, which has a built capacity of 410. That includes 300 secure cells, 102 residential cells and eight maximum security cells. The expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre will deliver a minimum of 164 residential cells.

The project scope includes expanding the prison car park and upgrades to the wastewater, mechanical services and electronic security system. It is important that this infrastructure is well planned and properly thought through. That is why the government asked Building Queensland to review and refresh the original 2014 Capricornia Correctional Centre business case. Building Queensland completed the business case update in September 2016 and reference to it is made in the Building Queensland pipeline, which was released yesterday. The full business case in relation to the expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre has not been released publicly, as major infrastructure projects require competitive tender processes. The premature release of this information has the potential to prejudice the state's commercial position, which would be at the expense of taxpayers.

The expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre is progressing well. Queensland Corrective Services staff have been working diligently to ensure that the project can proceed as quickly as possible. In June 2017, five Central Queensland companies were given the opportunity to tender for a package of works. The Department of Housing and Public Works is working closely with Queensland Corrective Services and selected five local companies to tender for the early works at this prison. These companies sit on a whole-of-government register of prequalified building consultants and contractors that are eligible to undertake a project of this value. The successful managing contractor tender will be appointed in late August 2017.

Initial works to expand the car park and install shade sails are expected to commence on site in August 2017. It is anticipated that the 164 residential cells will be commissioned by July 2021. The priority is to get this expansion done as quickly and as efficiently as possible, including ensuring that the project runs on time and within budget.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Buderim.

Mr DICKSON: Minister, page 18 of the SDS states—

Corrective Services contributes to a fair, safe and just Queensland by managing Government and privately operated custodial facilities and supporting the rehabilitation of offenders within and outside its facilities. It assists crime prevention through the humane containment, supervision and rehabilitation of offenders in correctional centres and in the community.

Does humane containment include providing televisions with pay TV at a cost of \$2 per week to prisoners? If so, how is that assisting crime prevention when the prisoners, who are the beneficiaries of this humane containment, are committing the crime of malicious damage to these tools of humane containment—2,404 televisions? What are the key performance indicators that measure this objective or strategy? Does the person who is responsible for implementing it still have a job?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. I will take issue with a part of your question and that is the nature of the programming that is available to prisoners in correctional centres. It is not pay TV; it is a limited suite of commercially free-to-air material.

Mr Dickson interjected.

CHAIR: Member for Buderim, you have had a good opportunity. You have asked a long question with a lot of different components to it. You have been given plenty of latitude. I am allowing the minister to answer your question.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr RYAN: I am just clarifying that particular bit of information that you have had. It is a range of limited commercially available television programming plus, of course, DVDs up to a standard of—

Mr DICKSON: People in Buderim cannot afford power. This is pretty good for prisons.

CHAIR: Member for Buderim, you continue to interrupt. I caution you that you will be warned if you continue.

Mr RYAN: As you correctly identified, the prisoners who wish to have a television in their cell have to pay for those televisions. There is a rental cost and there are consequences if they damage those televisions, including possibly paying for the replacement television, having that right to have the television in their cell removed, and even the possibility of referral to criminal charges.

Managing prisons and prisoner behaviour is very complex. It is complex because you have a lot of people with challenging and complex behaviours in a small space. You often have to engage people in productive, positive activities to ensure that they are not then engaging in negative, destructive activities. One way that we can help manage prisoner behaviour is by providing them with some level of access to television, because that provides them with some level of engagement in some positive, productive activity.

There are a number of anecdotal reports that suggest that prisoner behaviour would be a lot more difficult to manage should we not have those extra activities for them to engage in. Some of the extra activities that we engage in is ensuring that there is sufficient out-of-cell time to ensure that they are able to be active, to be outside the cell, to ensure that they are not confined in those tight environments, to engage them in industry programs to provide them with skills. As I said in my opening speech, there reaches a point for the majority of prisoners where they are released from prison. There is only a small cohort of prisoners who will never be released from prison. We want to make sure that, when people are released from prison, they have the opportunity to be positive contributors. We cannot set people up to fail because, if they fail, it is not just them who returns to the prison; the community has to deal with their reoffending and their recidivism.

We have to make sure that we have a suite of strategies inside our correctional facilities that not only are able to engage our prisoners in positive, productive activities but also give them the skills they need to survive in the world once they are released. Part of that is ensuring that we have education programs and industry programs so that they are job ready. If a prisoner can get a job when they are released from prison, they are less likely to reoffend.

That is the whole focus of the Sofronoff review and the government's acceptance of those recommendations and funding them with \$265 million over six years. It is about making sure that we enhance the rehabilitation of people, we enhance the supervision of people so that we can stop them committing crimes once they are released. If we do that, everyone wins.

Mr DICKSON: Point of order. What I have heard did not answer the question I asked at the end. Has the gentleman in charge of this facility been fired, because when we are losing this sort of money as a state government, this soft-on-crime issue has to come to an end?

CHAIR: Member for Buderim, you are not making a point of order. You are attempting to ask another question. I have already called the member for Everton.

Mr MANDER: Mr Chairman, my question is to the director-general. I refer to a newspaper article in the *Townsville Bulletin* of 29 June. I ask for leave to table that.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr MANDER: Just to remind you, director-general, this is about a report that a prisoner was left unescorted to attend a funeral. I want you to confirm whether that a criminal, with a violent past, was allowed to go to a funeral, but totally unescorted by any prison security officers

Mr Mackie: Member, my advice was that it was a remanded prisoner that was actually let out on bail by the magistrate to attend.

Mr MANDER: What is the normal practice for those on remand? That is not the responsibility of Corrective Services?

Mr Mackie: If it is before the court it will be up to the judicial officer to make a decision as to whether or not he will bail him or otherwise.

Mr MANDER: My next question is to the minister. Minister, I refer to page 18 of the SDS. My question is about the new Parole Board that you have announced recently. You have talked about the fact that it is important to have diversity on that board, and I would agree with that. Minister, 68 per cent of these appointees are female and only 32 per cent are male. Of the professional members, 100 per cent are female. That even exceeds the Labor Party's quota system. How can you describe these appointments as diverse when there is such a major gender imbalance?

Mr RYAN: I cannot believe I have just heard a question complaining about the number of women appointed to a Parole Board. My God! What will it come to next? We, of course, went through a merit based process when it came to appointing members of the new Parole Board. What a calibre of people we have on the Parole Board. The president of the Parole Board, Michael Byrne QC, is a tremendous appointment. He is a man very talented in the law, a man who has extensive criminal law practice and a fine legal mind. Not only is he a great appointment; he is also a person who is very committed to the Sofronoff reforms. We also see two very experienced lawyers appointed as deputy presidents of the Parole Board: Peter Shields, a lawyer of many years, who had his own practice in the criminal law and also was on a number of Queensland Law Society committees in respect of the criminal law and other aspects of the law; and Julie Sharp, a barrister of some almost two decades experience, from my understanding.

We also have a number of significant appointments as committee and professional members of the Parole Board. You are right in identifying that we have some magnificent people appointed as professional members of the Parole Board: Barbara Kent, an experienced barrister of 29 years. She spent 25 years teaching law at the Queensland University of Technology. She has proven experience and has been—

Mr MANDER: Minister, please do not read the qualifications for every member of the Parole Board.

Mr RYAN: You are asking about people on the board.

Mr MANDER: No, I am asking about gender diversity. Sixty-eight per cent of these appointees are female and 32 per cent are male and you are claiming that this is a diverse board. It is obviously not reflective.

Mr RYAN: You are making an outrageous inference that just because they are female they are not qualified to be on the board.

Mr MANDER: No, I am talking about diversity.

Mr RYAN: I am talking about the magnificent diversity that we have on our Parole Board.

Mr MANDER: No-one is denying their qualifications.

Mr RYAN: And the calibre of the people we have.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, you have had a chance to clarify your question and make your point. I call the minister.

Mr RYAN: Can I reinforce, of course, the merit based process that we went through in appointing people. It was a national recruitment process by a professional recruiting firm. There was a panel that interviewed those people who were recommended for appointment. The recommendations for appointment were actually made by the president of the Parole Board to me as minister and I accepted his recommendations. Member, when you are casting aspersions in your question you are actually casting aspersions about the process and the recommendations made to me by the president of the Parole Board. Again, I just cannot believe we have a question complaining about the number of women on a board.

Mr MANDER: What factors did you consider when you considered diversity? If you did not consider gender, what did you consider?

Mr RYAN: You are getting worked up about this and maybe this underlies the motivation for your question to criticise the number of women on a board.

Mr MANDER: Qualifications are not the only criteria. You said diversity is a criteria.

Mr RYAN: Well, let us talk about—

Mr MANDER: You are going to talk about other elements, but you are not going to talk about gender.

Mr RYAN: No, let us talk about diversity and having seven Indigenous people on the board.

Mr MANDER: That is right. Totally appropriate.

Mr RYAN: You are criticising the constitution of the board. You cannot have a bet both ways.

Mr MANDER: What you are saying is that gender is not one of those elements.

Mr RYAN: You cannot say it is appropriate to have a constitution of a board that is not diverse and then when I say seven Indigenous people are on it you suddenly say it is diverse.

Mr MANDER: It is not diverse in the area of gender.

Mr RYAN: I think you are getting caught up on it. It is underlying a criticism about the number of women on a board. Again, I just cannot believe someone would make an assertion like that.

Mr MANDER: Ninety-three per cent of prisoners are males.

Mr RYAN: I cannot believe that someone would cast an aspersion such as you have just done. Talking about diversity, we have seven Indigenous people on the board. We have a number of people from rural and regional Queensland on the board. I do not have the exact number here, but from memory I think about seven are from rural and regional parts of Queensland. We also have two police officers on the board. We have public servants on the board. We have 24 community members and we have three legal professionals—all people of significant experience.

I think it is important for us to highlight this experience because the member is making an allegation that the four women who have been appointed as professional members of the Parole Board are, for whatever reason, not worthy of that appointment.

Mr MANDER: No, that is untrue.

Mr RYAN: That is right. You are criticising it.

Mr MANDER: I am asking whether gender is part of the diversity criteria.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, you are being unruly. Allow the minister to respond to your question.

Mr MANDER: He is provoking me, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: You are very easily provoked, member for Everton. I call the minister.

Mr RYAN: You need to get a bit tougher, Tim. Barbara Kent, an experienced barrister with 29 years experience, is a very worthy appointment as a professional member; Carolyn McAnally, acting director of JAG for strategic policy for a number of years, also has 19 years legal experience, including 10 years with the Director of Public Prosecutions, including time as a Crown Prosecutor; Kylie Anderson, who is the manager of the Child Death Case Review Panel secretariat, has over 17 years experience as a legal practitioner, adviser and senior manager within government; and Beverley Russell, who is the health professional appointed to the board, holds a Masters of Social Science and a Bachelor of Health Science, has specialist nursing qualifications in mental health, psychiatric and alcohol and drug areas, was a member of QCAT for five years and a member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for six years and since 2009 has been the team leader for the Prison Mental Health Service with the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service.

I am very proud of the constitution of our Parole Board. This went through a very thorough merit based recruitment process. The appointments were made on the recommendation of the president of the Parole Board. He was asked to look at diversity and he has the diversity right, including Indigenous representation, rural and regional representation and community members who have a variety of backgrounds and experiences. I commend the president on his recommendations and I wish the Parole Board all the very best for the work that it will do. It is very important work. It is an exciting time to be in Corrective Services because of the Sofronoff review and I am confident that the work our new Parole Board will do will contribute to a safer Queensland.

Mr MANDER: Minister, the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre at the moment is the most overcrowded corrections centre in the state. The ombudsman report released in September last year called for immediate action to address the drivers of growth and reduce overcrowding at the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. What immediate action has been taken to address this issue?

Mr RYAN: I appreciate the question from the member. The member will recall that we made an announcement in the budget to expand capacity at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. The commitment relates to an additional 26 cells and an additional 52 beds. This, of course, is towards addressing the recommendations of the ombudsman report in respect of overcrowding at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. I am pleased to announce as well that recommendation 2 of the ombudsman report has already been implemented, which was for the director-general to take necessary action to ensure that the Corrective Services Act regarding prisoners subject to a safety order is met at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. We also are working towards implementing the remaining six recommendations. Action has taken place to commence the rollout of that including, of course, the announcement around expanded capacity.

One of the other things we did was provide some additional funding to support re-entry services. This is an additional \$1 million annually for a new program designed to give female prisoners a better chance of successfully reintegrating into the community and reducing the incidence of reoffending and going back to prison. This new program includes sector workers who specialise in the areas of domestic violence, housing, drugs and alcohol and mental health, who will provide services to female offenders when they are back out in the community. This is similar to recommendation 33 of the Sofronoff review which was to expand re-entry services.

During 2017-18 further funding will be made available to develop a transitional housing support model for prisoners exiting custody. Dedicated transitional accommodation will allow for progression from custody into the community, reduce returns to prison from parole and reduce long-term reoffending. It also addresses another challenge. There are a number of women who are in Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre on remand. The basis for them being remanded is that they have no fixed address. These are people who have not yet had their day in court, have not yet been convicted, but because they do not have a fixed address they are remanded in a high-security correctional centre. Part of our support for the re-entry model and transitional housing is to also support housing options for women who would normally be remanded for the only reason of not having a fixed address. That is a program we are working on that will hopefully address some of the capacity challenges we have at Brisbane Women's.

Mrs MILLER: My question also relates to the Brisbane women's prison, particularly in relation to work camps. I know that work camps for women are very successful. We have one out in Warwick. I would like to see more work camps for women. I cannot understand why they have not been done yet, because there are certainly plans that way. There are many options for women to be housed, like at Warwick in the showgrounds. They could be utilised in quite a number of country areas around the place and I would certainly like to have a women's work camp in my electorate, which is just down the road from the prison. They could come out through the day and maybe go home at night. We have the perfect opportunity here to combine it with training programs like TAFE and I think it would be a good outcome. I am just wondering whether we will get any more women's work camps.

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. You identify a very important piece in our corrective services framework, the work camps. It is not only a good opportunity for people to transition to life outside of prison by giving them those skills and experiences to be productive contributors to community; it is also a way for them to give back. I will tell you a great story about some women from Townsville Women's Correctional Centre who were engaged in the prison's industries program around doing the laundry for the local hospital. I had the opportunity to speak with them. I said, 'Do you realise what you are contributing to here?' They just sort of said, 'Oh, the laundry.' I said, 'Well, no, you are actually contributing to our public health system. You are giving back to community.' You could see how their demeanour changed when they appreciated that this was one way they could contribute back to community and one way for them to make amends for their criminal offending. Where there are opportunities for us to provide prisoners with those experiences, that is something we need to do. We are always looking for opportunities to do more.

I will give you some information about the current work camps and then I will provide some additional comments around work camps. The Palaszczuk government recognises the importance of community service as an opportunity for low-security prisoners to make reparation to the community harmed by their offending behaviour and to develop employment skills. Queensland Corrective Services strictly manages prisoners at work camps and acts swiftly to respond to any increases in risk

to the community. There are currently 13 work camps that operate throughout Queensland, of which 11 are for males and two are for females. Work carried out by prisoners includes maintaining fences, cemeteries, playgrounds and showgrounds in addition to ongoing general maintenance projects in regional communities. In 2016-17 prisoners on the work program completed almost 180,000 hours of community service, equating to \$4.37 million worth of labour provided to support regional Queensland. In 2015-16 prisoners on the work program completed 176,000 hours of community service, equating to \$4.2 million worth of labour provided to support regional Queensland.

Member, you make a great point about work camps. We have to ensure that, when we provide work camp projects, we have the right mix of prisoners. Prisoners have to be assessed as low risk prisoners. Prisoners may be eligible for progression to a work camp where the prisoner is not only classified as low security but also has been sentenced to an appropriate sentence. They cannot be sentenced for murder or sexual offences. They must also meet the other suitability criteria and do not have any outstanding charges or warrants, extradition orders or otherwise. Wherever possible we try to provide those opportunities for our prisoners.

If she does not mind, I will ask the acting commissioner to provide a bit of extra information about some of the struggles that we have with finding work opportunities for our work camps. Certainly, if there are more work opportunities we have the vehicles to be able to provide more work camp workers.

Mrs MILLER: I can give you one straightaway. It is the Salvation Army nursery at Riverview. They have accommodation there as well.

Mr RYAN: Very good. We will take that information and follow up. Acting Commissioner, would you like to add some extra around work camps?

Commissioner McDermott: As you know, the work camps are quite a valuable asset for the agency. However, there are some issues with it, particularly for the women when we are looking at visits, children and the health needs that accompany that. We were open to any application from any community member if they have a work proposal. As well as that, we have the community options of work for our probation and parole offenders to go out and do that community service.

Mrs MILLER: Can I make a comment there, please, Commissioner: I do have some community organisations that look after the probation and parolees, but they have a dreadful record of turning up.

Commissioner McDermott: That is correct. We try to address that as much as we possibly can, but it is an ongoing issue. The value of community service, both for the offenders and back to the community, is enormous, so we do not want to give up. However, there is no question of the value that a work camp can give to a community.

Mrs MILLER: Work camps are better. There is no doubt about that.

CHAIR: Member for Bundamba, that is a statement and not a question.

Mr RYAN: Before, we finish, I want to again thank the member for the question. If you have any suggestions around projects, please provide them to my office. We are always happy to follow up on those. I know the member for Bundamba is particularly passionate about this. It was one of her passions as minister and she continues to be passionate about it. I put on the record the thanks of Corrective Services and also myself for her support of Queensland Corrective Services and for always being able to offer opportunities like this. I appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIR: I call the member for Pine Rivers.

Ms BOYD: Page 19 of the SDS refers to facility utilization of Queensland's prisons. Will the minister update the House on the short, medium and long-term infrastructure solutions this government is implementing to ease prisoner capacity pressures?

Mr RYAN: I have spoken already today about some of the short, medium and long-term infrastructure plans that we have to address infrastructure capacity constraints in our Queensland corrective services system. Our government is committed to providing Queenslanders with a cost-effective and cost-efficient criminal justice system that focuses on delivering safe communities throughout the state. That is why through our election commitments and both this year's and last year's budgets we have invested in short, medium and long-term strategies needed to operate a criminal justice system that delivers safe communities.

As at 30 June this year, there were 8,504 prisoners in custody in Queensland. Since 31 January 2012, about five and a half years, the number of prisoners in Queensland has grown by 51.7 per cent. From 30 June 2016 to 30 June 2017, one year, there was an increase in population by 10.2 per cent. The Palaszczuk government has recently committed \$27.4 million over four years, including \$16 million

in capital funding over two years, to increase the capacity of the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre by up to 52 additional beds across 26 cells. We have committed \$70.4 million to reduce the suicide risk of older-style cells at the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre, equating to a further 244 secure cells to be reopened by June next year. We have committed \$13 million for noncustodial infrastructure to support the delivery of ancillary services across Queensland and \$200 million, as I have already outlined, for the expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre, expanding the centre's capacity by a minimum of 164 cells, with site works expected to start in August this year. There is also the preparation of business cases for the expansion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct and the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre. Those short, medium and long-term strategies will not only ease prison overcrowding but also generate jobs for Queensland, including Central Queensland, where 100 jobs on average per year will be supported during the construction of the Capricornia Correctional Centre expansion. More than 70 ongoing jobs are expected as a result of the expansion itself.

The Palaszczuk government has also committed to increase prisoner bed capacity in our correctional centres by commencing construction on 1,000 new bunk beds. We have already committed \$1.3 million to get the ball rolling on the construction of the first 450 new bunk beds as part of our response to managing prisoner capacity. We will continue to work with Building Queensland, as I have already mentioned, on progressing the business case for 628 new cells at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and 1,004 new cells at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre. That is in addition to the 30 bunk beds that were previously installed at the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre.

It is important to realise that responding to criminal justice capacity constraints is not just about building more prisons. You have to attack the nature of criminal offending. You have to implement strategies that reduce reoffending and lower recidivism. If you can do that, as the director-general mentioned, you can reduce supply. That then reduces the pressure on governments to expand prison infrastructure.

One of the big things that we have done to address those short, medium and long-term infrastructure capacity constraints is, of course, to deliver on the Sofronoff review recommendations, with \$265 million over six years to fundamentally reform parole. We know that if you can get parole right, you can reduce reoffending, you can reduce recidivism and you can then reduce criminal offending. That will have a long-term positive consequence for our correctional centres.

I am very pleased to say that our parole reforms have started. We are already delivering on the new Parole Board. Additionally, we are rolling out GPS monitoring to parolees and supporting the expansion of other programs in our prisons that are fundamental to the recommendations of the Sofronoff review. Of course, that includes providing more mental health support in prisons, more education training programs and more drug rehabilitation programs and ensuring that when prisoners are released—as I have said, in the majority of cases prisoners will be released from jail at some point—they are in the best position to be positive contributors to community.

Mr BROWN: Minister, in addition to the infrastructure solutions, can you outline to the committee any non-infrastructure initiatives that are being used to ease prisoner capacity pressures and reduce recidivism?

Mr RYAN: I am very pleased to answer that question, member for Capalaba. It is a good segue from my previous answer. I want to take this opportunity to thank you not only for the question but also for your interest in this matter. I know that you get it when it comes to breaking the cycle of criminal offending. It is not just about being tough on crime; it is about being smart on crime and the causes of crime. As I said in my previous answer, if you get rehabilitation right, you reduce reoffending, you reduce recidivism and you reduce crime. That has a saving to community and it has a saving to government, as well.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to keeping Queenslanders safe. We are implementing a number of non-infrastructure initiatives to ease prisoner capacity and reduce recidivism. As I have said a number of times this afternoon, the Sofronoff review provides a blueprint for major reform of our correctional system and it was unequivocal. The most effective way to secure the safety of our community is to reduce reoffending and that means rehabilitation. Sofronoff noted that between 17 and 20 per cent of prisoners are incarcerated because their parole has been suspended. Consequently, a major focus for our reforms will be to better prepare prisoners for release to parole and support them to complete parole successfully, which includes greater supervision and greater rehabilitation. To do this, as I have already said, our government has committed \$265 million over six years to commence the implementation of this reform, including professionalising the Parole Board, improving the management of offenders in the community with greater supervision and the expansion of rehabilitation and re-entry services.

In our custodial centres, strategies have been adopted to reduce the operational impacts of overcrowding. Prisoner movements and activities have been adapted to manage competition for unit amenities and reduce known points of conflict and high-risk periods. Prison industries have been extended from five to seven days of operation in some correctional centres, after being cut back by the previous government. That shows how ordinary the previous government was for our correctional centres. It actually set people up to fail by cutting the very programs that helped their rehabilitation. It is no wonder prison incarceration rates increased by almost 30 per cent over their time in government.

Prison industries are being expanded from five to seven days of operation in some correctional centres. Queensland Corrective Services has the responsibility to rehabilitate prisoners in custody and offenders in the community. Queensland Corrective Services will work with community partners to deliver quality interventions and break the cycle of reoffending. For the majority of offenders, cost-effective rehabilitation strategies increase employability and support safe resettlement into the community. These strategies include education, training and work opportunities, substance abuse intervention, progression to low custody and support to resettle in the community.

Rehabilitation programs are delivered by a combination of Queensland Corrective Services program delivery staff and external service providers, in both custodial centres and in the community. As prisoners are preparing to leave custody, Queensland Corrective Services provides support for community reintegration. To support reintegration, the Palaszczuk government committed an additional \$1 million annually for a new program designed to give female prisoners a better chance of successfully reintegrating back into the community and reducing incidents of reoffending.

In response to recommendation 33 of the Sofronoff review, we will also continue to expand re-entry services and we will work towards providing dedicated transitional accommodation to allow progression from custody into the community, which will reduce returns to prison from parole and reduce long-term reoffending. Queensland Corrective Services also provides support to prisoners to assist them to be successful on parole and in the community. Our government is committed to addressing prisoner infrastructure challenges, but we are also committed to breaking the cycle of reoffending because, ultimately, as I have said, this will be of benefit to our community, it will reduce crime and it will provide a saving to the community and to government. If the committee does not mind, I have some information in respect to a question taken on notice.

CHAIR: Before we adjourn I will allow you the opportunity to do that.

Mr RYAN: Thank you very much. This relates to how many of the total number of full-time staff are in prison and have contact with prisoners, which was a question asked by the member for Everton. In 2017-18, 3,174 full-time equivalents are budgeted to be employed at publicly operated correctional centres, of which 2,487 full-time equivalents are custodial correctional officers, which is about 78 per cent. The vast majority of the remaining 687 staff who work in correctional centres are frontline staff, but they might not necessarily have direct contact with prisoners, whether or not they are custodial correctional officers.

I take this opportunity to thank all members of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and particularly Queensland Corrective Services for their contribution and presence today. I thank all those people behind the scenes who have assisted with preparing for the estimates process. I take this opportunity to really commend the work of Queensland Corrective Services. It is a really tough job. Often there is much negative media around our correctional centres. I think our staff need to be thanked more often. I take this opportunity to thank them.

I also take this opportunity to thank our recently retired corrective services commissioner, Mark Rallings, for his contribution to the people of Queensland. I understand he has moved to Tasmania, so good luck in the cold.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee will now adjourn and the hearing will resume at 7.30 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio of Fire and Emergency Services.

Proceedings suspended from 6.15 pm to 6.30 pm



CHAIR: Welcome back, Minister and officials. The committee will now resume with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio of Fire and Emergency Services. Minister, I invite you, if you wish, to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Mr RYAN: The Palaszczuk government's 2017 state budget ensures our front-line services and our front-line officers have the resources and equipment they need to keep Queenslanders safe. Our budget is about supporting front-line services, not cutting them. We are about building vital infrastructure

and facilities, not selling them. Our values as a government are clearly demonstrated in a budget that prioritises jobs and services and the safety of all Queenslanders. That is the difference between this government and the previous government.

Proudly, the Palaszczuk government has delivered an operating budget of \$663.8 million this year to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to enable the delivery of essential emergency, safety, mitigation and response services across every region, town, city and suburb of Queensland. This represents a \$28.9 million increase on the 2016-17 estimated actual budget. Importantly, we are funding community education programs that were cut by the former government. 'If it's flooded, forget it', a life-saving road safety campaign to educate Queenslanders of the dangers of entering floodwaters, has again been allocated funding of \$1 million. This is life-saving campaign that was cut by the former government.

Our budget is also investing \$250,000 for the Road Attitudes and Action Planning program, which is a campaign to deliver road safety education to young drivers by trained operational firefighters. Again, this is a program that was cut by the former government but funded under our government. The Fight Fire Fascination program is supported with \$292,000 in this budget. It teaches children and young people who have been involved in at least one concerning incident to respect fire and develop fire safety skills. Again, this is a program restored by this government.

We are also providing \$400,000 to deliver the bushfire safety advertising campaign to urge Queenslanders to prepare a bushfire survival plan. We have prioritised more than \$107 million to replace or upgrade Fire and Emergency Services stations, facilities and equipment right across our state, from Horn Island in the north to Charleville in the west.

Over \$19 million is being invested into the replacement of auxiliary fire and rescue stations in regional towns and communities of Charleville, Childers, Gordonvale, Herberton, Kilkivan, Oakey, Proserpine, Rathdowney, Richmond and Tara and completion of a co-located auxiliary fire and rescue station, rural fire station and SES facility in Roma. Furthermore, \$16 million has been allocated to upgrade or replace permanently staffed fire and rescue stations in other towns and urban centres right across our state, with investment going into Bundaberg and Mount Isa, which also incorporates upgraded rural fire and SES facilities.

Another important priority in our budget is the \$36.4 million investment to replace and purchase new fire and rescue fire vehicles. For our dedicated Rural Fire Service volunteers, our budget is delivering an additional \$30.1 million over two years to replace and renew their fleet of firefighting vehicles. The Accelerated Rural Fire Service Fleet Program will see the replacement of 60 Rural Fire Service vehicles across Queensland during 2017-18 and many more in the next financial year.

To keep our firefighters safe, the Palaszczuk government's budget has allocated funds to purchase new or replacement equipment, including protective clothing, as well as \$2.61 million for protective personal and operational equipment for our SES groups. The 2017-18 budget includes funding to assist SES groups with their invaluable services such as storm damage, land search and specialist rescue, including \$712,000 in grants to assist with the cost of acquisition and maintenance of facilities, vehicles and flood boats. Another \$1.95 million is for subsidies to local governments to support the operation of their SES groups.

Our government and our government's budget are about ensuring our front-line services, officers, volunteers and agencies have all the resources and equipment they need to do their job of keeping Queenslanders safe.

Mr MANDER: My first question is to the commissioner. Commissioner, would you describe your relationship with the Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association?

Commissioner Carroll: I have an excellent relationship with them. I meet with them every two to three months and discuss whatever they wish to discuss with me on behalf of their members. They are a very open and easy group of people to get on with. I have a very good relationship with them.

Mr MANDER: Would you describe them as a professional organisation?

Commissioner Carroll: Professional in what they do and how they treat their people. They have a form of discipline around them and obviously treat their people very well and do as much as they can on behalf of their people.

Mr MANDER: Minister, my understanding is that the charter with QAFA expired in May; is that correct? If that is correct, has it been renewed?

Mr RYAN: I will check my notes, but I am aware that it has expired. I will take your word that it was May.

Mr MANDER: So it has expired?

Mr RYAN: I am aware that it has expired.

Mr MANDER: What is the reason for the nonrenewal?

Mr RYAN: My office has tried to facilitate discussions with QAFA around the renewal of the charter. One thing to keep in mind is which organisations can discuss industrial matters with government agencies, including of course Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. The registered industrial organisation to discuss industrial matters with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is the United Firefighters Union, not the Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association. Any charter or any documentation that outlines the processes for engagement between an organisation and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has to reflect the law—that is, that industrial matters need to be engaged and discussed between the registered industrial organisation. We have to make sure that the charter that QAFA may have with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services reflects that.

I have been passed a note that says that, although the QAFA charter has expired, negotiations around an extension are continuing. It has been agreed that the current arrangements will continue until December 2017.

Mr MANDER: Do you support the UFUQ taking action against the Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association to have them deregistered as an organisation?

Mr RYAN: That is a matter for the United Firefighters Union. All registered industrial organisations are entitled, under the industrial law, to take action in relation to coverage of particular work sites. It is a matter of industrial law, not a matter for emergency services. If the United Firefighters Union, as the registered industrial organisation, wishes to take action around demarcation disputes or otherwise, that is a matter for them.

Mr MANDER: You have no opinion on that?

Mr RYAN: It is a matter for them. I am not going to cast a view around that. They are the registered industrial organisation and I support what the registered industrial organisation is allowed to do to ensure that the law in respect of industrial relations is complied with.

Mr MANDER: Do you recognise the distinct cultural differences between auxiliary firefighters—often rural based, part-time, with a second job—and full-time, paid professionals in metropolitan areas?

Mr RYAN: I meet with them whenever I am out and about across the state. It might surprise you, member for Everton, but there are more auxiliaries who are members of the United Firefighters Union than there are members of QAFA. The United Firefighters Union represents auxiliaries and full-time professional firefighters.

Mr MANDER: The officials of QAFA are quite upset by the action that has been taken. Do you believe they warrant separate representation through QAFA?

Mr RYAN: People are entitled to join whatever organisation they like, but when it comes to industrial law the industrial law has to be complied with. That means that if an organisation wishes to represent people on industrial matters they must be a registered industrial organisation. If QAFA wants to do that then they must become a registered industrial organisation. If they are not then they cannot deal with those matters.

Mr MANDER: Is this not just a grab for more union fees by the union? That is exactly what that is, is it not?

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I am ruling that question out of order. There is a clear imputation in it. You have also in previous questions, in contravention of standing order 115, asked for opinions. I ask you to recast your question or move on to another series of questions. Alternatively, we will give other committee members a chance to ask some questions.

Mr MANDER: I refer to page 32 of the SDS in relation to discontinued measures. Why is the disaster management training measure being discontinued? Surely that would be a service effectiveness measure.

Mr RYAN: I just want to add, with your indulgence, a little more to the answer I was giving. I am happy to continue discussing all matters of interest to QAFA with them except, of course, industrial matters because they are not the registered industrial organisation. If they have any issues that they wish to discuss on behalf of their members, I am more than happy to engage with them. They are a great group of people who are representing auxiliaries right across the state. They have a great relationship with the commissioner. We are very keen to keep working with them.

In respect of your question around the SDS, you are right in that there is one measure being discontinued. That was assessed by the Queensland Audit Office as an activity measure, not a measure of service effectiveness, and should not be included in an SDS. We have replaced that discontinued measure with a new effectiveness measure. That new effectiveness measure is about assessing the percentage of disaster management training participants with enhanced capability.

Just to give you a bit more information about those SDS measures, the percentage of identified disaster management training met for 2016-17 was 70 per cent—slightly below our target estimate of 75 per cent but showing improvement on previous years. It is six percentage higher than the previous year. The target estimate was not met this year for a very good reason. That is due to staff turnover in key disaster management positions across the disaster management sector. We did have a major natural disaster as well which does upset training programs and the like.

Disaster management stakeholders have a 12-month period from commencing in their roles to complete mandatory training requirements, meaning a majority of new disaster management members will not be required to undertake training until next financial year. The important thing is that, whilst that measure will be discontinued in the SDS and replaced with a new effectiveness measure, that measure will still continue to be measured internally and monitored internally.

Mr MANDER: Minister, with reference to the review of the disaster management effectiveness announced on 9 April this year following Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the flooding events that were part of that natural disaster, do the terms of reference include the closure of schools on 30 and 31 March?

Mr RYAN: All aspects of our response to Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the associated flooding will be considered. I know that the Inspector-General Emergency Management is looking at all matters including, of course, that decision to close schools.

Mr MANDER: Has the public consultation that was promised begun?

Mr RYAN: Yes. There has been significant public consultation. Not only has the Inspector-General Emergency Management engaged with councils, government agencies and communities right across the state; but there has been targeted consultation. I will pass to the inspector-general in a moment. From memory, I believe that 1,200 members of the community have been engaged in direct consultation on the response to Tropical Cyclone Debbie. I will pass over to the inspector-general for more information.

Mr Mackenzie: Indeed, we engaged a professional market research company to assist us in this. We targeted three specific areas across the state, recognising the difference between the cyclonic impact area in North Queensland and the sudden onset flood events we experienced in South-East Queensland, including the Gold Coast, Logan and Scenic Rim, and then the slower onset flood events that affected Rockhampton. There were 1,200 surveys in all conducted and they form an integral part of our report, which is due to the minister next month.

Mr MANDER: Minister, will the review's recommendations still be implemented ahead of the 2017-18 summer season?

Mr RYAN: Certainly they will all be considered by then. As I am sure the member will appreciate, some recommendations are quick and easy to implement and some take some time. I cannot speculate or hypothesise about what the recommendations might be. The inspector-general has not finalised his report yet. Once the report is provided to me, it will be considered obviously and government will respond to those recommendations in due course.

Mr MANDER: Wasn't that your public commitment though, that they be implemented before the summer season?

Mr RYAN: The commitment was to have the review conducted before the next cyclone season. Member, I am sure you will appreciate that some recommendations do take time to implement if they recommend major wholesale changes to how we might do things. Certainly, if there is a recommendation that we can implement quickly, we will. If there is a recommendation that requires more work then we will certainly do it as quickly as we can.

Mrs STUCKEY: My question is to the minister. Rural fire brigades have expressed concerns about new rules that come into effect on 1 August 2017 restricting heavy vehicles to the left lane of the M1, the Pacific Motorway. Is the minister aware that there is no exemption for rural fire brigade trucks? Will the minister inform this hearing whether he will stand up for these dedicated volunteers so that they can get to an emergency in a timely manner?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. It is a very important transport plan in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games. I am sure that, as a Gold Coast member, the member appreciates the need for that transport plan. I have just received advice that the majority of our rural fire fleet are not heavy vehicles and will not have to stick to the left-hand lane. In those instances where they do have to attend an event or an emergency, as they are not heavy vehicles, that traffic plan should not extend to them or affect them.

Mrs STUCKEY: Then I should be able to reassure my three rural fire brigades who have contacted me—

Mr RYAN: What I encourage them to do is speak with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services or come through our office and we can double-check the nature of their appliance. We can also liaise with Transport and Main Roads to provide them with some comfort around the transport plan. At the end of the day, it is not about making things difficult; it is about making sure that we support all of emergency services including those volunteers of the Rural Fire Service in attending an event. If there is something we need to address, we will address it. The advice I have is that the majority of appliances are not heavy vehicles and they will not have to be in the left-hand lane.

Mrs STUCKEY: The message that they received from Alan Gillespie said that they would be affected. You are saying that they need to look further because you do not think they will be.

Mr RYAN: I have some advice to say that the majority of the fleet are not heavy vehicles. Get them to come through Queensland Fire and Emergency Services or my office and we will chase it up for them to provide them some comfort around what the transport plan means for them.

Mr BROWN: Minister, on page 29 of the SDS there is a focus on ensuring a coordinated approach to plan and prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster and emergency situations. Will the minister provide an overview to the committee of the QFES response to Cyclone Debbie and what storm and cyclone preparations were undertaken by the QFES in the lead-up to the 2016-17 season?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. It is a very good question. The member will be pleased with the answer. We have a world-class fire and emergency service here in Queensland that does all the preparations that are needed. We are a state of extremes not only in distance and geography but also in weather. We do always have to plan for the worst, but obviously we hope for the best.

In the lead-up to the storm and cyclone season during the 2016-17 season, an operational period was declared, as is usually declared, by the Commissioner of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to focus all parties on preparing for the storm and cyclone season. In 2016-17, Operation Fortitude commenced. There was a clear emphasis on a unified, multi-agency approach to planning, preparing communities and delivering rapid mobilisation and response to severe wet weather incidents.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services led an interdepartmental committee to consult with local governments that operate cyclone shelters to ensure staff were adequately prepared for the severe weather season, with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services facilitating training of cyclone shelter management staff. In partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and Gioscience Australia, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services was developing community profiles, river catchment profiles and river basin schematics in preparation for the 2016-17 storm and cyclone season. Each year Queensland Fire and Emergency Services designs and implements a training and exercise program for the department, as well as also for the Queensland Police Service, the Public Safety Business Agency and other government staff.

On 22 March 2017, a tropical low was identified and tracked south-east of Papua New Guinea. It drifted south while developing over the next few days and was then named Tropical Cyclone Debbie at 10 am on 25 March 2017. On that same day, the State Disaster Coordination Centre was stood up. Tropical Cyclone Debbie rapidly intensified from a category 2 to a category 4 cyclone during a 12-hour period on 27 March 2017. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services though was ready. We predeployed 216 staff to key locations in Central Queensland through to North Queensland in preparation for the cyclone. The cyclone made landfall at Airlie Beach on Queensland's Whitsunday coast at approximately 12.40 pm on Tuesday, 28 March as a large and powerful category 4 cyclone. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services deployed flexible habitats into Bowen to support the PCYC and to Proserpine to support Queensland Fire and Emergency Services staff.

Prior to the cyclone crossing land, on 25 March—the same day that the tropical cyclone was declared—we sent up our GWN, our government wireless network, communication-on-wheels devices. These are called COWs. They provide communication in areas where communications have failed. We deployed our COWs to Airlie Beach, Proserpine and Rockhampton. These were critical in allowing a portable radio communication network to be established for our emergency services.

As you are no doubt aware, member, the cyclone devastated many parts of Queensland including the resort islands in the Whitsunday group, as well as towns like Airlie Beach and Proserpine. Bowen also received significant damage and further inland the cyclone caused damage at Collinsville. The tropical cyclone weakened below tropical cyclone strength at about 3 am on Wednesday, 29 March but continued to wreak devastation on Queensland by tracking south-east over the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane during the afternoon and evening of Thursday, 30 March. Damaging wind gusts were observed along with widespread rainfall over the Gold Coast hinterland and Scenic Rim. On Thursday, 30 March the Queensland government ordered the closure of all schools south of Agnes Water and east of Nanango due to the threat of flash flooding and damaging winds. Schools from the Sunshine Coast south would remain closed on Friday, 31 March.

Heavy rainfall led to localised flooding as ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie tracked south, with the highest rainfall experienced in coastal catchments and subsequent flooding experienced in Rockhampton, Livingstone, Scenic Rim, Logan, Gold Coast and parts of Brisbane and Moreton Bay. It was not until 11 April 2017 that the State Disaster Coordination Centre was stood down. That goes to show how immense this natural disaster event was to have the SDCC stood up for almost three weeks—a tremendous period.

The centre also supported the flooding events in South-East Queensland and in Rockhampton. The SDCC actioned 75 emergency alert campaigns which resulted in approximately four million messages being received by the community, and 20 requests for state assistance were completed. There were 11 requests for defence assistance to civil community submitted. As at 13 April 2017, a total of 10,765 rapid damage assessments were conducted in the impacted areas. The assessments identified that 45 properties were classified as destroyed, 292 had severe damage, 607 sustained moderate damage and 1,418 had minor damage. Approximately 7,600 SES requests were received.

A total of 1,106 QFES personnel, including Fire and Rescue, State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service and Emergency Management, were deployed in the response operations, with additional personnel deployed within the regions. Throughout the activation, the SDCC was staffed by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the Queensland Police Service, the PSBA and other government and non-government agencies.

I must also acknowledge that we received assistance from other states. We had 139 interstate personnel from Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. I am grateful for them for their assistance. This was a very tough event for Queensland, but we were up for it because we do have a world-class fire and emergency service here in Queensland. They do great work.

Mrs MILLER: Minister and Commissioner, I have a question in relation to the Bundamba fire station, which I understand approval was given to in 2014. It is now 2017. My people in Ipswich are saying, 'We could have built a 20-storey high-rise in that time,' and we want to know when it will be finished.

Mr RYAN: Member, I have no doubt that the members of your community at Bundamba could have built something in that period. They are very talented and gifted. I acknowledge the good people in your electorate. I do have some good news for the member, albeit news about the belated completion of your fire station—the Bundamba Fire and Rescue Station.

Mrs MILLER: I just want to know when.

Mr RYAN: It should be practically completed by the end of the year, by December.

CHAIR: Minister, going back to the topic of Tropical Cyclone Debbie, earlier this year the new state deployment centre was opened. Could you please advise the committee how the new centre enhanced Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' capabilities in the lead-up to, during and in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie?

Mr RYAN: What a great opening it was, Commissioner. Both the commissioner and I were there. We got to check out the big trucks, as well as all the equipment and resource that we have there to support our firefighters. It goes to show our government's commitment to supporting our firefighters when you have a look around the state deployment centre and the degree of equipment and resource that is there to support them.

Member, you are right. The new state deployment centre was opened recently, in December 2016. This centre provides a base for our Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Disaster Assistance Response Team, which was formerly known as our urban search and rescue team. The centre is managed by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Technical Rescue Unit, which is responsible for the maintenance of this capability. The centre houses the deployment cache of equipment for our Disaster Assistance Response Team.

This capability includes incident management control systems; rapid damage assessment collection; flexible habitat capability including capability for living in the field for up to 270 people—just think for a second about the amount of equipment you would need to be able to provide habitat capability for 270 people—heavy rescue equipment for large-scale structural collapse; Swiftwater rescue platforms including inflatable watercraft to enhance regional capacity; and other equipment that supports the disaster relief operations.

The centre allows disaster response equipment to be accepted into operations, tested and stored ready for operational use. It also provides space for testing equipment before dispatch to regional centres. During Tropical Cyclone Debbie the centre provided the initial assembly point for the DART, the Disaster Assistance Response Team, allowing easy allocation of equipment for smooth deployment to several locations throughout Queensland. Additional requests for equipment to support operations were successfully fulfilled and deployed.

The centre also acted as an alternate assembly area briefing location for the State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service disaster relief crews before being deployed throughout Queensland. Interstate disaster assistance was sought and resulted in the state deployment centre receiving and briefing these crews for operational deployments. The centre continued to support operations during the recovery phase of the incident and allowed demobilising of teams after relief operations were carried out.

The design features incorporated into our new state deployment centre provide improvements in assembling disaster relief crews for their deployment, dedicated storage areas for our equipment and resources, and a specialised work area for equipment that allows recommission and testing of a range of disaster relief equipment used by our disaster assistance response teams.

Miss BARTON: Minister, I ask this question on behalf of Jon Krause, the member for Beaudesert, who cannot be here today because he is quite unwell. Rural Fire Service volunteers in Logan have advised that Jimboomba Rural Fire Brigade will be closed within 12 months and yesterday a fire tanker was removed from the station. Minister, are you able to explain why you and the government are abandoning the people of Jimboomba and that area who depend on rural fireys for the protection of their lives and property?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. I start by wishing the member for Beaudesert a speedy recovery. I am sure he would not have used the flamboyant language that you used there, but nonetheless I will accept that as a question from him on his behalf.

Miss BARTON: I am sure the member for Beaudesert is very happy with the wording that I used. He is very passionate about rural fireys in his patch.

Mr RYAN: As is the Palaszczuk Labor government. We are very proud of our contribution to supporting them including for the first time ever paying for maintenance and fuel for our rural fire brigades as well as our rural fire fleet acceleration program of \$30 million over two years. As it is with a lot of operational portfolios, what the government does is provide the funding and resources to the commissioner for deployment across the state. The matter that you refer to is an operational matter for the commissioner and I will ask the commissioner to address your question.

Commissioner Carroll: The arrangement has been under review by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services in the south-east region which will support a recommendation by the regional manager of the Rural Fire Service to transition Jimboomba to an auxiliary Fire and Rescue Service delivery model only. The regional manager of the Rural Fire Service has been working with Jimboomba brigade's first officer and auxiliary captain over the last few months on how best to progress this matter. Subsequently, the brigade was informed of the proposal at the annual general meeting, which only took place on 30 July.

The transitional arrangements broadly provide for the upskilling of rural fire brigade members who want to transition across to the auxiliary Fire and Rescue Service and for those who wish to transfer to adjoining rural fire brigades. The transition proposal is to be fully completed with the Jimboomba fire

brigade closing down formally in July 2018. There has been a lot of discussion and a lot of work between both the Rural Fire Service and the Fire and Rescue Service, and they are the arrangements that have been accepted without any depletion of capacity or capability in that area.

Miss BARTON: Commissioner, as a follow-up, what impact will that have on response times given that there will not be a dedicated Rural Fire Service in that particular location?

Commissioner Carroll: Those areas are also supported by other brigades and other rural fire services, so I do not expect a decrease in response time in relation to any fires in that area. We assess these matters on an ongoing basis all the time. If there are any concerns they should be raised with me. However, from my perspective I do not have a concern with response times.

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Inspector-General Emergency Management. Inspector-General, volunteers obviously play an enormous role in the emergency services sector in Queensland. What training is provided to maintain the appropriate level of behaviour when interacting with members of the public?

Mr Mackenzie: I thank the member for the question, but the role of training of volunteers across the emergency management sector falls directly under the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services whereas I provide that assurance role.

Mr MANDER: I will redirect. Commissioner, you may not have heard that. Volunteers play an enormous role in emergency services in Queensland. Can you outline the type of training that is provided for volunteers in regard to engaging with members of the public?

Commissioner Carroll: Can I refer that question to my deputy commissioner? Whilst I can give you a holistic view, he can get to the more pertinent points.

Deputy Commissioner Wassing: Thank you for the question. Our volunteers across the rural fire rescue, State Emergency Service and fire rescue service receive extensive training. A lot of that training is technical based training. I understand that the context of the question was really about engaging with communities. There are a couple of aspects to that. In particular, we have several hundred volunteer community educators. Their specific capability is within the Rural Fire Service. They receive special training associated with community education and community engagement. That training is currently being extended to our State Emergency Service training volunteers as well. In fact, that training model is looking to be extended to our key partners in the volunteer marine service as well. General volunteers have a close connection with their community. As part of their normal induction components, they have general training in terms of what their role is and how to engage generally with the community.

Mr MANDER: Minister, in light of that training that is given to volunteers with regard to engaging with the public, you must be incredibly embarrassed about the behaviour of one of your election volunteers at Deception Bay against the LNP's candidate Kara Thomas?

Mr RYAN: The behaviour of that particular person is totally unacceptable. That person was a volunteer for the Labor Party—not particularly for me but for the Labor Party. That person has been counselled and, as a result, they are no longer a volunteer for the Labor Party and are no longer assisting on campaigns for the Labor Party.

Mr MANDER: My next question is to the Fire Commissioner. Commissioner, I refer to page 29 of the SDS in relation to the changes to smoke alarms. What activities will be undertaken in the upcoming year given that there is a 10-year phase-in period for this changeover?

Commissioner Carroll: Thank you for that question. Thankfully, Queensland households will be the safest in the country with the new legislation in terms of smoke alarms. As you know, they play a critical role in alerting dwelling occupants to the presence of fire. The new legislation addresses the coroner's recommendations following that tragic house fire at Slacks Creek.

Smoke alarms must comply with Australian Standards. The government has approved \$3 million over the next 10 years to implement a comprehensive consumer protection campaign about the changes to the smoke alarm legislation and the need for practice fire escape plans. The fire safety campaign focuses on the need for practice fire escape plans. This began in June 2017. The home fire safety campaign was followed by the smoke alarm laws 2017 advertising campaign. The new smoke alarm laws advertising campaign focuses on legislation, encompassing specific messages to introduce and build awareness of the need for the change.

The new smoke alarm laws 2017 campaign was initiated with social media and search engine advertising on 14 July 2017, with TV advertising scheduled to commence on 30 July. Implementation activities are progressing through the establishment of the interdepartmental committee, and the committee is ensuring a consolidated government approach to facilitate the legislative changes.

Mr MANDER: So the major work over the next 12 months is public awareness? Would that be accurate?

Commissioner Carroll: In essence, education, public awareness and allowing for the cost factor to ensure that people implement smoke alarms within the next 10 years

Mr MANDER: Commissioner, I have another question for you. I am sorry, I am jumping all over the place here. There has been a lot of public comment on the cladding at the PA Hospital. Can you outline QFES's involvement in the assessment of this cladding? What reassurance can you give to the public that people in that building are safe?

Commissioner Carroll: I thank the member for the question. QFES has been heavily involved in all aspects of the PA Hospital. Obviously we know of the tragedy that occurred in Grenfell Tower some weeks ago. As a result of that, an interdepartmental committee was immediately formed and chaired by the Department of Housing and Public Works to address any nonconforming building product matters arising in Queensland, and QFES is a member of that.

On 29 June, however, Minister de Brenni at the time announced an audit task force which we are also heavily involved in to examine materials of properties built from 1994 to 2004 focusing firstly on hospitals, aged-care facilities, accommodation buildings, high-occupancy public and private buildings, and high-rise office buildings. Fifteen officers from across Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission have been assigned to the task force.

When we received information that there was cladding at the PA Hospital, initial tests were conducted on this cladding and now more comprehensive and complex tests are being conducted. Three weeks ago when we were notified of this we immediately elevated our response. An elevated response means a doubling of the initial response and the people who turn out to respond to that—initially, 18 firefighters, four pumpers, an aerial and a command vehicle. However, within a 10-kilometre radius of the PA Hospital we also have five fire and rescue stations and 30 appliances, as well as within a five-kilometre radius six stations and 13 appliances. Yes, we have been heavily involved in it, and as a result of what we know we have elevated the response but there is also ongoing work in terms of the testing for the PA Hospital.

Mr MANDER: Commissioner, is the major response to this potential fire—let us hope and pray that it never happens—simply a quicker response time by firefighters? They can get there quicker and there are more of them; is that what you are saying?

Commissioner Carroll: It is a larger response because there are obviously more people and they will get there quickly. However, that is also in sync with a lot of other measures. The hospital has exceptional fire equipment, fire standards and fire procedures. There are additional security officers as well on the grounds of the PA Hospital, so it is a comprehensive plan involving a number of departments, not just mine.

Mr MANDER: And that is opposed to what Grenfell was like with regard to its fire prevention devices?

Commissioner Carroll: Whilst I do not have the final report on Grenfell and I do not want to comment on that, I think it is very difficult to compare the two. We as a state and a country have some of the highest standards across the world. I think we are in a very good place to say that that hospital is very secure and so are the people within it.

Mr MANDER: I refer to page 37 of the SDS in relation to staffing, and I ask: what was the overtime budget for the permanent full-time firefighters in 2016-17 and what was the actual amount achieved last year?

Commissioner Carroll: You asked for 2016-17?

Mr MANDER: Yes, the year just passed.

Commissioner Carroll: Approximately \$23.9 million—

Mr MANDER: Was the budget?

Commissioner Carroll: Yes, that is the budget.

Mr MANDER: And what was the actual?

Commissioner Carroll: It is an adjusted budget so it is the same.

Mr MANDER: Can you explain what that means?

Commissioner Carroll: I will refer to the deputy.

Deputy Commissioner Smith: We allocate approximately somewhere in the vicinity of \$23.5 million for overtime in each financial year. Over the last three financial years, that has increased from approximately \$19 million back in 2014-15 to the \$23.5 million in the financial year just finished. We need to adjust that budget through the year because of exigencies that occur with respect to storms and whatever. At the start of the financial year, we make some provision for events, but with an event like Tropical Cyclone Debbie there is significant unforeseen expenditure with respect to overtime. At the end of the financial year, in accounting terms it is an adjusted figure. At the start of the financial year 2016-17, it was approximately \$23.5 million and we finished the financial year at \$23.9 million.

Mr MANDER: So you would regard that as being on budget?

Deputy Commissioner Smith: Indeed. The point of making an overtime allocation in the budget is that it has to meet the real-time circumstances of the state, and that is what it is currently costing us.

CHAIR: I call the member for Capalaba for a question.

Mr BROWN: Minister, I refer you to page 28 of the SDS which refers to the key strategic challenge for the QFES of managing service capacity versus community expectations. With the milestone of the 100th recruit graduation from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services academy in May—and I have the pleasure of attending some of those graduation ceremonies at Lytton, which are always good occasions—would the minister please give an update on recruit training?

Mr RYAN: I want to add, with the indulgence of the member, just a bit more to the answer provided by the commissioner and the deputy commissioner in respect of the overtime paid for the last financial year. We have done some figures and we have determined that \$3.1 million of the total \$23.9 million related to overtime expenses in respect of Tropical Cyclone Debbie. We can always wish for things, but if Tropical Cyclone Debbie had not hit we would have had an overtime expense much lower than the budgeted amount. Thanks very much for your indulgence on that, member for Capalaba.

I have also received some further advice for the member for Currumbin in regard to the left lane law on the Gold Coast. We are going to seek some more clarity as well around the heavy vehicles and what that means and work with your rural fire brigades—

Mrs STUCKEY: The three of them

Mr RYAN: Yes, those three and all of them on the Gold Coast, to ensure we have got it right.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you.

Mr RYAN: With respect to the member for Capalaba's question, I thank you for the opportunity to speak about our Queensland Fire and Emergency Services academy and of course our recruit training. I had the great pleasure of meeting the recruits in the 100th recruit course. I got to join them on one of their night activities to see them doing road crash rescues and other rescues and I got to experience a little bit of what they had to experience. They are all topnotch people, which is fantastic.

Mr BROWN: Did you get in the container yourself?

Mr RYAN: I did not get into the live fire container.

Mr BROWN: You are missing out.

Mr RYAN: I did manage to cut a door off a car with the assistance of some very trained and professional members of our Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. In May this year, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services did celebrate a milestone. The 100th recruit course was completed and we saw 22 new firefighters join the ranks of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. This is further proof again of our government investing in front-line services. We invest in the front line and this is another example, with 22 new firefighters joining our ranks.

The events saw recruit course 100 follow in the footsteps of 1,800 firefighters who have trained at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy, 30 years on from the graduation of recruit course 1. During the ceremony, graduates received their official firefighter epaulettes and met long-serving firefighters from recruit course 1. The 22 graduates of recruit course 100 underwent rigorous assessment before being accepted into the course. All applicants were required to respond to

a number of prerequisite questions on the application form. These questions verify that applicants meet the minimum requirements associated with the recruitment and selection process, taking into account industry standards and ongoing training and education requirements.

The assessment process includes a series of cognitive, physical and psychological assessments, a state panel interview, reference checks, a medical assessment and a criminal history check. The panel is comprised of an assistant commissioner, chief superintendent, manager firefighter development and a United Firefighters Union Queensland delegate. Every assessment has a minimum requirement that must be met prior to recruitment. These standards reflect industry best practice and ensure all candidates will be fit for duty. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services enforces strict entrance guidelines to ensure that the best person for the job is selected. Minimum requirements for assessments specifically reflect the occupational requirements of the role of a firefighter. Failure to achieve the standard requirement for each assessment will result in the applicant not progressing in the recruitment process.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recognises the value of a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves. As such, marketing and attraction strategies have been developed to promote firefighting as a career and specifically target potential applicants from diverse backgrounds, including persons with a disability. The training, education and learning for the staff of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is managed at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy through the School of Fire and Emergency Services Training. The academy provides the foundation of an initial 16-week recruit course for our firefighters to cement their knowledge as they step into the role of a firefighter and embark on a continuous learning pathway and challenge of practical and theory disaster and emergency situations. They also provide training and professional development for our fire com officers, from recruit com officers to fire com managers.

The training and assessment of recruit firefighters is conducted by current operational firefighters at the training school, working in accordance with national vocational educational standards. The academy also provides training in educational learning opportunities to other members of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and its partners in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery for disaster and emergency events. Learning opportunities are available to staff through a number of in-house programs extending to formal education such as universities, education providers and professional development workshops for senior public servants and senior emergency service managers.

The academy also provides training in numerous fields for emergency service workers—for example, incident management and, of interest to the member for Capalaba, live fire training, road crash rescue, medical technical rescue and fire communications training. Quality assurance ensures that the education provided meets the state requirements via the delivery of courses such as flood boats, swift-water rescue, land search operations, driving and traffic management.

CHAIR: Minister, I have a question in relation to page 29 of the SDS which states that Queensland Fire and Emergency Services will endeavour 'to continue to deliver the Road Attitudes and Action Planning program in high schools, a practical lifesaving road safety awareness program for young drivers, facilitated by operational firefighters'. Would you please give the committee an update on this valuable community program which was scrapped by the previous LNP government?

Mr RYAN: This is a very important program, and our investment in this program to return the program is investing in young lives and keeping people safe on our roads. As the member may be aware, this government has allocated \$250,000 this year to the Road Attitudes and Action Planning program to deliver a practical lifesaving road safety education program to young drivers which is facilitated by trained operational firefighters. The program is designed to enable young drivers to make informed decisions and follow safe driving habits to help ensure their own safety and the safety of the extended community.

The program's primary objective is to reduce the number of injuries and deaths in road crashes in the 17 to 24 age group, which is overrepresented statistically. The program is identified as an investment in young drivers and provides a unique opportunity to educate the next generation of drivers about the serious consequences of road trauma. It also provides a valuable opportunity to connect with young Queenslanders and make a real difference in their future.

As the chair correctly noted about the funding for this program, how ordinary is it to cut funding for a program which keeps kids safe on our roads, but it was cut under the former government in 2012. The difference is that our sound budget is supporting front-line services and community education programs like the Road Attitudes and Action Planning program and we are not cutting them. We believe in investing in these programs, in jobs, in front-line services and in our communities.

The program is being delivered to senior students at high schools across the state and provides them with an improved understanding of acceptable driving behaviours and why an appropriate attitude to road safety is essential. The program addresses the contributing factors putting young drivers at high risk, including but not limited to: less developed visual and perceptual skills; an inability to accurately identify and respond to risks and/or hazards when driving; overconfidence; inattention caused by inexperience coping with distractions while driving; the tendency to drive at high-risk times—at night-time, for instance—with a number of other young people in the car; alcohol, illicit substances, prescription medication or a combination of these; and deliberate risk taking, like high-speed driving and/or tailgating.

In 2012 a research report conducted by Footprints Market Research reported very positive results with the effectiveness of this program. This report came out in 2012, and what did the LNP do in 2012? They cut the program. A total of 87 per cent of the participants said that they were more aware of the dangers involved with driving and used the program strategies to avoid potentially dangerous situations. Chair, you will be very pleased to hear that there are currently 168 trained program presenters throughout Queensland. These are professional firefighters delivering this program. Between July 2016 and 30 April 2017, 264 program presentations were provided. These are provided to class loads at schools, so you can just imagine the thousands upon thousands of young people who now have these skills to be safer on the road. This budget continues to fund the program to the amount of \$261,000 this year.

Ms BOYD: Minister, I refer to page 29 of the SDS which refers to the Palaszczuk government's commitment 'to continue to promote the ... If It's Flooded Forget It campaign to highlight the dangers of flooded roads and ... educating Queenslanders on how to prepare, act and survive'. My electorate has a lot of rural and semirural places that often get cut off in rain events. Could the minister provide an overview of the campaign and what outcomes it is achieving?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. I certainly avoid Youngs Crossing Road as well when it rains. The member will be very pleased to note that our commitment to the 'If it's flooded, forget it' campaign continues in this budget. In 2015 we restored dedicated funding for the program, after funding for the program was cut by the previous government. Additional funding of \$1 million was allocated to continue the campaign for the 2016-17 storm season.

Following the 2015-16 campaign, our research indicated a very high recognition of the program of 'If it's flooded, forget it'. I am sure all members will agree that little kids even quote it to you; the campaign is that successful. That is what we want. We want everyone to be aware of that tag line, but we also want them to act in accordance with the tag line. The research also showed that 55 per cent of drivers stated that they would never attempt to drive through floodwaters, which is an increase on research from the previous year of 49 per cent. We are seeing that our awareness campaign in this space is improving awareness but also contributing hopefully to saving lives as a result.

While the 2015-16 campaign urged drivers to refrain from driving through floodwater by highlighting the dangers, the 2016-17 campaign took the message one step further. I was very proud to stand with the fire commissioner when we announced the launch of this campaign just ahead of the last storm season. We asked drivers to prepare to stay safe by making sure they have travel plans in place when poor weather or flooding was expected and to think about those things that are important to them, like who is going to pick up the kids or who is going to check on the neighbour who might be ill. These are things that we are asking people to consider as part of our 'If it's flooded, forget it' campaign.

One of the things that we saw as well was how we acted during Tropical Cyclone Debbie. For those people who were in South-East Queensland on the day that we experienced that severe weather, it was excellent to see people taking that message about avoiding our roads and not driving through floodwaters. The decision made by the government to close the schools on that Thursday and to instruct non-essential public servants to go home and to change their travel plans meant that our roads were not just free for Emergency Services; it also meant that people were not putting their lives at risk by driving through dangerous circumstances.

The last campaign, as I said, was launched last year—I joined the commissioner on 18 November to do that—and it finished this year on 31 May 2017. The campaign included advertising on television billboards, Facebook, YouTube and on other weather applications. As flash flooding and riverine flooding impacted vast areas of the state in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie, including heavily populated areas of the south-east, there was no loss of life from drivers entering floodwaters. Considering the scale of that weather event, this was a remarkable result, but thank goodness.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is looking forward to gaining a greater insight into the changes in driver attitudes when the post-2016-17 campaign research is complete in the near future. Early data from that research indicates public recognition has increased once again. I mentioned previously the public recognition following the 2015-16 campaign was 82 per cent. The early data from the research indicates that the public recognition has increased to 91 per cent. Fantastic! Further—and this is the best news—86 per cent of people now say they are less likely to drive through floodwater after seeing the campaign and 91 per cent are more likely to make alternative arrangements in times of potential flooding. The good news is our government's commitment to that highly successful campaign. Again, it was pretty ordinary of the previous government to cut it given the statistics of how effective it was. An additional \$1 million has been allocated for the campaign for the next year, for the 2017-18 storm season. The ongoing campaign messaging will continue to be developed in line with best practice and informed by search.

CHAIR: Before we close the hearing this evening is there anything further you would like to add?

Mr RYAN: I start by thanking the members of the committee, the secretariat, Hansard staff and all parliament staff for participating in this very important process. Estimates is fundamental, I believe, to our democracy and provides members of parliament with the opportunity to quiz departments and ministers about very important budget decisions. I thank you for your time and commitment to that process.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management and, of course, the COO, the chief operating officer, and his team from the Public Safety Business Agency. To all of those people I say: Thank you very much for what you have done here today and behind the scenes. I also take this opportunity to thank them all for what they do every single day for the people of Queensland. I have one of the best jobs because I get to meet Queensland heroes every single day. Whether they are Queensland Fire and Emergency Services workers, police officers, our correctional officers or probation and parole officers, every single one of them are heroes because they keep their fellow Queenslanders safe. We owe them a debt of gratitude. I am grateful for what they do and I love being their minister.

CHAIR: The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services has expired. The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 3 pm on Monday, 24 July 2017. A transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within the next few hours. Thank you, Minister, and statutory and departmental officers for your attendance. Thank you to Hansard and everyone else who assisted here today. I declare the hearing closed.

Committee adjourned at 7.33 pm