

FRIDAY, 26 JULY 2019

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

Estimate Committee Members

Mr PS Russo (Chair)
Mr JP Lister
Mr SSJ Andrew
Mr JJ McDonald
Mrs MF McMahon
Ms CP McMillan

Members in Attendance

Mr DC Janetzki
Mr MC Berkman
Ms SL Bolton
Mr TJ Watts
Mr LL Millar

In Attendance

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

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Mr D Mackie, Director-General

Ms C Scott, Chief Financial Officer, DJAG, Financial Services Branch, Corporate Services

Crime and Corruption Commission

Mr A MacSporran QC, Chairperson

Legal Aid Queensland

Mr A Reilly, Chief Executive Officer

Office of the Public Guardian

Ms N Siegel-Brown, Public Guardian

The committee met at 9.00 am.



CHAIR: Good morning everybody. I declare the hearing of the estimates for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee open. I would like to introduce the members of the committee. I am Peter Russo, the member for Toohey and chair of the committee. Mr James Lister, the member for Southern Downs, is the deputy chair. The other committee members are Mr Stephen Andrew, the member for Mirani; Mr Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer; Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; and Ms Corrine McMillan, the member for Mansfield. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to ask questions at this hearing today, so other members may be present over the course of the proceedings.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2019 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. 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 the broadcasting of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Persons on the floor of the red chamber may use mobile phones or other electronic devices on silent mode. Mobile phones are not permitted to be used in the gallery above the chamber. I also remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: justice and Attorney-General from 9 am to 12.45 pm, police and corrective services from 1.30 pm to 6 pm, and fire and emergency services from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2019 for the portfolio area of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. The committee will examine the justice and Attorney-General portfolio until 12.45 pm and we will suspend proceedings during this time for a break from 10.30 am to 10.45 am. I understand that visiting members are David Janetzki, the member for Toowoomba South; Sandy Bolton, the member Noosa; and Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar.

I remind those present that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland 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 also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that 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, 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 Attorney-General or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of justice and Attorney-General open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

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

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you and good morning, Chair and committee members. This is my fifth year reporting on the progress of this government's justice initiatives, which continue to foster safer communities and contribute to the government's priority to keep Queenslanders safe. As the state's population continues to grow, there are ever-increasing demands on the justice and court systems. The 2019-20 budget provides more resources to meet those demands.

Specifically, there is an additional \$57.7 million allocated over the next four years for the operation of Queensland's courts. As well as dedicated staff, we are fortunate to have some remarkable courthouse buildings throughout the state that obviously need renovations or upgrades from time to time. For example, just recently work began on the \$2 million refurbishment of the Bundaberg Courthouse, and I look forward to seeing the completion of major capital works at the Rockhampton, Townsville and Beenleigh courthouses towards the end of this year.

I should note that each of those upgrades, which total \$32 million, is progressing on schedule. Importantly, the Townsville and Beenleigh upgrades cater for the expansion of our specialist domestic and family violence courts, which are playing a key part in addressing domestic and family violence issues and assisting victims with the best support possible.

The protection of children is among the government's most important responsibilities and we have acted to strengthen our approach. We have added 17 more crimes to the list of disqualifying offences when applying for a blue card as part of the overhaul of Queensland's Working with Children Check. The Queensland Family and Child Commission's comprehensive review of the blue card system found that our state has one of the strongest working with children check systems in Australia. Now we are spending \$17 million over three years making it even stronger.

The latest budget allows for significantly increased funding for child protection and support initiatives. The government is providing increased funding of \$13.5 million in 2019-20 for child protection litigation services; increased funding of \$9.7 million over three years for the Queensland Family and Child Commission to continue research, evaluation and awareness initiatives; and \$2.5 million over four

years to establish the new independent child death review board. Furthermore, we are investing an extra \$2.3 million over two years to continue an additional specialist Childrens Court magistrate, support staff, security and legal advocates to increase cases heard in the Childrens Court. This is all designed to reduce the number of children on remand waiting to face court.

There are other court operations being bolstered courtesy of the nearly 10 per cent increase in Justice funding. An extra \$13.1 million over five years will go towards the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to boost its services and also deliver on the lemon laws that were passed in April. We do not like seeing Queenslanders taken for a ride, and these new laws provide greater protection for those who get stuck with defective vehicles. An extra \$2.9 million will go towards the Coroners Court to assist with the growing volume of the very important work that it did does, while the government has responded to the increased workload of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions by increasing funding by \$42.8 million over four years.

The final matter that I want to highlight this morning is a most important one—that is, the two-year evaluation of the government's suite of measures to tackle alcohol fuelled violence. Cabinet considered the evaluation report this week, and the report and the government's interim response have been tabled this morning. It is fair to say—and I am pleased to say—that this rigorous, comprehensive and independent report has vindicated the tough decisions that the government took several years ago. While there have been some positive signs as a direct result of the steps that the government took, there is further work to be done. The Palaszczuk government welcomes the responsibility of keeping communities safe, illustrated by this budget, which injects significant funding into vital services. I look forward to the committee's questions.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: I will defer to the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: Can I call forward the chairperson of the CCC, please. Mr MacSporran, in order for the Crime and Corruption Commission to function effectively, how important is it for the CCC to be independent and free from political interference and also to be perceived as such?

Mr MacSporran: It is critically important, obviously.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr MacSporran, the Deputy Premier made a cold call to you on Sunday, just days after the CCC received a complaint about her alleged conduct. Does a phone call between you and a person the subject of a complaint—a person who controls the budget of the CCC no less—compromise the CCC's independence and give rise to the perception of political interference in the CCC's activities?

Mr MacSporran: Not at all. I want to explain firstly what happened in the phone call, why I engaged with the Deputy Premier, to explain why I am not compromised and neither is the commission and to explain more particularly why that is so—that is, what the process of assessment involves.

Firstly, I will commence by saying this: that having considered all of the debate and commentary that has surrounded this issue all week I have decided after careful consideration, on the basis that the independence and integrity of not only myself but the commission is critically important as I have just acknowledged, that I will, in fact, stand aside from any decision-making role in the assessment process and/or investigation should it occur. I do not do that because I have been compromised, but I do it because there is a need to enhance and maintain the reputation and transparency of the way we operate.

I am thankful for those commenting, including yourself Mr Janetzki in your letters to the commission, to have acknowledged that you have not attacked my integrity nor the commission's integrity, but it is a broader issue than that so I will stand aside, but I would like to explain why there is not, in fact, a problem in this way: when a matter is being assessed there is always contact between the complainant, the subject person, and the commission. There necessarily has to be to obtain relevant documentation and information to make the assessment.

In this case the phone call was made to my business mobile. I have two mobiles like most of us these days, a business and a private mobile. My business mobile was contacted by the Deputy Premier. Bearing in mind the Deputy Premier is the Treasurer and given that I had previously spoken to her directly on the same mobile months ago about a funding issue, I had no knowledge of why I was being called. I do not mind being called on the weekend. My job is 24/7. I accept that as part of my role. I do not resent that, it is just comes with the territory. In fact, I was putting together an Ikea bookcase in my trackie pants when the phone rang and I was grateful for the distraction frankly. So I took the call simply to understand what the call was about.

When I discovered what it was about I did not terminate the call because it was clear to me that it was, in fact, as I understand the Deputy Premier has already said, a courtesy call to let me know that she was self-referring and, more particularly and of interest to me, that she had done some work overnight with her husband and was preparing a series of documents to provide to us. I queried when we would get that because I was interested that the assessment move on particularly quickly. She told me that I would have it first thing Monday morning. She said that I would not have the Integrity Commissioner's advice because she had been advised by the Integrity Commissioner not to provide that advice to us because it may have impacted on the assessment itself. I understood that because that was going to be my query as being a relevant document. She said the only other thing she wanted to know was that she proposed to have a press conference and would that in any way interfere with our assessment process and, if so, she was prepared to not have the press conference. I said it did not worry us as long as she was not going to discuss the details of the complaint or debate it in public, and on that basis she went ahead and did the press conference.

The call lasted three, maybe five minutes. It was non-consequential. I made no notes because there was nothing to note. I reported the phone call to my CEO on the Monday morning and, as promised, early that morning the bundle of documents were hand delivered by her solicitor to my EA and I took them myself to the head of my Corruption division who then gave them to Integrity Services. That was the extent of it. There was no compromising of my integrity. I did not feel as though I was being influenced or there was an attempt to. She was very deferential to me in the conversation, apologetic about the Sunday call and so forth. That was the end of it.

Can I say the process involved in the assessment is it goes to Integrity Services and they assess the information. We are largely well advanced in that process. We have asked for more documentation. That, I understand, requires cabinet approval because they are cabinet documents. Our assessment has gone as far as it can until those documents are provided. We will see what happens in that space. Once the assessment proceeds, if the investigation or the assessment is that there should be an investigation, that recommendation comes from that team to our ELT, which is the executive leadership team. That is a seven-member team including myself. There is myself, the executive directors of both Corruption and Crime, Corporate Services, the police group and Strategy, Innovation and Insights. That group meets every two weeks. The recommendation from Integrity Services is assessed at those meetings. There are robust discussions had about the course proposed.

I can assure you that I am one voice and I have never had the occasion where my view has prevailed over a majority contrary view of the ELT Integrity Services' recommendation. If we decide to investigate, the team investigates. They then provide a recommendation to the team. A lawyer prepares a briefing note if there are to be charges laid. The briefing note goes to the head of the police group of Corruption, which is a superintendent of police. He notes the file, makes his recommendation. It then goes to the executive director of Corruption who is a senior lawyer, Paul Alsbury. It goes from him, if he agrees and recommends, to me finally to sign off on charges. If I sign off on charges, I recommend that the brief be given to a police officer attached to the group to independently assess for themselves whether the evidence is sufficient to lay charges and, if so, whether it is in the public interest to do so. If we then lay charges the brief goes to the DPP and then it is up to the DPP whether they prosecute or not and ultimately, I suppose, the Attorney-General could have a say in whether they agree with the DPP's view.

I think that process I have just outlined would make it very clear that I would never have the ability to influence improperly an investigation. Those ELT meetings are minuted. Those minutes go to our commissioners who include Syd Williams, a very senior silk here in Brisbane, Marshall Irwin, a retired District Court judge and chief magistrate, Deborah Holliday, who is a senior barrister experienced in criminal law, and Anne Tiernan, who is a political governance expert at Griffith University. They get the minutes. They meet with us as a commission—today, in fact—every month and they routinely query decisions we make and we have robust debate about the course the commission is taking. Those minutes are also viewed and available to and regularly seen by our oversight committee, the PCCC, which again we meet with publicly and in private, and out of session if necessary, and it has the ability to question any direction that the commission is taking.

I think it is important to keep in mind in the context I am talking about that although I am the head of the organisation and I take that responsibility very seriously, I am but one small cog in a very large process that is subject to significant, as it should be, governance and transparency controls. We value our independence and integrity and I can assure you we do not welcome the sort of debate we have heard, necessary though it is, that distracts us from the good work and results we are achieving routinely in this space.

I should add that if, in fact, any member of the ELT or any investigator involved in any case perceives or has a conflict of interest they are required to fill out a conflict of interest form, declare it and, if necessary, stand aside from any decision-making process. All members of the ELT from time to time have done it, including myself. I have stood aside from various investigations over time.

The most recent example, you might remember, was there was a complaint made about me in my conduct in writing to the Logan City Council to advise them that if they were going to sack their CEO they should be aware that to do so for improper reasons would be a reprisal, a breach of our act and a breach of the Public Interest Disclosure Act. The LGAQ took exception to the tone of that letter, complained about my conduct in writing that letter to the oversight committee, the PCCC.

Whilst that complaint was alive and before it had been resolved in my favour, as it ultimately was, I was given the material to assess whether the then mayor of Logan City should be charged with corruption, Luke Smith. I thought it prudent to stand aside from my role in that process because of the fact that there was a complaint about my contact with Logan hanging over my head. I stepped aside and Paul Alsbury, the head of our Corruption division, stepped in, assessed the brief, approved the recommendation to go to a police officer who ultimately was satisfied the evidence was sufficient and the charges against Luke Smith were laid.

The complaint about me was publicly resolved in my favour thereafter, and I approved the subsequent sets of charges against Luke Smith and other councillors in more recent times. Again, that is another example of how the governance around the commission is necessarily very robust and we take great care to make sure that there is not only no conflict or lack of independence but also no perception of it.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you. Certainly I never seek to impugn your integrity and the work of the CCC. My question goes back to the process. You have said that, after receiving the phone call from the Deputy Premier on your business mobile, you did not take file notes but you reported the call to the CEO on the Monday morning; is that correct?

Mr MacSporrán: Yes.

Mr JANETZKI: Would the Deputy Premier have potentially contacted anyone else within the CCC or would it have been just the one call to you?

Mr MacSporrán: I suspect it was only the one call to me and it was to me, I suppose, as the head of the organisation, as someone she had had dealings with before. As I say, my impression was that it was a courtesy call to me. I doubt whether she spoke to anyone else, unless someone from our integrity services branch contacted her directly to get more material, but I suspect that would have been done through her solicitor who was then on the record, having delivered the documents to me Monday morning.

Mr JANETZKI: As you mentioned, the Deputy Premier spoke with you only one other time on that business mobile—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order, Mr Chair. Under standing order 115, I suggest that these questions are hypotheticals.

Mr McDONALD: Mr Chair, this is about the effectiveness of the CCC. If millions of dollars are being spent on the effectiveness of the CCC, then certainly these questions are very appropriate.

CHAIR: Mr Janetzki, can you—

Mr JANETZKI: I will keep moving on.

Mr MacSporrán: I should correct one thing. I did not mean to convey that there was only one previous call. There were, in fact, two previous calls: one about funding and one, further back, probably last year or it might have been the year before, concerning the allegation made against the Deputy Premier that reports of corruption within Ipswich City Council had been routinely made to her and she had done nothing with them. She simply rang to obtain information confirming that she had referred all such allegations to the CCC, as was her duty. We simply confirmed that and gave her the figures, I think. That was the first call ever on the business mobile. The second was the funding issue and the third was the Sunday just gone.

Mr JANETZKI: Obviously the Deputy Premier has your business mobile number and that is fine. I want to understand whether it is common practice for persons under assessment to reach out and contact you personally. For instance, did Minister Bailey when the mangocube allegations were made or did Minister Miles in relation to Lady Cilento? Would you have received similar phone calls from those ministers during that period?

Mr MacSporran: No, and clearly it is unusual. Possibly it could be said to be unwise, because of what we have seen develop in the debate about it, but quite harmless, frankly. It is unusual. There is no doubt about that.

Mr JANETZKI: My next question is again to the process of the investigation going forward or the assessment going forward.

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, I do not want to disrupt the member for Toowoomba South, but this appears to be more of a dialogue going back and forth than questions. I ask for your guidance. A question needs to be put within the standing orders framework. Certainly I know the chair is more than welcome to take any questions, but I ask the member for Toowoomba South to frame his questions, as opposed to a dialogue going back and forth.

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair, this is a search for the truth. I would not want to see anything intervene there. I think Mr MacSporran can speak for himself.

CHAIR: Just a minute. I do not want a debate.

Mr JANETZKI: I will get to the question. Mr MacSporran, what evidence are you gathering from the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority and the cabinet office to identify what information, with respect to model property value increases and planning scheme changes, was available to the Deputy Premier when the Woolloongabba property purchase occurred?

Mr MacSporran: I do not want to go into the detail of what we are doing in this space.

CHAIR: I think some of that material would be privileged, wouldn't it?

Mr MacSporran: I can tell you this much: the assessment necessarily has to be thorough, so that we understand the process and what information was available; what had or had not been declared in the context; what part, if any, the Deputy Premier played in the project going forward; the choices being made about options that were available and so forth. We have done most of the assessment. It is currently awaiting—and we have requested—documents that need, as I understand the process, cabinet clearance to be provided to us, which will reveal the nuts and bolts of the discussions and decisions that were made and the basis for them. That is a necessary part of the assessment. I really should not be pre-empting the outcome of all of that, because we are simply in the assessment stage. We have not reached the stage where we have yet made a decision, nor could we, as to whether there should be an investigation. That is the next step.

CHAIR: We will go to government questions.

Ms McMILLAN: I acknowledge the Attorney-General and I wish her a happy birthday for today. Attorney, I refer to page 35 of the SDS. Can you advise how the Palaszczuk government is continuing to support the Crime and Corruption Commission's vital work?

Mrs D'ATH: I am pleased to be able to talk about the important work that the Crime and Corruption Commission undertakes each and every day and the importance we have placed on that through this year's budget. In 2018-19, the Crime and Corruption Commission's budget was enhanced by providing an additional \$7.4 million over four years and \$1.9 million per annum ongoing for frontline investigators and human source capability; and \$16.3 million over four years and \$3.9 million per annum ongoing to improve its digital and forensic technologies and heighten its information security platform. I cannot emphasise enough, and I am sure the chairman would agree, that forensic technologies are critical to the work that they do, because so much of the crime that we see happening is happening online or using online platforms to support those offences.

In 2019-20, the budget is \$4.185 million, or 6.73 per cent, higher than the 2018-19 budget of \$62.182 million. Additional frontline investigators have supported the increase in demand for the CCC's investigative function, particularly relating to corruption. Significant corruption outcomes in 2018-19 include Operation Front, which resulted in all but four councillors in Logan City Council being charged and administrators being brought in to run the council. Operation Windage identified significant governance failures and cultural issues relating to Ipswich City Council and resulted in multiple charges and administrators being brought in to run the council. Taskforce Flaxton examined corruption and corruption risks in Queensland's correctional services facilities and made 33 recommendations for reform.

A full-time human source unit, HSU, has been established. The HSU includes one sworn sergeant of police and three unsworn officers, all of whom are experienced in either human source management or intelligence. Since the HSU's establishment, 64 potential human sources have been assessed, with 260 intelligence reports being generated and disseminated both internally and externally to the CCC.

Further, the CCC has made significant progress in transforming its digital workplace. The progress includes the completion of a new security framework, the implementation of new forensic computing technology that will enable self-service acquisition of evidence from mobile devices, a new case management system in implementation and the commencement of the implementation of the CCC's cloud computing strategy that is focused on backup and disaster recovery.

As all members would be aware, on 1 March this year we welcomed amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act that most significantly included the removal of the benefit or detriment component of the definition of 'corrupt conduct', which recognises that people outside the Public Service can exploit, adversely influence or corrupt public sector processes. I know the CCC certainly welcomed those amendments that help strengthen the tools they have to do the important work they do in this state.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 35 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General outline what work is being done by the CCC to investigate and stamp out organised crime in Queensland, including outlaw motorcycle gangs?

Mrs D'ATH: The CCC addresses organised crime in Queensland by using its specialist functions and powers to help the Queensland Police Service and other law enforcement partners stamp out organised crime. This may involve using its coercive hearing powers, undertaking investigations on its own or jointly with the QPS and other law enforcement agencies, undertaking intelligence focused operations and restraining and forfeiting criminal proceeds.

The CCC supports investigations into organised crime through the use of its coercive hearing powers which compel witnesses to provide information. Organised crime in Queensland takes on many forms, as I have spoken about before. In 2018-19 key outcomes achieved through the use of the CCC's coercive powers included: identification of drug sources both within Queensland and interstate; identification of additional investigative opportunities for the QPS and CCC's partner agencies; confirming the identity of an offender in relation to an armed robbery; assisting in the disruption of a network trafficking in firearms and recovery of weapons and ammunition; advancing an investigation into the theft of livestock in rural Queensland; identifying the involvement of outlaw motorcycle gangs in a shooting incident, related violent incidents and ongoing criminal offences; and advancing an investigation into a syndicate focused on the distribution of doping products within the Queensland horseracing industry.

In relation to the crime investigations, as at 26 June this year, over the last financial year the CCC commenced three investigations and partnered with other law enforcement agencies in 10 referred investigations focusing on organised crime. This involved 154 coercive hearings with 141 witnesses giving evidence. The CCC's own investigation into organised crime has resulted in 25 people being charged with 71 offences and drug seizures to the value of \$27,745. Over the same period, 39 prosecutions were finalised for CCC investigations. Significant outcomes include 3½ years imprisonment for drug offences, five years imprisonment for drug offences including trafficking, head sentence of 7½ years imprisonment with a parole eligibility of 20 December 2020 for drug offences, 5½ years imprisonment to serve a minimum of 20 months and 81,700 property items forfeited for fraud.

In relation to their intelligence operations, the CCC also commenced four intelligence operations focused on understanding organised crime methodologies and the involvement of criminal organisations and their participants in criminal activity. One intelligence operation used covert strategies to identify suspected organised crime participants and evolved into a joint investigation with the QPS focused on the trafficking of multiple dangerous drugs throughout South-East Queensland. This investigation is ongoing.

The other three intelligence operations involve the use of hearings to advance and support other law enforcement agency investigations into organised criminal activity including: acquiring and disseminating intelligence on Queensland based outlaw motorcycle gangs to multiple QPS investigations; addressing intelligence gaps in relation to the activities of a particular OMCG and the illicit markets that they allege to be operating in; and identifying an interstate entity supplying drugs into the Gold Coast which has resulted in the deaths of two people and hospitalisation of a further six people.

Finally, can I say to committee members in relation to organised crime matters that for the 2018-19 period the CCC assessed 90 new confiscation matters, obtained 31 proceeds of crime restraining orders with a value of \$11.54 million and concluded 34 confiscation matters resulting in another \$9.96 million forfeited to the state.

CHAIR: My question is to the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission. I refer to page 35 of the SDS. Can you outline how the new digital workplace being implemented by the CCC will assist and enhance their work?

Mr MacSporran: The digital program involves program Unify and Nexus. Implementation of a new and integrated case management system, which is Nexus, is one component of program Unify. The fundamental role of Nexus will be to streamline and automate operational processes through work flow and notifications, support portfolio assessment and review, manage investigations and projects, support coordination and collaboration across the commission's operational activities, generate template based forms, communications and e-briefs and enable information exchange. Nexus will, therefore, provide efficiencies by introducing contemporary commission-wide, consistent case management work practices, removing the need for some activities and processes—for example, maintaining hardcopy files or excel spreadsheets—taking advantage of automation and system functionality—for example, work flows and approvals; single data entry of the same information—and becoming the single point of truth for operational performance reporting. It will also consolidate four existing systems within the CCC: COMPASS, the corruption database; OASIS, the crime database; IRAS, the intelligence database; and IMAC, which is the Queensland Police Service system used by seconded QPS officers working in the organised crime unit.

The configuration of Nexus is about 50 per cent complete. It was scheduled for deployment this month, but release was delayed due to scope and supplier performance challenges. Fortunately, we got on top of that very quickly. It has been sorted. It has resulted in a delay in it coming online to next April, I think it is, but it will come in under budget by about \$115,000. It is a good outcome for all concerned. This is a classic case of getting on top of the potential problems early rather than being stuck with a hugely expensive and delayed problem down the track.

The delay has given us the opportunity to better understand the system's out of the box capabilities; review and consider the CCC's requirements, including scope, complexity and gaps; conduct a comprehensive review of what has been configured to date; and adjust ways of working with the supplier to ensure the CCC achieves a fit for purpose outcome within the set budget. It is an exciting project. The staff are all on board. It will undoubtedly increase our capability. We are looking forward to working with that new system in due course.

Ms McMILLAN: Attorney-General, I refer to page 68 of the SDS. Can you advise of any steps being taken by the Palaszczuk government to maintain the integrity of the Queensland electoral system?

Mrs D'ATH: As all members will recall, on 17 May 2018 the Palaszczuk Labor government passed the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. This bill outlawed political donations from prohibited donors. It also made it a criminal offence to participate in a scheme to circumvent the Prohibited Donors Scheme. The donation ban applies to all political donations made from 12 October 2017.

We know that the LNP were not supportive of this particular ban. The Electoral Commission administers the ban on political donations from property developers and industry organisations, with a majority of members being property developers. The ECQ established the Prohibited Donors Scheme to implement this ban through a combination of proactive and reactive regulatory strategies. Proactive strategies focus on providing education and regular stakeholder engagement to assist people to comply. Reactive strategies involve audits of disclosures to uncover potential breaches and investigation of tips from the public. The ECQ has released 17 fact sheets, a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions, a self-assessment tool to assist self-identification of property developers as well as holding information sessions with key stakeholders and promptly responding to queries from the public.

Under the legislation, applications can be made to the Electoral Commissioner for a determination that an entity is not a prohibited donor if they can satisfy the Electoral Commissioner of this fact. Determinations can also be revoked if the Electoral Commissioner is no longer satisfied the entity is not a prohibited donor.

I can advise that as at 28 June 2019 the ECQ has granted determinations that four entities are not prohibited donors and one has been revoked. The ECQ has undertaken recovery action of \$18,599 worth of donations identified as being from prohibited donors. I can also advise the committee about the outcome of the High Court challenge by Gary Spence, former LNP state president, which challenged the constitutional validity of the legislation. At the same time, due to changes to federal legislation while that case was going on, where the Morrison government brought in changes that sought to override state legislation predominantly in this space, they became the subject matter of the High Court challenge as well.

I am pleased to say that not only was our legislation upheld as being valid in relation to prohibited donors but also the new section 302CA that was put into the Commonwealth laws was seen to be completely and wholly invalid. It was interesting that the commentary from the majority of the High Court found that the section that was put into the act and took effect from 1 January this year had no real effect whatsoever in relation to the federal laws and federal political parties and had significant impacts and sought to impede on state and territory laws. Its main purpose was to undermine state laws. We welcome the finding that it was wholly invalid. Consequently, there are costs ordered in that matter and we are still working our way through those cost issues.

We have recently heard an announcement from the LNP around their diamond donation for developers. I understand that the ECQ has very recently made a ruling that it does not believe that that is a contravention of the act. Having said that, I am very disappointed that such a scheme has been established with conveniently a price of \$990 when the threshold for real-time disclosure is \$1,000. Despite it technically or legally not being seen to be a circumvention of the laws, the LNP's acting president Dave Hutchinson—I will stand to be corrected if he is the acting president or the elected president—said in speaking to this new membership, 'For those wondering what this is all about, this is a class of membership that's allowed under current state legislation that effectively prohibits property developers from participating in our party.'

It is pretty clear what the intent of that membership is, and that is so that the LNP can continue to collect money from developers and, because it is a membership and not a donation, not have to disclose it. No-one in the public—no Queenslander—will ever know how many property developers are joining up through that membership and who they are. That is disappointing. It is one thing to find loopholes in laws, but to do it so blatantly and to do it so that the public do not know who is giving money to the LNP and how many of them are doing so is a sad reflection on the lack of transparency. I suggest that all political parties and all candidates need to be as transparent as they can about their political donations so that the public can have that knowledge when it comes to election time.

I will finish by saying that at the last state election in 2017, because of our real-time disclosure system voters were able to cast their vote knowing that 1,023 gifts had been disclosed to the value of \$3.714 million. I can advise that, as at 31 March 2019, 9,115 disclosures have been lodged in the electronic disclosure system. I am very pleased to say that I have noticed that another jurisdiction has an almost identical system operating now in their jurisdiction. I hope that more states and territories pick up real-time disclosure and that the Commonwealth gives real consideration to real-time disclosure because it is important to have that transparency around our donations.

Ms McMILLAN: I thank the Attorney-General for that comprehensive response.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: I defer to the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr MacSporran, the Deputy Premier said on Tuesday that she would seek advice from the CCC to allow her to table her file note of your telephone discussion. Has the Deputy Premier sought that advice and will you allow her to table the file note in parliament?

Mr MacSporran: She certainly has not requested my consent for the tabling of the file note, but I would have no objection to the file note being produced—nothing to hide.

Mr JANETZKI: Turning back to the cabinet documents questions that I started just before the last break—and they will go to the process, not the content—on what date was the request made for the cabinet documents to inform the CCC assessment of the complaint against the Deputy Premier?

Mr MacSporran: I cannot give you the actual date or day. We got the material from the Deputy Premier on the Monday. I suspect that it would have been either later on the Monday or certainly soon after—maybe the Tuesday. I do not know is the short answer. I know that the request has been made and it had been made before yesterday, from memory.

Mr JANETZKI: Do those cabinet documents or the request only relate to Cross River Rail related documents or would there be other subject matters as well?

Mr MacSporran: I would anticipate, although I do not know, that they would relate only to Cross River Rail. As I say, I do not know the extent of the request. That is a matter of detail I would not ordinarily be involved in.

Mr JANETZKI: Again, on the same topic, is the CCC including in its assessment the matter referred to you earlier this week that a decision was made to shift the location of the Cross River Rail station at Dutton Park to be closer to the Deputy Premier's investment property?

Mr MacSporran: Again, I am somewhat speculating but I imagine—

CHAIR: Excuse me. Could you rephrase the question? There is an imputation there.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Chairman. Is the CCC including in its assessment, in relation to the matter referred to you earlier this week, the location of the Cross River Rail stations?

Mr MacSporran: I do not know for a fact, but I am assuming it would because that would be central to the issue that has arisen, I think. Can I update you that I have just been told that we have just received the cabinet documents. That will enable the assessment process to proceed as intended.

Mr JANETZKI: Given your earlier assessment that the Deputy Premier's call to you may have been unwise, did you contemplate terminating the call as it was occurring?

Mr MacSporran: I did not because, although unusual and arguably a little unwise, I did not think there was any need to stand on ceremony and be rude about it. I took the view that she was, as she stated, ringing me as a courtesy, which I appreciated, frankly, and more particularly I appreciated the information that we were going to get the documentation as soon as possible, which is always the sticking point for us in terms of a timely assessment of matters. I was very pleased to hear that we were going to be able to move this forward very quickly given the high-profile, public nature of it. I did not think there was a need to stand on ceremony and give a lecture to the Deputy Premier about what might have been appropriate or not. I took it in the spirit in which it was intended and got on with my job.

Ms McMILLAN: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. These issues are confidential and ongoing matters. I wonder whether the shadow Attorney-General has any budget related questions.

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Chairman. Mr MacSporran, on the basis of your last comment, in future, then, would you accept telephone calls from other persons who may have been referred to the CCC and under assessment?

Mr MacSporran: Well, providing I understood that the call was related to the complaint about them, I probably would not. As I said before, the reason I accepted this call—or returned the call, I should say—is that I did not know what the topic was and I was concerned that I might have needed to discuss funding issues, which are dear to my heart and pretty critical to my agency's success.

Mr JANETZKI: The Deputy Premier left a message on your voicemail and you returned the call?

Mr MacSporran: I actually did not get to the phone as it rang and then saw her name and returned the call immediately. I do not know whether she left a message. I did not check. I just simply returned the call.

Mr JANETZKI: Have you checked since to see whether she left a voice message?

Mr MacSporran: No, I did not. No.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba South, please keep your questions relevant.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Chair. Did the Deputy Premier consult with you before leaving the country as to whether it would impede or delay the CCC's assessment of this matter, and what is your opinion of that travel?

Ms McMILLAN: I have a point of order on relevance and also imputation.

CHAIR: Excuse me—

Mr JANETZKI: I will rephrase the question, Chair.

CHAIR: Do not interrupt me, please. I understand you are going to rephrase the question, so you beat me to the punch.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Chair. Did the Deputy Premier consult you, Mr MacSporran, before leaving the country as to whether it would impede or delay the CCC's assessment of these matters?

Mr MacSporran: No, she did not. But given it has been public knowledge that she was scheduled to leave today, I imagine that if my integrity services assessing team thought there was an issue with that they would have informed the Deputy Premier and/or me to make sure they got from her what they needed before she left if it was a delaying issue. With regard to the timing of things, as I see it our assessment was complete except for the cabinet documents, which we now have, so I do not see an issue with the Deputy Premier leaving. But she certainly has not contacted me, no.

Mr JANETZKI: When do you expect the assessment of these matters to be completed?

Mr MacSporrán: I am always reluctant to put a date or time on it. As soon as possible, obviously, but I have not seen the cabinet documents and I probably will not for some time. It depends on the complexity of those, how clear the documentation is and how transparent the decision-making process is before I can really assess that. As I say, I probably will not get to assess that. The first I will see of it is the recommendation that is made to me by the integrity services team when it comes to ELT.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, I another question in relation to the process in the future. Mr MacSporrán, given the matters that have occurred now over the course of the last week, will the CCC be considering any process or investigation for the receiving of personal phone calls from persons under assessment or under investigation?

Mr MacSporrán: It is difficult to lump all of that into one process. We already have processes where we take care with how we deal with both complainants and subject persons. Sometimes there is a need to make sure that subject people do not come to know there is a complaint made against them for operational reasons. Sometimes there is a need to approach them and get documentation or other clarification. Each case is judged on its merits.

In terms of my personal contact with people who are the subject of complaints, it is very unusual that I would have such contact. It is, however, not unusual, it seems to me—and my practice has been—to have some contact with some ministers and most DGs. I need to have a good working relationship with those people for a whole host of different reasons. They are always conducted with the utmost respect and propriety. Both myself and the people I deal with, including ministers, understand that and respect my independence. I have not, until this case, had any difficulty with it.

It is a cautionary note though; I take your point. It is unusual. I need to be forever on my guard, I suppose. But I did not see the need to, as I say, lecture the Deputy Premier in any way about her approach. It is unfortunate, but it was taken in the spirit in which it was intended.

Mr LISTER: I would like to defer to the member for Noosa.

Ms BOLTON: My question is to the minister. I refer to page 49 of the Department of Justice SDS regarding the resolution of services. Minister, can you advise when an increase in funding will be made available for community legal centres to address shortfalls and for an extension of services to provide for WorkCover and other exclusions?

Mrs D'ATH: I know that the member for Noosa is as passionate as I am about community legal centres and the great work they do. The state government advocated very strongly last year with the Commonwealth that we needed to see certainty in the federal budget. The current national partnerships agreement expires on 30 June next year, and we did not want to see another funding cliff like we saw last time, so I was very pleased that we were able to see funding in the 2019 federal budget.

Having said that, we still do not have the detail of what Queensland's financial component is going to be. We know what the total funding is across the country. We do not know how much Queensland is going to get and we do not know what the criteria are going to be for the use of that funding. What we have had in the past is a narrowing of what that funding can be used for, which means that organisations which otherwise previously were able to access funding then could not because they did not fall within that narrow definition.

Also there is a change in the way the Commonwealth is providing their funding. They are now not proposing to fund the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service directly and they want the states to administer that as well. There is a real concern—and I absolutely support that concern of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service—that over time their funding will be diminished because they are being put into a bigger pool and they will not necessarily have that standalone funding. We are still working through those issues. I know that ATSILS would rather see their funding still being done directly to them through the Commonwealth.

As far as the state's component, we have increased our funding in the sense that we have previously had the core funding that has been provided to CLCs and then we have been providing additional temporary funding for other services, particularly those that go to DV. I am very proud to say that in this year's budget that is no longer temporary funding. We have increased our core funding to make that additional funding permanent going forward so we can give certainty to CLCs that they have that funding and they do not have to worry each year whether that is going to be there or not.

We have a lot of work still to do to make sure that we are supporting our CLCs. I know they would like more funding. I understand that. There is a Commonwealth Productivity Commission report that says CLCs need more funding, but we need to work with the Commonwealth. We cannot do all of the carrying ourselves. In fact, our contribution versus the Commonwealth's contribution has grown. Over

the years Queensland is putting more and more in. We are not seeing the same from the Commonwealth. I really want to see the Commonwealth step up and provide more support to our community legal centres so we can collectively work together to provide the support they need, because we know they support the most vulnerable in our community.

Mr BERKMAN: I have a question in relation to the work of the Office of the Public Guardian. It would be best answered directly by the CEO of the PG, but it is not clear to me procedurally whether I can ask a question of Ms Siegel-Brown directly.

Mrs D'ATH: No. To assist, Chair, the Public Guardian is a statutory authority but not a statutory body for the purpose of schedule 7. Certainly the member could not direct her to attend to answer any questions, but I am happy to assist in whatever way I can. If I believe those questions can be better supplemented by the Public Guardian, I can invite the Public Guardian up.

Mr BERKMAN: In that case, I might ask the question of the DDG of justice services, who I understand has oversight of that area.

Mrs D'ATH: Again, your question has to be to the director-general or the minister. It is up to the director-general or the minister to then ask other parties to come forward. If you want to direct the question either to myself or the director-general, we are more than happy to take the question.

Mr BERKMAN: I seek leave of the committee to table a document, which is a question on notice and the answer provided by Minister Farmer—

CHAIR: Could the member for Maiwar wait one second?

Mr BERKMAN: Certainly.

Mrs D'ATH: While that is being circulated, can I ask what number question on notice that was, or did you say that was to a different minister?

Mr BERKMAN: That is right. It is question on notice No. 18 to Minister Farmer and answered by her yesterday.

CHAIR: Attorney, is it a document that you would prefer to see?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes. I understand the committee has to consider whether they approve it being tabled. If it is, I would certainly like an opportunity to have a quick read of it before we go to any questions.

CHAIR: Does the committee consent to the tabling of the document or do you need more time?

Ms McMILLAN: I would appreciate a little bit more time, Mr Chair.

Mr McDONALD: Mr Chair, it is a question on notice to the parliament. I am happy to accept it.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr BERKMAN: The document that has just been tabled sets out details of the Office of the Public Guardian's engagement with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women centred around a meeting in October last year. From the perspective of the Office of the Public Guardian and its role in the ongoing protection of vulnerable kids in the youth justice system, can you reflect on the adequacy of the government's response as set out in that document?

Mrs D'ATH: Can I just clarify whether the question is to me or the director-general?

Mr BERKMAN: I will ask the question to the director-general, if I might.

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order, Mr Chair. I am just concerned that the question is asking for an opinion.

CHAIR: I agree. Would you mind rephrasing the question to take out the element of seeking an opinion?

Mr BERKMAN: Certainly. From the perspective of the Office of the Public Guardian, can you explain how this response is adequate to protect the interests of vulnerable children in the youth justice system?

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Chair—

CHAIR: Member for Maiwar, I asked you to rephrase the question to take out the request for an opinion.

Mr BERKMAN: Certainly. I will try again, if I might. From the perspective of the Office of the Public Guardian, can you explain the adequacy of the measures taken and outlined in the minister's response in that answer?

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Chair, point of order. When you are asking for a perspective, you are actually asking for an opinion.

Mr BERKMAN: No. I am asking a question from the perspective of the Office of the Public Guardian. As I said, this is a question that is best answered by the CEO of OPG. Whether the director-general chooses to refer it that way is obviously outside my control.

CHAIR: I do not want to debate it. Could you put the question again, please?

Mr BERKMAN: I can try again, Chair—fourth time lucky, I suppose. From the perspective of the Office of the Public Guardian—

Ms McMILLAN: Sorry, Mr Chair, point of order. Again, this is seeking an opinion and a hypothetical.

CHAIR: I thank the member for Mansfield.

Mr BERKMAN: I will simplify, Chair. Can the director-general explain what measures have been taken to ensure that the functions of the Office of the Public Guardian can be properly carried out in protecting vulnerable children who have been detained in watch houses?

Mr Mackie: Thank you for the question. In relation to this particular subject matter around youth justice, I am not a responsible director-general for youth justice so I cannot answer in that context. What I can say is in terms of the funding that has been provided to the Office of the Public Guardian. There is continued funding of \$5 million in 2019-20, and that includes an additional 32 full-time-equivalent positions for that office. It is reflecting the workload that the Public Guardian and the community visitors within the Office of the Public Guardian are doing to make sure they are visiting visitable sites and also including the two youth detention centres.

I know that watch houses were one of the relevant issues around youths in detention. I do not know the latest, but I know that all youth were removed from watch houses last week or the week before and there were none in there. My job as director-general is to ensure the Public Guardian has enough funding to be able to fulfil her commitment to visit these sites to ensure that children are receiving the care and services they require while they are in detention.

CHAIR: I now go to the government members.

Mrs McMAHON: My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to page 58 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General outline how the Palaszczuk government is supporting bodies such as the Queensland Family and Child Commission to continue their vital work in protecting young Queenslanders?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. We know that the role of the Queensland Family and Child Commissioner is a very important one indeed. The Queensland government certainly is committed to keeping our community safe and assisting in the state's child protection activities by providing funding of \$13.5 million in 2019-20 for child protection litigation. I should say that the Director of Child Protection Litigation is an independent statutory officer within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The role of the DCPL is to decide whether or not an application for a child protection order should be made for a child and the type of orders that should be sought. If an application for a child protection order is made, DCPL is responsible for conducting the legal proceedings in the Childrens Court. The DCPL works collaboratively with the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor within the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to manage child protection order application proceedings to ensure applications and outcomes are dealt with efficiently by using evidence based decision-making.

I can advise that the Director of Child Protection Litigation has improved outcomes for children and families, I am pleased to say, by ensuring greater accountability and oversight for child protection applications, providing assurance that state intervention occurs only where necessary, promoting orders that are tailored to meet child protection and care needs, and ensuring application processes are delivered in a fair, timely and consistent way. The government has committed funding for the DCPL of \$12.6 million to deliver child protection litigation activities and a further \$150,000 for a statutory review of DCPL as required by section 41 of the Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016, which is to occur as soon as practicable after the end of three years of operation.

CHAIR: The next question is to the chief executive officer of Legal Aid. I refer to page 43 of the SDS and ask the chief executive officer to outline what Legal Aid Queensland is doing to support Queenslanders, particular regional Queenslanders, accessing the justice services they need.

Mr Reilly: As you probably all know, Legal Aid Queensland provides quality and cost-effective services to financially disadvantaged Queenslanders. We provide a wide range of services: community legal education, legal information and advice, duty lawyer services, court and tribunal representation,

and dispute resolution. We provide these services across a wide range of areas of law: criminal law, youth justice, child protection, domestic violence and various areas of civil law as well. We are committed to providing frontline legal services to rural, regional and remote areas of Queensland. We do this in a whole variety of ways, and we are always trying to find new ways to do it.

Legal Aid has 13 regional offices, and approximately 30 per cent of Legal Aid Queensland staff work regionally—outside the Brisbane CBD. This represents approximately 188 employees. We have a statewide network of regional preferred supplier private law firms that contribute to supporting Queensland's justice system. By way of some statistics on that front, in 2018-19 Legal Aid Queensland spent more than \$44 million in fees to private law firms outside Brisbane. That represents nearly 68 per cent of the total fees paid statewide to private law firms. That is a significant amount that I hope helps support the economy in rural and regional Queensland. We also work closely with 37 community legal centres across the state, many of whom do great work in regional centres all over Queensland. They are great colleagues to have, as are the private law firms.

Many CLCs assist Legal Aid Queensland in delivering domestic and family violence duty lawyer services in regional courts. That partnership that we have been developing with CLCs and private law firms in increasing the reach of our duty lawyer services for domestic and family violence is something that has been a great part of Legal Aid's work in recent years. Legal Aid also coordinates the very important regional legal assistance forums. These forums meet a couple of times a year in our regional areas to enable legal assistance service providers in a particular region to work together cooperatively and collaboratively to deliver legal services to disadvantaged people living in rural and remote areas of Queensland.

I will now turn to some specifics of some of the frontline services. We have criminal law duty lawyer services in magistrates and children's courts in regional towns across Queensland. We have family law duty law services in 10 locations. We have domestic and family violence duty lawyer services in 18 locations, including five new locations at Redcliffe, Sandgate, Cleveland, Gladstone and Hervey Bay. We have child protection duty lawyer services in seven locations. Our in-house counsel team appear in regional and remote courts on the court circuits that are a real feature of legal life in Queensland and an important part of it.

Legal Aid Queensland has recently introduced a new outreach service to improve the availability of child protection services to people living in South-West, Central and North Queensland. It is a Brisbane based team that travel regularly out to these communities. The way in which they are approaching that is to develop links and partnerships with services across the state and hopefully enable more and more people to access legal support in this important area of law. We also have a number of legal outreach clinics where lawyers travel to surrounding regions or link in by videoconferencing to provide legal advice services.

We have expanded our wonderful Farm and Rural Legal Service to North Queensland. We have a lawyer in Townsville now as well as one in Brisbane. A recent area of law that we have been doing more work on over the past year or so is the National Disability Insurance Scheme appeal response service. We also have an employment and anti-discrimination service. We designed those services in such a way that people across Queensland are able to access them.

One of the things we have done over the last few years is increase our involvement in remote area court circuits and community programs. For example, Legal Aid Queensland now provides service delivery in the domestic and family violence courts at Palm Island and also in Mount Isa. We also provide criminal duty lawyer representation in remote communities in the Torres Strait Islands and Gulf of Carpentaria. We do so in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service. We also work with really good organisations like the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network, who are based up north.

Legal Aid is committed to contributing to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice and child protection systems. Over the past 18 months we have established a First Nations advisory committee led by a board member and barrister Joshua Creamer to lead development of Legal Aid Queensland's capability in service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including in regional, rural and remote areas. The committee has developed a First Nations strategic plan to increase awareness and accessibility of Legal Aid services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in both metropolitan and rural and regional areas. Since March 2017 Legal Aid Queensland has doubled its proportion of Indigenous employees, from 2.04 per cent to 4.08 per cent. We are aiming to achieve a target of nine per cent by 2022. We are taking that seriously and we aim to get there.

Legal Aid Queensland has also helped many people affected by natural disasters in regional Queensland. The most recent example of that has been in North Queensland following the big rain event in Townsville and across the north-west earlier this year. We set up a flood hotline for affected people to obtain legal advice and we have also got people on the ground in Townsville who can help people. We are working collaboratively with the Townsville Community Legal Service to provide those services, which is always the best way to do things, to work together to get the job done. We have attended two insurance forums in Townsville facilitated by the Insurance Council of Australia and we will be attending a third forum in July 2019. Those forums provide a great opportunity for people of Townsville to come along and learn about their rights in this area.

Legal Aid Queensland, through its Farm and Rural Legal Service, provides free specialist advice and information on credit and debit related issues to primary producers and rural small business operators in rural and remote areas of Queensland. This assistance includes the conduct and negotiations with financiers and other creditors as well as attending farm debt mediations conducted pursuant to the Queensland Farm Finance strategy under the Farm Business Debt Mediation Act 2017. In May 2019 Legal Aid Queensland provided outreach legal services at agricultural shows in regional Queensland including Laura, Alpha, Barcaldine, Tambo, Boulia and Blackall. The Farm and Rural Legal Service employs two senior lawyers.

Legal Aid Queensland currently also has a graduate program which operates in Brisbane and in our regional offices. There are currently eight graduates within this program, including four regional graduate positions. These positions are located in regional offices in Townsville, Maroochydore and Ipswich. They are really great environments for young lawyers to learn about the law. They are a bit like the old articulated clerk system that I came through. They get two years work and if they are going okay, we try to keep them on. Three of these positions are identified and filled with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates.

Ms McMILLAN: My question is to the Attorney. I refer to page 94 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General please outline how the Public Trustee is helping Queenslanders get their affairs in order, in particular in regional Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. As we know, the Public Trustee has been supporting our community now for almost 103 years since it was first established in 1916 when Queenslanders were leaving to fight in the First World War. Staff of the then public curator were making wills for servicemen on the docks and in Army camps. They do tremendous work out in our communities.

The Public Trustee continues to provide trustee, estate and administration services that make a positive difference in the lives of Queenslanders. I can advise that those services aim to ensure prudent management of the financial assets of members of the community, ensure an orderly succession of assets between generations and assist the Queensland community by making wills free of charge and enduring powers of attorney at an affordable cost.

The Public Trustee has an enduring commitment to provide community service obligations to the Queensland community across this great state and it undertakes a wide variety of those community service obligations, including the free will-making service. Funding of these CSOs is provided from revenue received from other activities performed and investment incomes earned by the Public Trustee.

The Public Trustee makes a large number of wills each year. In 2018-19 the Public Trustee made 21,431 wills for Queenslanders. Committee members may be interested to know that it actually holds 1.1 million wills in its wills bunker. I have actually been to the wills bunker. It is an atmospherically controlled safe storage facility. In fact, one of the first wills they hold is from a young serviceman who was at the Ekka showgrounds and was about to ship out. He was filling out his will there to leave all of his belongings to his mum. Normally, people leave it to their kids. However, because he was going out to serve his country he thought he might not come back, so he made a will leaving his belongings to his mother.

We will be promoting the importance of wills for people over the age of 18 during our annual Wills Week, from 31 August to 8 September 2019. I emphasise the importance of people having a will. A will is the most effective way for a person to ensure a smooth transfer of their assets to relatives or other beneficiaries on their death. It is in the public interest for all Queenslanders over the age of 18 to have a valid will, particularly as an intestacy often results in uncertainty, additional costs and delays. There is this service there and we ask people to take up this service.

Unfortunately, many people think that buying a will kit saves them money, but it often ends up in the courts because people are not clear on what they need to do and how to write that will properly when they can get a free service from the Office of the Public Trustee. We encourage people to do that.

You will see in the budget papers that client satisfaction with its will preparation services is very high. The estimated actual achieved last year was 93 per cent on overall client satisfaction for the work it does. I congratulate all of the Public Trustee's staff for that great work. I mention all of those based in the regions. Every time I travel regionally, I visit every office of the Public Trustee, as I do with other divisions within our department out in the regions. In addition to those regional offices, 28 community outreach locations are attended by the Public Trustee, including our courts, Centrelink offices and neighbourhood and community centres. They also visit many clients in their homes, in aged-care accommodation and in hospitals to ensure they are providing regional support and services.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr MacSporran, in relation to the documents and information being sought, will the CCC be seeking advice of the technical specialists in the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority on the station locations and the decision-making process about those station locations?

Mr MacSporran: It is a little bit hard for me to express a view on that, because it will depend upon how we assess the documentation we have just received. Your point is well made to this extent: we need to understand the process—the decision-making process in particular—to see whether it was affected by any impropriety. We just wait to see how that assessment pans out.

Mr JANETZKI: You mentioned another conversation that the Deputy Premier had with you in relation to allegations surrounding the Ipswich City Council. Can you possibly provide a copy of your file note of that telephone conversation with the Deputy Premier in relation to the Ipswich City Council allegations, or would you give consent for the Deputy Premier to table her file note of that conversation in the parliament?

Mr MacSporran: I did not make a file note. It was simply a request to access information held at the commission to verify the Deputy Premier's recollection about the action she had taken. I referred her inquiry on to my staff, who then provided the figures. I cannot remember whether I got back to her or whether someone on my staff did. I do not have a file note, but I am more than happy for the Deputy Premier, if she has one, to provide it to the committee for your information.

Mr JANETZKI: I thank you for your candour today. It was never my approach to impugn the integrity of the CCC. I appreciate the candour and the frankness in your answers today. Just so I fully understand, bearing in mind that the opposition leader referred this matter to the CCC on Thursday, why did the Deputy Premier need to self-refer, given that a referral had already been made? Is there a process that—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr JANETZKI: I will rephrase.

CHAIR: Please.

Mr JANETZKI: Is there a process for multiple referrals of the same matters to the CCC?

Mr MacSporran: It is quite often the case that there are multiple referrals. We just deal with them on their merits. One advantage of self-referral in respect of the Deputy Premier is that we got the documentation immediately. As I say, that can be on occasions—too often, unfortunately—an impediment to our assessing something rather quickly. Her self-referral expedited that. With the Leader of the Opposition's referral, we would ultimately have had to go to the Deputy Premier and seek the documentation anyway, but there would have been a gap which I suppose the Deputy Premier's self-referral closed for us. We were happy with that.

Mr ANDREW: Good morning and happy birthday. What a way to start the day! How many people have appeared before the Mental Health Court in Queensland? How many staff in the department of justice deal with these matters?

CHAIR: I do not know if that question is relevant to the Attorney-General's portfolio.

Mrs D'ATH: Just to clarify for the member, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General does not oversee the Mental Health Court.

Mr ANDREW: Are there any plans to expand the Sarina Magistrates Court?

Mrs D'ATH: The Sarina court facilities are managed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. This is one of our 'hubs', where we have entered into arrangements with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to consolidate resources on the basis that there is not sufficient work to justify manning a courthouse five days a week but there are other government services—like Transport

and Main Roads—that need facilities and are able to operate. It actually means that the doors are generally kept open more often because we have that coordination. My understanding is that magistrates do not circuit through Sarina court facilities. I will ask my director-general to clarify that. He might have some more facts about it.

Mr Mackie: A magistrate from Mackay goes on a one-day-per-month circuit to Sarina but, as the Attorney-General has pointed out, it is also a QGAP agency. There is nothing in our future plans in terms of our capital program. That is dictated by a whole range of matters. I have 87 court facilities all over Queensland, so maintaining them for a contemporary justice system is the priority. I also talk regularly with the head of jurisdiction, the Chief Magistrate, as to what he believes are his priority areas around the state in terms of where workloads are going et cetera. Unfortunately, there are no plans at the moment or on the future capital program.

Mrs D'ATH: Member for Mirani, were you asking not whether there would be capital investment but whether there would be more sittings there potentially?

Mr ANDREW: That is correct.

Mrs D'ATH: Those decisions are made directly by the Chief Magistrate. The Attorney-General and the director-general do not decide how many days they circuit through those courts. It really is based on demand and needs of the area. The Chief Magistrate makes decisions about whether there is sufficient growth in matters coming before the courts that would warrant additional days. Those are matters that can change over time. It really is based on demand and the number of matters coming on in the area as to whether the Chief Magistrate, in consultation with the magistrates based in the Mackay who circuit through that court, determines a need to increase the number of days.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr MacSporran, in terms of the process of assessment, has the CCC asked, or will it contemplate asking, the Deputy Premier to hand over her mobile phone to allow the CCC to inspect text message exchanges to understand the process of timings?

Mr MacSporran: I read the material she provided on Monday, before I took it down to Integrity Services. She did provide the text message to which she has already referred in public that came from her husband including a picture of the house that he intended to buy. We have that. I am not sure what other information we might require from the phone, but if there were requirements we would make them.

CHAIR: Attorney, would you like to make some closing comments?

Mrs D'ATH: Before I make some closing comments, can I make a correction. Earlier I talked about the Electoral Commission of Queensland in relation to a determination on the LNP's diamond membership. I said that it had already been determined that it was not seeking to circumvent the current legislation and that it was not seen as a donation. In fact, I am advised that the ECQ has not yet made a determination and that it is in formal dialogue with the LNP about its new diamond membership. I wanted to clarify that.

In closing, I want to thank the statutory bodies and the CEOs who have made themselves available today but, more importantly, for what they do each and every day in this state and in the regions and what their staff do. It is important work. Many of them are significant either investigative or oversight bodies and I do, on behalf of the government and the people of Queensland, thank them very much for what they do and will continue to do into the future. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 10.45 with the examination of the estimates for the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio.

Proceedings suspended from 10.30 am to 10.47 am.

 **CHAIR:** The hearing will resume. Welcome back, Attorney-General and officials. The committee will now continue its examination of the proposed expenditure for the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio. I call the deputy chair.

Mr LISTER: I will let that question go to the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is in relation to the Public Trustee. Director-General, how many complaints have been made to the Public Trustee between 2016 and 2019 involving, firstly, client complaints, privacy breach complaints—

Mrs D'ATH: Can I just clarify whether we are still dealing with statutory bodies? I thought that that session was over and my statutory bodies have left.

Mr JANETZKI: No, these are questions—

CHAIR: The advice that I have received, Attorney, is that the questions can still be asked of the Attorney.

Mrs D'ATH: Okay; no problem. I just wanted to clarify because they have obviously gone. Sorry to interrupt, but I just wanted to clarify.

Mr JANETZKI: No, that is okay. How many complaints have been made to the Public Trustee between 2016 and 2019 involving client complaints, privacy breach complaints, employment complaints and other complaints, and that is per the complaints management policy and employee complaints management policy?

Mr Mackie: Thanks for the question, member. If you are asking me how many complaints have been made to the Public Trust Office, I am not able to answer that. The Public Trustee and the organisation are independent and separate in their own right. They would have a complaints management system in there, as all public sector agencies do. Only they would know the answers to those questions though.

Mr JANETZKI: Is it possible to take it on notice and provide that information perhaps, Attorney?

Mrs D'ATH: We can take that on notice, yes.

Mr JANETZKI: Have there been any complaints to you, Director-General, in respect of the Public Trustee made to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General?

Mr Mackie: Of the Public Trustee as in the individual?

Mr JANETZKI: Of the Public Trustee.

Mr Mackie: I have had no complaints about the Public Trustee directed directly to me in that time period.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay. Director-General, a 2019 QCAT decision involved orders made against the Public Trustee requiring it to pay compensation as it failed to act with reasonable diligence. How many compensation orders have been made between 2016 and 2019 for loss caused by the Public Trustee's failure to comply with the Guardianship and Administration Act?

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, I seek clarification here because the office of the Public Trustee is a statutory body. My statutory bodies do not report to the director-general; they report directly to the Attorney-General. I am just mindful that these questions are being directed at the director-general and to avoid every answer being that the director-general would not have any direct knowledge of any of that I just advise that the—

Mr JANETZKI: Okay. I will redirect the question.

CHAIR: My understanding is that the questions should be directed to the Attorney-General.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay. Thank you, Mr Chair. Attorney, a 2019 QCAT decision involved orders made against the Public Trustee requiring it to pay compensation as it failed to act with reasonable diligence. How many compensation orders have been made between 2016 and 2019 for loss caused by the Public Trustee's failure to comply with the Guardianship and Administration Act?

Mrs D'ATH: I would need to take that on notice. Thank you.

Mr JANETZKI: Attorney-General, what is the—and I expect I already know the response to this too—total cost of all compensation orders to be paid by the Public Trustee between 2016 and 2019?

Mrs D'ATH: I will again take that on notice. It is unfortunate that these questions were not asked while the Public Trustee was still in the room.

Mr JANETZKI: I appreciate that. We had some other issues to discuss this morning. I will move on. A recent Court of Appeal case involved a builder who bribed an official of the Public Trustee of Queensland in 2015 in order to be given information about building work so that he could underquote and win the tender. The contracts that were secured in that fashion were worth a total of over \$250,000 of public funds. The employee of the Public Trustee was convicted. Attorney, how many allegations of money being misappropriated have been made against the Public Trustee in the last three years?

Mrs D'ATH: Again, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr JANETZKI: One former client claims that the depth of incompetence and financial negligence perpetrated by some employees at the Public Trustee was staggering. How many employees employed under the Public Service Act have been subject to disciplinary action under section 188 of the Public Service Act between 2016 and 2019?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his questions. All matters dealing with staff of the office of the Public Trustee under the Public Service Act are directly answerable to the Public Trustee. They are not decisions of the Attorney-General. I have no role, no authority over staffing issues. Nor would I have

direct information in relation to the staffing issues within the office of the Public Trustee. Those are questions that should be put to the chief executive officer in relation to those matters, but I will say that there will always be, from time to time, aggrieved clients or, can I say, also aggrieved family members who are not clients. I get correspondence from members of parliament and from the public. People will raise complaints from time to time in relation to the office of the Public Trustee that go to issues of financial management—of either their own finances or a loved one's finances.

The decision to make the office of the Public Trustee the appointee in relation to people's financial management is either made by the family themselves—voluntarily choosing to appoint the Public Trustee office—or made by an independent tribunal making those decisions based on the evidence and in the best interests of that individual. Sometimes those family members do not like the fact that they are not managing their loved one's money. Sometimes the individual themselves who does not have the capacity to make decisions is not happy that someone else is managing their money. That does not mean that they are mismanaging it; it just means that a decision has been made based on the fact that the best interests of that individual are served by the office of the Public Trustee making those decisions in relation to their finances.

We have a royal commission going on right now into elder abuse. It is a sad but true statement that a lot of elder abuse, particularly when it comes to financial elder abuse, is done at the hands of a loved one—someone making decisions that do not benefit, or who is not acting in the best interests of, that individual and their assets. That is why it is important that these matters are determined by the tribunal and the office of the Public Trustee appointed when necessary. Of course, it is possible for individuals or family members to seek a review of those decisions if they believe that that decision by the tribunal has been erroneous or that circumstances have changed such that the family is now in a position to manage those finances, or would like to manage those finances.

I am happy to take on notice these specific questions about numbers and get the office of the Public Trustee to provide that information for the committee, but I want to just put in the context that, when we start talking about numbers of complaints and those sorts of things, there will always be people aggrieved because they personally do not believe that someone else should be managing their money or their loved one's money. I might hand back to the director-general. I believe he needs to correct the record on a matter.

Mr Mackie: I need to correct a response that I gave when you asked whether or not I had had any correspondence from anyone between, I think you said, 2016 and 2019 in relation to the Public Trustee. Obviously, at the time I took that as meaning up to the point where the former public trustee was working. I have just been advised that correspondence has come in this month from a particular individual talking about, or having a complaint about, the Public Trustee. I just want to make sure: that has come in only this month and it has been post separation on suspension of the former public trustee.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you. Obviously in terms of the responsibilities of the Public Trustee, the reporting authority is to you as Attorney-General. Can you explain your relationship with the Public Trustee and their executive team from time to time? Do you have regular meetings? Can you explain the process of your interactions with the Public Trustee?

Mrs D'ATH: With all of my statutory bodies, I certainly meet with the heads of statutory bodies from time to time to go through issues within the organisation that they may wish to talk to me about, or matters that I may wish to receive information on. There are no set time frames. It is really on a case-by-case basis how frequent we meet on those matters. I should say that, in addition to meeting, I also get briefing notes from those chief executive officers informing me of different things within the organisation from time to time, whether it is just the progress of projects or whatever else is happening, to keep me informed.

In relation to executive leadership teams, as a matter of course I would not meet with internal leadership teams because, again, they are statutory bodies and independent. My role is to ensure that the relevant body is fulfilling its obligations and to ensure that any issues in relation to resourcing are brought to my attention, for me to be raising those issues on their behalf with the government. Much of the information about the operations of the organisations appears in their annual reports, which are publicly available and which I table on their behalf.

Mr JANETZKI: How many times would you have met with the Public Trustee in the last year in particular but also in the last three years? I am most interested in the last year, if you have that information to hand.

Mrs D'ATH: All of my meetings in relation to the Public Trustee are on my public diary records.

Mr JANETZKI: Can you provide them?

Mrs D'ATH: I do not have the numbers in front of me, but it is readily available. It is a public document.

Mr JANETZKI: When you say from time to time, once every six months or as the need arises?

Mrs D'ATH: It is on the public record. I do not have it in front of me so I am not going to guess the number in case I may not be completely accurate in doing so. It is all on the public record.

Mr JANETZKI: When you meet with the Public Trustee what would a rough agenda be like as you are meeting with the Public Trustee? Would it be simply operational or would you go into general matters or concerns or trends involved with the operation of the Public Trustee?

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order. I am concerned the question is hypothetical.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Mansfield.

Mr JANETZKI: There is nothing hypothetical about what is on an agenda for a meeting. Attorney-General, what are the general matters under discussion—no particularity—at one of your meetings with the Public Trustee?

Mrs D'ATH: Again that is a bit hypothetical, but of the meetings I have had there is not a set agenda. It depends on the matters of the day. There are a number of issues generally going to operational issues, what is happening with ICT projects and organisational change and giving me an update if there are particular issues that the Public Trustee may want to raise with me and bring to my attention. As I say, I should advise that when we talk about meetings, not only do we have a formal meeting where we may have set agenda items, of course I get briefing notes that keep me updated on a whole range of things throughout the year.

Also, and I have said this earlier, whenever I travel around the state I actually visit offices as well. On occasion the Public Trustee will attend as well so there are opportunities to talk about issues then. Those visits may specifically be about getting an update on organisational change and walking me through those changes and talking to the various staff about that at the Public Trustee's request. There have been meetings and visits like that as well. In referring to my public diary and meetings I just want to make it clear that there are often other conversations, other briefings done in other forms as well.

Mr JANETZKI: In the course of these briefings or meetings with the Public Trustee, would aged matters or contentious matters involving the Public Trustee, and you have alluded to people who are unhappy with the treatment of a loved one or a family matter, be under discussion as well?

Mrs D'ATH: Certainly the office of the Public Trustee would not sit down with me and go through a list of individual complaints and how they are dealing with that. As I say, my office gets correspondence from time to time in relation to people feeling aggrieved with any particular decision that has been made by the office of the Public Trustee. We forward that off to the office of the Public Trustee and I have to say when it comes to the office of the Public Trustee I generally get a very comprehensive answer. Maybe the member himself has received some of my correspondence.

Mr JANETZKI: Yes, I have. Thank you for that.

Mrs D'ATH: One of the things that really surprised me when I took over the role of Attorney-General was how detailed those responses were. I am very pleased and grateful for that because it means I am able to provide the family and the members of parliament making the inquiries—obviously we always put in that correspondence the importance of confidentiality, respecting the confidentiality around those issues—as much detail as we can. If things could have been done better what I find is the office of the Public Trustee is willing to say, 'You know what? We could have done better here and we are taking steps to improve that process.'

Do we sit down and go through individual complaints? No. If there are matters before the courts which the Public Trustee is involved in I would generally be kept informed of those matters, but certainly not day-to-day matters in relation to complaints. As I say, we have taken it on notice but in talking with the Acting Public Trustee and CEO the other day I think the complaints numbered around 500-ish compared to the thousands, and I can go through the numbers, tens of thousands of people, who have their finances managed or deceased estates managed or the number of trusts they manage across the whole of the office of the Public Trustee in Queensland. There is a significant number of clients that they deal with each and every day and the number of complaints is quite small. The number that was given to me the other day was just the most recent number. I know you are asking for back to 2016 so we will get the specific details of your questions to make sure that we get those answers back to you.

CHAIR: If we could go to government members now.

Ms McMILLAN: In reference to the budget papers, can the Attorney-General please outline the response to the Palaszczuk government's fifth budget, particularly from legal stakeholders?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Mansfield for her question. I am very pleased to say the Palaszczuk government has been working very hard over the past five years to ensure that Queenslanders do have access to the justice system they need and that the 2019-2020 state budget is no exception to that. Particularly in my portfolio areas the budget was received very favourably in particular by members of the legal community.

The Queensland budget has proven to be a much needed and long overdue funding boon in justice investment, according to the Queensland Law Society. They also went on to say—

the government had delivered a veritable 'funding bonanza' on a wide range of important issues such as an investment in court infrastructure (\$57.7m), Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (\$13.1m) and Youth Justice (\$550m).

They also stated—

This is certainly a justice investment Budget...

The QLS thinks the government should be praised for the much needed funding. We welcome those views. Also we heard from other stakeholders—

It is good that the Attorney-General is starting to fund justice services across Queensland

...

There is additional funding in the forward estimates for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I note that this was necessary funding, particularly in view of the QSAC report and recommendations that the DPP has a greater role to play. I want to see the DPP prosecuting cases with the full vigour and force of the law so that vulnerable Queenslanders get the justice they deserve.

Other comments were—

I am pleased to see that, firstly, the Office of the Public Guardian still has a job and, secondly, it has been granted additional funding of over \$27 million.

and—

there is additional funding for QCAT.

These are just some of the positive comments by one particular legal stakeholder in Queensland and I understand that is the member for Toowoomba South, a former practising banking lawyer and now shadow Attorney. I thank him for his positive feedback. I welcome those positive comments about the budget for this year. I do think it is a good budget for justice services and so, consequently, for the people of Queensland.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 13 of the SDS. Could you provide an update on delivery of the key initiative of the government's Tackling Alcohol Fuelled Violence Policy?

Mrs D'ATH: I truly thank the member for Macalister for the question. I was very, very pleased to table that report today. This morning we tabled the *Queensland alcohol-related violence and night time economy monitoring* final report, an independent evaluation of the Tackling Alcohol Fuelled Violence Policy. The report was undertaken by Deakin University working with the University of Queensland, James Cook University and Latrobe University and was delivered to the government in April. This is the most comprehensive, longitudinal, independent evaluation of liquor laws in this state of its type ever. The evaluation team considered a range of datasets, including emergency department presentations and hospital admissions, police and ambulance callouts, court data and comparative data from entertainment precincts. The final report is extensive, it is approximately 800 pages, and contains a significant amount of data. Given the extremely detailed nature of the report and its data we have taken our time to consider the contents and to develop a well-considered response.

The report made 38 recommendations and today I also tabled the government's interim response to each of those recommendations. It is an interim response and the reason for that is that fundamentally we wish to consult with all stakeholders and the public before finalising our position on those recommendations. Having said that, it is also important to establish an initial position on each of those recommendations to provide a starting point for that consultation process.

In terms of the findings of the report, I am very pleased to tell the committee that there have been promising reductions in some key measures of alcohol related harm across Queensland. Specifically, the evaluation found a 29 per cent average reduction per month statewide in serious assaults between 3 am and 6 am. This was a 40 per cent reduction for Fortitude Valley, the busiest precinct in the state. It found significant reductions in ambulance callouts, including 29 per cent less between 3 am and 6 am in safe night out precincts statewide. It found a significant reduction in hospital admissions for ocular bone fractures of four per cent per month across the state and a 12 per cent reduction per month in

Brisbane. Importantly, this was achieved without a significant impact on the liquor industry. The report showed that total numbers of licensed premises across Queensland grew each year, that patron numbers were stable across the state's safe night out precincts and that live music performances increased.

In economic terms, the evaluation found that the policy had resulted in an overall benefit of \$16 million to the Queensland community. Having said that, the evaluation also found that levels of alcohol consumption and harm remain high here in Queensland. The report indicates that predrinking levels of patrons in entertainment precincts had not changed and remained high, and education and awareness campaigns aimed at reducing drunkenness and violence had not been effective. We have one of the highest blood alcohol concentration levels when compared to other Australian capital cities. Given this culture of drinking to get drunk, we have a lot more work to do on why people feel they need to drink to a level of excess that actually puts them and others at harm. There remains a need to address those issues in order to reduce harm.

As a result, the government has committed to supporting or further considering 28 of the report's recommendations. This includes a number of recommendations focused on improving support services in safe night out precincts, education programs and preventive health measures. It also includes measures such as making CCTV compulsory across all late-night venues that trade after midnight, increasing the police bans to one month with an option of up to six months, and improving the transparency around liquor licensing decisions. Of note is a recommendation that safe night out precincts be subject to an annual review of their boundaries and criteria for inclusion. The report recommends the inner Brisbane west, Caxton Street and Ipswich precincts be removed as safe night out precincts. The initial position is that the government will support that. I should clarify that, in relation to Ipswich, the report found that there is only one licensed venue within the current boundary. It has recommended that there may be another area of Ipswich where there is a concentration of licensed venues that would better be suited as a precinct.

The government's tackling alcohol fuelled violence policy, implemented three years ago, involved a range of measures intended to reduce alcohol related violence and harm in entertainment precincts, drive cultural change around drinking behaviours and balance a reduction in harm with the interests of patrons and the licensed industry. I know that none of us wants to see any deaths. I hate to single out one particular death, because losing anyone in these circumstances is tragic. In the past we have lost people through alcohol fuelled violence in our safe night out precincts. Maybe it is being the mother of two teenagers, but Cole Miller's death certainly strikes a chord with me and will forever be a catalyst for these changes.

Certainly the evaluation report shows that the introduction of ID scanners has provided a systematic way of preventing potentially dangerous patrons from entering venues and recommends that the mandatory network ID scanners are retained, with some suggested amendments. By keeping troublemakers out, venues have become safer for law-abiding patrons wanting to enjoy a night out, and so have the entertainment precincts where people go. It was our purpose to make sure that people are safe and that they feel safe when they go out. People should be able to go out and have a great time, but their families and loved ones want them to come home safely at the end of the night. We want a vibrant nightlife, but we want people to be safe while they are enjoying that nightlife. Significantly, the evaluation found that at least one serious crime a week was solved using our ID scanner data. That includes cases of rape and grievous bodily harm. Crimes are solved every single week in Queensland because of the ID scanners. Additionally, as at 30 April 2019, 910 patrons on police and court bans were prevented from entering venues in safe night out precincts. I am advised that that number is now over 1,000.

There remains a need to ensure that, amongst measures that have been successful, any response to the recommendations of the report needs to take into account the balance between reduction of harm and supporting a diverse and vibrant industry and the jobs in that industry. As such, the government's interim response does not support 10 recommendations that it believes do not strike that reasonable balance between reducing harm and the interests of patrons and supporting the hospitality and entertainment industry, or could otherwise result in potential adverse impacts. Consultation has commenced on all of the recommendations, and the government remains committed to engaging and working with industry stakeholders to keep our nightlife thriving and our patrons safe.

CHAIR: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Attorney-General, can you advise how the Palaszczuk government is supporting the modernisation of court facilities, particularly in regional Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: In the 2019-20 budget, \$8.917 million has been allocated, including \$1.55 million for regional courthouse locations: Cairns, Caloundra, Charleville, Charters Towers, Hervey Bay, Rockhampton, Thursday Island, Townsville and Warwick. A sum of \$2.5 million has been allocated as

part of our overall AV upgrade funding to procure equipment to be installed in courtrooms across Queensland in preparation for the transition of recording and transcription services to a new service delivery model in 1920-21.

In 2018-19, we allocated \$8.388 million to AV upgrades, including \$3.71 million for regional courthouse locations and \$308,000 for VC trolley upgrades, of which \$181,000 was spent on key regional courthouses. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of that AV equipment in our courtrooms. Sixty facilities, courtrooms and correctional centre suites have been upgraded to latest equipment audiovisual technologies, including district courts in Bundaberg, Brisbane, Cairns, Hervey Bay, Innisfail, Ipswich, Roma, Toowoomba, Townsville and Rockhampton; magistrates courts in Bundaberg, Brisbane, Cairns, Cleveland, Innisfail, Ipswich, Mareeba, Maroochydore, Pine Rivers, Southport, Townsville, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Tully; and four correctional centres. Videoconferencing trollies have been upgraded in Aurukun, Brisbane, Doomadgee, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mornington Island, Normanton, Gladstone, Goondiwindi and Redcliffe. Courtrooms have had audiovisual capability expanded to include touch-screen controlled integrated videoconferencing. We now have this in our magistrates courts in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, Maroochydore, Pine Rivers, Rockhampton, Southport and Townsville and our district courts in Cairns and Innisfail and the QEI Courts of Law.

Ongoing investment in videoconferencing systems allows a percentage of in-custody court appearances to keep pace with increasing matters. In-custody appearances save time and money, as defendants are not required to be transported from prison to court. Over 70 per cent of in-custody defendants now appear via our video court systems. Video court also provides special witnesses and vulnerable persons with flexible options for appearing in court, including prerecording of video evidence for child witnesses and remote appearance from secure locations other than courtrooms for special witnesses, including those involved in domestic and family violence matters.

More broadly in relation to our courthouse upgrades, I can advise that both the 2018-19 and the 2019-20 capital building works program has provided and will provide further improved and additional courtrooms and interview rooms; courtroom dock security; access and support for people with disabilities; security for the public, victims of crime, staff and the judiciary; workplace health and safety standards; and, of course, our domestic and family violence facilities in the Townsville, Beenleigh, Richlands and Pine Rivers courthouses. I note the member for Macalister was with me a few days ago at the Beenleigh courthouse, observing the works happening there for the new specialist DV facilities.

Upgrades are occurring in the following areas. We are upgrading the QCAT area, and construction is expected to be completed by December 2019 within a total budget of \$2.72 million, directly supporting about nine FTE jobs. In Central Queensland, the Rockhampton courthouse upgrade is expected to be completed in October this year within a total budget of \$12 million, directly supporting approximately 40 FTEs. With the Richlands courthouse domestic and family violence facilities upgrade, construction is expected to be completed by August this year with a total budget of \$1.3 million, supporting around four FTE jobs. We hear that parts of the Beenleigh courthouse upgrade, which I have touched on, are due to be completed in December and some early in the new year. All stages are to be completed early in the new year with a total budget of \$11 million, directly supporting 36 FTE jobs.

For the Pine Rivers courthouse domestic and family violence upgrade the construction is due to be completed in March 2020. The total budget is \$1.3 million. It will directly support five FTE jobs. The Townsville courthouse upgrade for domestic and family violence should be completed by November 2019. Although, we heard the other day that they are hoping to hand over the domestic and family violence areas late September. It will be within a total budget of \$9 million and will directly support approximately 30 FTE jobs. Lastly, the Bundaberg courthouse refurbishment construction is expected to be completed in November 2019. It has a total of \$2 million and will directly support around seven FTE jobs.

Mr JANETZKI: I will briefly go back to the Public Trustee, Attorney-General. From the briefing notes and the meetings that you have with the Public Trustee does the Public Trustee ever make recommendations in relation to legislative change that would address any perceived or actual shortcomings in the operation of the Public Trustee?

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to changes in legislation, obviously any of my statutory bodies can write to me recommending or suggesting the government look at changes to legislation as a consequence of deficiencies or improvements that could be made or possibly even as a consequence of court matters making a particular finding or an interpretation of the law that needs to be corrected or clarified in legislation. That can certainly happen with any head of a statutory authority.

The department and the government goes through processes where we recognise over time changes and improvements that can be made to legislation. We would initiate that ourselves. If a statute is due to be reviewed we would write to the relevant body and ask them for their input in that regard. It is a two-way street. We will sometimes go to statutory bodies asking them to give input into legislative changes we are proposing if we are reviewing their act. Also, they would write to me or raise with me any legislative changes. Obviously what those changes would be would be subject to a cabinet process.

Mr JANETZKI: The reason I am asking these questions is that the Public Trustee has been suspended, three senior staff have left suddenly, there are cases of misappropriation at the Court of Appeal and compensation at QCAT. On Sunday I attended a session with 50, 60, 70 people who are very concerned about the administration and potential maladministration of their loved one's affairs. What I would like to know is: what is the Attorney-General doing to inform herself of these issues and what steps will you take to address them?

Mrs D'ATH: Firstly, I would not necessarily accept the proposition or the statement that the member has just made. Staff leave organisations from time to time for a whole range of reasons. The office of the Public Trustee is a large organisation based all around this state. There will inevitably be staff turnover due to retirements, due to people moving, due to people wanting a career change or due to people changing jobs. To state that people have left the organisation and from that make some sort of inference that it is because the organisation is having issues I think is a wrong conclusion to draw without any evidence to support it.

Yes, the Public Trustee has been suspended. That shows I am doing my job. That shows that I am actually aware of what is happening within the office of the Public Trustee. Issues have been brought to my attention and I acted on that. I would absolutely accept criticism from the member for Toowoomba South if he came in here with evidence of issues in relation to the office of the Public Trustee and asked why I had not acted on them, but I have acted.

It is not an easy decision to suspend a statutory appointee such as the Public Trustee, but I have done so. I have done it on sound advice. As I have said publicly and in the private briefing I gave the member and the Leader of the Opposition, these are serious matters. They are currently matters still before the Crime and Corruption Commission.

The issues in relation to the suspension of the Public Trustee should in no way reflect on the service that the office of the Public Trustee and its thousands of employees across the state provide to clients and the general public each and every day. I have absolute confidence in the work of the staff of the office of the Public Trustee and how they support clients. As I said, there will be aggrieved clients. There will be aggrieved family members.

Mr JANETZKI: There are many.

Mrs D'ATH: I take the member's interjection that there are many. With all due respect to those individuals you have met with, some may or may not have genuine grievances. By all means bring them to my attention and to the attention of the office of the Public Trustee and get a response. We are talking about thousands of people every year who have their estates managed by the office of the Public Trustee. A number will be aggrieved. I caution the member in terms of accepting a version of events in relation to any of those complaints without knowing all the facts.

When those issues are brought to my attention I do get the facts of those cases. There are good reasons the Public Trustee is entrusted with people's finances. Those are decisions by QCAT. If we are taking issue with whether the Public Trustee should be managing people's accounts and affairs and how then there are mechanisms to do that. Anyone who raises those issues—and I would hope the member for Toowoomba South is giving this advice—can take those issues up with the office of the Public Trustee. They can take those issues up with me as the Attorney-General. They can take those issues up with the Queensland Ombudsman. They can also ask for the matters to be reviewed by QCAT.

All of those options are available. People should have the confidence that if they are not accepting of the response that they have had from the office of the Public Trustee there are sufficient other independent bodies that can consider complaints and provide them with advice. They may still not be happy with the final outcome. We should all have confidence—and I do—in all of those oversight bodies and independent bodies that can review those decisions.

Mr JANETZKI: I note the presence of the Public Guardian. I would like to call her to the table, if I could, please.

CHAIR: No. My understanding is that it is the Attorney who can call up the statutory body.

Mrs D'ATH: It is not a statutory body.

Mr JANETZKI: I ask that the Attorney consider the presence of the Public Guardian at the table.

CHAIR: They are not in schedule 7 is my understanding.

Mrs D'ATH: As I said earlier, I am here as the minister to answer questions in relation to the budget. If there are questions in relation to one of my oversight bodies—that being the Office of the Public Guardian—I am happy to take that question directly. If I believe that the Public Guardian can assist me in supplementing the answer, I am happy to invite the Public Guardian up. I would ask that the question be put to me as the relevant minister.

CHAIR: That is correct. The question has to be put to the minister—in this case the Attorney-General—and then the minister can then call an advisor forward if needed.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you for your guidance, Chairman. Attorney-General, what has the Public Guardian observed in Queensland watch houses?

Mrs D'ATH: The role of the Office of the Public Guardian is to advocate for the rights and interests of the most vulnerable adults and children. In relation to children, watch houses is one of those areas. Youth detention centres and children in the care of Child Safety and under protection are others. They can visit and raise issues on behalf of those young people and adults.

The role of the Office of the Public Guardian is to obviously, from time to time, observe or receive complaints from young people, whether they are in watch houses or anywhere else. The job of the Office of the Public Guardian is to raise those with the relevant agencies to have those issues addressed. It is not the role of the Office of the Public Guardian to investigate and to check the veracity of those complaints and whether or not they are valid. Of course, their job is to be the voice for that young person. The job of the Office of the Public Guardian is to raise any of those complaints from those young people with the relevant agency.

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair, I raise a point of order under standing order 118 on relevance. The question was regarding what the Public Guardian has observed, not what the role of the Public Guardian is.

Mrs D'ATH: In doing so, I am explaining what their role is in putting context around what they observe.

Mr JANETZKI: We have the Public Guardian in the gallery.

CHAIR: There is no point of order. My understanding is that the Attorney is able to answer the question in whatever way.

Mr LISTER: It has to be relevant, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: There is no point of order. Attorney, could you continue, please.

Mrs D'ATH: I believe that the issues that the Office of the Public Guardian observed in her visits to watch houses are all on the public record. The member should be well aware of the issues that have been raised.

Mr JANETZKI: That is the answer? Okay. I find it extraordinary that with the people of Queensland watching—we have the Public Guardian in the gallery, Chairman. I will move on.

Mrs D'ATH: I do take issue with the inference that was just made, because what we are doing here is proper process. The process is that statutory bodies are able to be called up in estimates to answer questions directly. In relation to the department itself, the director-general and the minister make themselves available, as we are right now, to answer questions. To be critical and to make some inference about another person not being at this table is misleading, because the member knows who he can and cannot—

Mr JANETZKI: You are here for transparent questioning—

Mr Lister interjected.

CHAIR: Order! I do not want any argument across the table.

Mr LISTER: Why won't you let the Public Guardian come to the table?

CHAIR: I do not want any argument. Do you want to go into private session? Can you rephrase the question, please.

Mrs D'ATH: I do not think he put a question.

Mr JANETZKI: I will move on to a further question. RTI documents reveal that community visitors reported in February of this year that children were refusing to drink water from the bubblers because they were located on top of toilets. Through the Attorney-General I ask the Public Guardian: is that correct?

Mrs D'ATH: I do not have those RTI documents in front of me. I have already stated—and that is why it was important, going to the deputy chair's point, that I explained what the role of the Office of the Public Guardian is—

Mr JANETZKI: I understand.

Mrs D'ATH: The role of the Office of the Public Guardian is to raise issues. It is for the relevant agencies to investigate those issues and determine the accuracy or not of any complaints that are raised. In terms of asking whether something is correct, it is not the role of the Public Guardian to validate issues raised with the Office of the Public Guardian. It is the role of the Public Guardian to advocate on behalf of those young people to the relevant agencies.

If you are asking whether certain things observed within a watch house are correct or not, those are questions you should put to either the Minister for Child Safety—committee members of the other committee had the opportunity to do that yesterday—or the minister responsible for police and corrective services, because my department does not administer or oversee youth justice or the watch houses.

Mr LISTER: You do oversee the Public Guardian.

CHAIR: Is there a question?

Mr JANETZKI: I have another question. Attorney-General, can you then confirm that you are refusing to permit the Public Guardian to appear before this committee today to answer questions transparently about watch houses in Queensland? Can you confirm that, please?

CHAIR: I raise a point of order.

Mr JANETZKI: It is a straight question.

CHAIR: It is argumentative. I will give you an opportunity to rephrase the question.

Mr JANETZKI: Can the Attorney-General confirm that the Public Guardian will not be appearing before this committee today?

Mrs D'ATH: The committee is still ongoing. If the need arises, where I believe that the Public Guardian can assist me in providing an answer I will invite the Public Guardian up. I have not refused for that person to participate in this at all. As I said, it is very mischievous of the member for Toowoomba South to be criticising who answers questions in estimates when the procedures are quite clear as to who can be called to the table and how questions are to be directed. I am the minister. I am not shying away from any questions. I am here making myself available to answer any questions as part of the budget process.

CHAIR: I now go to government members.

Ms McMILLAN: I refer to page 4 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General advise how the Palaszczuk government will be responding to the criminal justice recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse?

Mrs D'ATH: The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is certainly a significant legacy of the Gillard government. It demonstrated that survivors were consistently and grievously failed by institutions who denied them protection and justice. On 15 December 2017 the royal commission delivered its final report, containing 409 recommendations. Eighty-five of those recommendations derived from the *Criminal justice report* published on 14 August 2017. Those recommendations focus upon reforming the criminal justice system to provide a fairer response to victims of institutional child abuse.

Today I announce my intention to introduce a bill to the parliament that marks the implementation of a significant portion of the royal commission's *Criminal justice report*. It is my intention that the bill will include the following: providing for retrospective application of the offence of maintaining a sexual relationship with a child under 16; extending the application of the offence of grooming a child under 16 to recognise grooming behaviour directed at adults; providing retrospective application of limitation periods of certain child sexual offences; creating a new failure to report offence regarding child sexual abuse in an institutional context, carrying a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment, which specifically addresses religious confessions; creating a complementary failure to protect against institutional child sexual abuse offence, carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment; excluding good character as a mitigating factor at sentence where it has facilitated child sexual offending; ensuring offenders for historical child sexual offences are sentenced in accordance with sentencing standards at the time of the sentence rather than the offence; facilitating increased admissibility of evidence of other allegations of convictions of child sexual abuse against the accused

person; and modifying the use of common law judicial directions and warnings to a jury in relation to delay and credibility and delay in forensic disadvantage. The implementation of these recommendations will be open to public consultation. I encourage members of the community to make their voices heard. More information about how consultation will be conducted will be forthcoming in the near future.

I would like to briefly address two of the recommendations that I think are particularly crucial: the creation of the new failure to protect and failure to report offences. The royal commission elicited detailed and devastating evidence that demonstrated that institutions turned a blind eye to members of their organisation who were committing child sexual abuse. The failure to protect offence would apply in an institutional context where an adult person knows that there is a substantial risk that another adult person associated with the institution will commit a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 years and a child of 16 or 17 years of age if the person associated with the institution is in a position of authority in relation to that child; where the person has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk; and where the person negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk. This offence creates a new culture of accountability for institutions and their senior members. They can no longer turn a blind eye. The absence of this offence allows perpetrators to be moved between schools or sites operated by an institution despite the institutional knowledge that the perpetrator posed a substantial risk to vulnerable young kids. By implementing this royal commission recommendation, it is my hope that we end that practice once and for all.

In relation to the failure to report by creating a failure to report offence, we will ensure that children no longer have to suffer in silence. The royal commission found that one of the greatest barriers to achieving justice for children who had been sexually abused were the barriers they faced in reporting their own abuse. Often that abuse is noticed by other people within the institution but the view is taken that it is 'none of their business'. This offence changes that. This offence will make it a criminal offence not to report child sexual abuse when a person associated with the institution reasonably believes that such abuse is occurring.

As I mentioned before, this offence would not be complete if it did not address the privilege of the confessional seal that is used by some religious organisations. Unlike the states that enacted the Uniform Evidence Law, Queensland's Evidence Act does not provide a statutory evidential privilege to religious confession. While a Queensland Law Reform commission study in 2005 came to the view that there is no common-law protection for religious confession, the royal commission has noted that due to a lack of case law on this point that view cannot be stated with certainty.

The Palaszczuk government is determined to put this beyond any doubt. While the Palaszczuk government respects the freedom of individuals to practise their religion freely, that religious observance cannot be used as an excuse to not report child sexual abuse. In drafting the provisions of this bill the Palaszczuk government will ensure that failing to report knowledge of child sexual abuse acquired through religious confession will be a criminal offence. While this will not receive universal support, I know this is something that we do for survivors. I am proud to be bringing this bill before the House and I look forward to it receiving broad support.

CHAIR: I refer to pages 5 and 6 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General update the committee on the operation of the various court diversionary and intervention programs operating to support Queenslanders' access to the justice services they need?

Mrs D'ATH: In talking about our diversionary intervention programs, there are many which I am very proud of. As a government we brought these back in after they had been dismantled and funding removed by the previous LNP government. We have expanded Court Link. Court Link is a generic integrated court assessment referral and support program for defendants on bail. It provides individualised case management to eligible participants. Court Link assists defendants to address criminogenic factors such as housing instability, homelessness, drug and alcohol use, mental illness and impaired decision-making capacity.

Court Link currently operates in Brisbane, Cairns, Ipswich and Southport. It is expected to commence in Mount Isa in late 2019, and it has been expanded through this year's budget. As at 31 March, 73 defendants were participating in Court Link case management. In 2017-18 funding was initially provided as part of \$22.7 million over four years which also provided for the re-establishment of the Queensland Drug and Alcohol Court and court referral services. An additional \$6.9 million over four years provided to extend it to Ipswich, Southport and Mount Isa. In this year's budget an additional \$6.6 million over four years has been provided to expand the Court Link program to three new sites, including Caboolture, Redcliffe and Maroochydore.

I will also briefly talk about the Queensland Drug and Alcohol Court. The director-general and I had the opportunity to sit and observe the court recently, and it was really pleasing to see how this court is operating. People are being recognised for their efforts in trying to rehabilitate, but they are also being punished where they are not stepping up and where they are not doing their tests. I want to make it clear that the Drug and Alcohol Court is not an easy option. In fact, it is probably easier to just serve time because they have to front up every single week, sometimes twice a week, to explain to the magistrate what they are doing to meet their obligations. Some of them are going in almost daily for tests, so they are being constantly monitored for drugs and alcohol. There is no hiding from this. Whether they are doing well or not is there for everyone to see. They have to report back to the court and answer to what they are doing in relation to accessing the support services offered to them.

This is such a great program because all of those services are brought together. It is an intensive program targeted to adult offenders with severe and drug and alcohol issues to stop them reoffending. We did have a discussion with a couple of participants. Without going into their personal details, it is impressive that people who have struggled so much with their addiction and who have found themselves in the justice system now are not using drugs, not abusing alcohol and not committing offences anymore. I congratulate them on their efforts.

Of course we know about the Murri Court, and I am very pleased that in this year's budget we are extending the court to Ipswich. I had the great opportunity recently to open the Ipswich Murri Court, which is now the 15th Murri Court across the state. We have the High Risk Youth Court in Townsville, which is a specialist court model for defendants aged between 10 and 17 who are at high risk of reoffending. I can advise that, up to 31 March, from 1 July last year 30 defendants have appeared before that High Risk Youth Court. Twenty-seven of the defendants identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The budget this year has provided \$3.3 million over four years to ensure the continuation of that High Risk Youth Court.

We have provided additional funding and enhancement for community justice groups. In the 2019-20 budget there is \$19.4 million over four years to provide an increase in funding for 39 community justice groups operating throughout Queensland. As at 31 March this year, community justice groups across the state provided a total of 6,104 instances of support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system, including the Murri Court, and I thank them for that. Of course we have our specialist domestic and family violence courts. I was very pleased to inspect the upgrades to Townsville and Beenleigh. When those facilities are completed it will certainly make a significant difference and, I hope, encourage victims to come forward and feel safe to report and go through the justice system. We know that it is traumatic at any point to do that, but with these new facilities we hope to support them through that.

We have a number of other local domestic and family violence responses being set up around the state, particularly in more remote and Indigenous communities. We have set up a justice hub in Mossman, established a men's hub in Cherbourg and a stop domestic violence community awareness campaign and quick response to domestic and family violence service on Mornington Island, just to name a few. We also have our Aurukun Restorative Justice program, which is a locally based and operated peacekeeping service which aims to support the community to manage conflict and increase the authority of local elders and respected persons with the program mediating a range of disputes, including intra and interfamily disputes facilitated by the local community justice group. This year's budget has provided ongoing funding of \$3.4 million over four years and \$840,000 ongoing to support the continuation of that program.

CHAIR: I invite the member for Mirani to ask the next question.

Mr ANDREW: Attorney-General, in relation to drug-related matters, there has been a noticeable reduction in the total value of assets restrained under chapters 2 and 2A of the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act. Corresponding with that drop there has been a drop in monetary value and the number of new matters. The number of restraining orders is noticeably less than the previous year and the trend going back a full decade. Are we losing the war on drugs?

Mrs D'ATH: I certainly hope not, but it is a significant war on drugs. I will obviously not speak on behalf of the Queensland Police Service. The committee will have the opportunity to talk to the minister later today. The Crime and Corruption Commission, with its coercion powers, is working with the QPS in relation to restraining those funds. They continue to do a great job. It really is about what they identify. The job is very significant. I think the member would have heard me talking about some of the surveillance and ongoing investigations currently in relation to trafficking and illicit drugs across the state.

Our efforts have not wavered one bit. There is commitment from the government and commitment from my agencies including the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which is responsible for the confiscation unit. It continues to work hard to get restrained assets. I can advise the following as at 31 March: \$27.567 million in assets under chapter 2 and chapter 2A of the act have been restrained; just over \$5.7 million has been forfeited to the state; an additional \$770,000 in proceeds assessment orders were granted; unexplained wealth orders to the value of over \$3.4 million were granted; and serious drug offender confiscation orders to the value of \$267,000 were granted. That is just one tool in the war against drugs—confiscation, restraining of assets, particularly unexplained wealth, which means you do not have to prove that it is directly related to the offending but they have all of these assets and this wealth that they cannot explain. We have quite strong powers in relation to that.

I have just talked about our diversion programs. The Drug and Alcohol Court and diversion programs like that are just as important. What the ODPP do, what the CCC do and what the police do are all really important—trying to find that organised crime and these activities and shut down illicit drugs. We also need to help people be diverted away from their addiction. We are doing that when they come into the justice system through things like the Drug and Alcohol Court, Court Link and QMERIT. There are also a whole range of initiatives being done under Health. This is a whole-of-government strategy—health services, mental health, homelessness. All of these things have to work together when you talk about trying to rehabilitate someone who has a drug addiction.

It is also everyone's problem. It is a national problem; it is an international problem. It is a problem for our councils. In every courthouse I walk into around Queensland, our magistrates raise the issue of ice. You will hear it from Child Safety; you will hear it from all these different agencies. Ice is a major problem out there and it is not peculiar to any particular demographics, any gender or any particular wealth. I hear of middle-aged women turning to ice for the first time. Having raised their children and been an upstanding citizen in the community, doing volunteer work and everything else, they just make that one bad decision where they think, 'I'm going to a party. Live a little. How can it hurt? It's one time,' except ice is such an addictive drug and you only need to take it once to have ongoing psychotic episodes into the future.

We still have so much to do to try to get this message out about the dangers of ice and what it can do to you. I go doorknocking in my community and people start talking to me and say, 'Things are fine. I've got this business. By the way, my brother and his sons are now addicted to ice,' and they start telling you of the ripple effect it has had through the broader community and how they have tried to help but they have had to step back. I do not mean to give you a longwinded answer, but this is such a big issue and a major problem that we all—governments at all levels, internationally, not-for-profit organisations, the community more broadly—have to work together to try to tackle. I thank the member for his question.

Mr BERKMAN: Earlier this year, 45 new poker machines were approved for the pub across the road from my office, despite overwhelming community opposition. Following that, the Premier announced that she wanted to see fewer pokies in Queensland. She repeated that position on Tuesday this week and referred me to you, Attorney-General. I have previously asked you a question on notice about this, but we are still in the dark. Is a reduction in the number of pokies in Queensland actually the policy position of the government? If so, what is the mechanism to get there?

Mrs D'ATH: I want to thank the member for Maiwar for his question. I know that previously you raised the issue in relation to an approval of additional machines at a venue in your electorate, and I understand your concerns in relation to that. I made public statements at the time that I was concerned about how those submissions are received during these types of applications and how they are considered and weighted. This is not a criticism. I am just saying that as the Attorney-General I do not make individual decisions—whether it is liquor licensing or whether it is gaming decisions.

I know that the member would not have had the opportunity to look at the report I tabled today, but one of the recommendations goes to transparency around decisions and reasons for decisions of OLGR, and also the elements that are considered. I think that is equally important in relation to both liquor and gaming. I think the public want to see more clarity and understand the criteria that applies to these applications—what sort of weight is given. I am not suggesting that a particular percentage goes to any particular thing, but if the police do or do not support an application, if the council do or do not support an application, if a peak body does not or if the community does not, then people rightly want to know how that decision was made and how those objections were weighed up. I can advise the member that, through that recommendation and us accepting further consultation on the recommendation, I am doing it in the broader context of liquor and gaming so that there is more transparency around that.

In relation to the caps—and I know the Premier did reiterate her view recently—there is a current cap both statewide and across the regions for hotels and clubs in Queensland. That cap has not changed under our government. We have not increased that cap. I am aware that we are currently operating underneath that cap, but I understand the concerns of the member. The number of machines per adult is actually declining. It is not a government position at this stage to alter the cap, but that does not mean that we do not support more work being done on a reduction in problem gambling. I can advise that the cap is 44,205 across the state and we currently have operationally 41,801.

The member would be well aware of the survey that the government reintroduced to get a clearer picture of problem gambling and gambling overall. That survey did show that the number of people playing poker machines has reduced. However, I absolutely acknowledge that the people at risk within that number have increased. There is a lot of work being done nationally in relation to gambling and the negative effects of gambling. I know that the member is particularly interested in poker machines, but can I say that there needs to be that broader discussion about online gambling. I have been criticised for talking about online gambling and other forms of gambling as somehow being dismissive of poker machines, and it is not in any way meant to do that. It is just saying that, when we look at the current generation and future generations, for these young people today their future when it comes to gambling is not necessarily walking into a pub or a club and sitting down at a physical machine to play a poker machine. I think our challenge is far greater because their mobile phone allows people to gamble away their life savings from their lounge without ever stepping foot outside the door.

I respect and understand the concerns of the member and his views and questions on poker machines, but I think we also need to be having that broader conversation. I am glad we are having that conversation at the national level around online gambling and illegal offshore gambling as well, because I think those matters have to be addressed.

Mr BERKMAN: I appreciate the clarity on the position that there is no intention to amend the cap. Going to the process you mentioned, when these machines—

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair—

Mr BERKMAN: It is a quick supplementary on the process. In relation to the process for approval of those pokies in the pub, I was shocked to learn that there is no route of appeal by the community when they have made submissions against the approval even though the pub owner can appeal the denial of their application. Does that review that you have mentioned or the report you have made available today consider levelling the playing field so that the community can appeal bad decisions in the same way that an applicant for a pokies licence can?

Mrs D'ATH: I do not want to pre-empt the consultation. Certainly that was not one of the recommendations coming out of the QUANTEM report, but there were certainly recommendations around what should be taken into account. In fact, the recommendations specifically went to looking at the link between domestic and family violence and alcohol and whether that should be taken into account in decisions. Sometimes that can be linked with problem gambling as well of course. There is not a specific recommendation to look at appeal rights. We will consult about how best to ensure there is more clarity in relation to what is taken into account with these applications and how the reasons for decisions made by OLGR are published to give people more confidence in the system.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you, Attorney. I appreciate it.

Mr JANETZKI: While we are on poker machines, I will go to the director-general. Can the director-general advise if the department, in coordination with Minister Jones's department, has been discussing options with community clubs about a pokie buyback scheme?

Mr Mackie: My department through the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation have had conversations around the global tourism hub and exactly how, if a proponent comes forward and picks up that opportunity, we would manage the machine site more broadly around the state.

Mr JANETZKI: Again to the director-general, are these conversations designed to facilitate the global tourism hub on the Gold Coast?

Mr Mackie: Some of those conversations would be talking about potential opportunities going forward and having initial discussions around how that would work in terms of machines, yes.

Mr JANETZKI: If there is a budget, what is the budget for that buyback of pokies?

Mr Mackie: I do not believe there is a budget.

Mr JANETZKI: Again to the director-general, would the department appoint an independent negotiator to determine a fair price as part of that buyback scheme given the circumstances?

Mr Mackie: I could not really answer that because it is a hypothetical. We are not at that point.

Mr JANETZKI: I will move back to watch houses, if I could, Attorney-General, and I will direct this question to you. When did the Public Guardian first raise her concerns with you about the watch house issues, which have obviously developed into a crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I cannot recall the exact date, but I can recall the month. It was February 2019 at a meeting I had scheduled with the Public Guardian that those issues were raised.

Mr JANETZKI: How regularly do you meet with the Public Guardian?

Mrs D'ATH: As per my answer previously—

Mr JANETZKI: In the diaries?

Mrs D'ATH:—I do not have fixed time frames for meeting with my statutory bodies and my statutory authorities. It is on a case-by-case basis. Either, as in this case, the Public Guardian would contact my office and say, 'I would like to come and brief the minister,' or we may ask to be briefed on particular matters. Of course, from time to time there may be briefing notes sent up as well. I am not a person who meets for the sake of meeting. I actually want meetings to be purposeful and have an objective. Generally, I would catch up with my statutory bodies on an annual basis, but whether it is more frequent than that comes down to issues that need to be raised. If nothing has changed since last time we met we generally would not have a meeting just to reiterate everything that has been previously talked about; it would be to update me on certain matters.

Mr JANETZKI: Given the urgency of the watch house crisis, did you meet again with the Public Guardian in the weeks and months after February this year?

Mrs D'ATH: I go back to my—

CHAIR: I ask the member for Toowoomba South to stop putting imputations in his questions, please.

Mr LISTER: Point of order, Mr Chair. Can I ask what the imputation was? An imputation can only be made against—

CHAIR: Do you want to go into private session? Do not argue the point.

Mr LISTER: It is a legitimate point.

CHAIR: Would you like to go—

Mr LISTER: No, I do not. We do not need to go into private session. I say this. You cannot make an imputation against a situation, only an individual member.

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, I am happy to address the question. I was aware that the Public Guardian was also keeping the director-general informed. Through the director-general I was being kept up to date. I also again want to remind the member that the Office of the Public Guardian would raise issues with the relevant agencies. It is not for my agency to investigate any of those matters. In fact, we do not have the authority to investigate any of those matters or to act on those particular matters. It is really making sure that I was aware of the issues. Importantly, the Public Guardian wanted to make me aware of what her community visitors had identified or what she herself identified, which she did. What I did do is satisfy myself at that meeting that the relevant agencies had been notified and were aware of these issues and that any of these complaints or concerns that have been raised by youth in any capacity, whether it is watch houses, detention centres or kids under child protection orders in care, are being raised with the relevant agencies. The Public Guardian did advise me that she had raised these issues with relevant agencies.

CHAIR: I will now go to government members for questions.

Mrs McMAHON: I have a question for the Attorney-General. I refer to pages 5 and 44 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General update the committee on work her department and bodies are doing to support the prevention of domestic and family violence?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. I briefly touched on it earlier. I would like to talk about some of the things we are doing. Obviously the *Not now, not ever* report was extensive and there was a number of recommendations within my portfolio. One of the things that we did do was establish the specialist domestic and family violence court, which we initially started down at Southport. We evaluated that model. We improved on that model and we expanded it. We have now extended it to other courts. We extended that to Townsville with a civil list and it circuits to Palm Island and Mount Isa. I am pleased to say that the new magistrate appointed in Mount Isa will be taking over the specialist

domestic and family violence list, which means that a Townsville magistrate will not have to circuit to Mount Isa for that purpose. That will allow the magistrate based in Townsville for the specialist DV list to be able to hear more matters in Townsville and Palm Island. I welcome that.

Of course, having the specialist list and having magistrates is one thing; you also have to have the facilities. As the member saw recently when inspecting the Beenleigh court with me, there are open spaces where the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator sit near each other and can see each other, sometimes with children in tow, waiting outside a courtroom for some time. That in itself can be intimidating but also it may be enough to deter someone from coming forward on domestic and family violence.

What we will have is a dedicated courtroom that has a secure entrance and exit off a safe area. Both in Beenleigh, just as we do in Southport, and in Townsville an alleged victim will be able to come forward, go to a separate registry which is established just for domestic and family violence, and then immediately go from there into a secure area. They will be able to have private meetings with their duty lawyer or lawyers in those areas. They will be able to give video evidence from there—videoconferencing—if need be.

They will be able to sit quietly and just wait in those areas. Their children can be with them there as well. When they are ready to go to court, they can actually go through a separate entrance. It is critical to have those facilities. In the 2018-19 budget we allocated a further \$8.1 million across relevant agencies to expand those facilities. I am pleased that the construction of the Townsville and Beenleigh courthouses, with capital expenditure of around \$20 million, will be completed in the very near future.

By way of an overview for Beenleigh, after the refurbishments we will have an additional courtroom, a safety precinct for women including a secure area, access to DV clients, a specialist court registry and extra meetings rooms for interagency use. The Townsville courthouse will see the creation of a new domestic violence courtroom, a civil courtroom, additional meeting rooms, a safe room for women and secure areas as well as access for domestic and family violence clients.

The specialist courts operating at these locations currently only manage civil lists using their existing courtrooms. Additional building facilities provided post refurbishment will support the running of a fully integrated specialist domestic and family violence court. This means that it will hear civil and criminal matters. I often get asked this question. Criminal matters will still be heard in another court, with a dock that has access to the watch house as opposed to the civil courtroom. When retrofitting existing buildings there is no possible way to link a dock to the watch house for a new courtroom elsewhere in the building that can also access the safe, secure area. Those are decisions we had to make. Importantly, once the new courtrooms are open we will run both civil and criminal lists—specialist DV lists—in those courts.

The Palaszczuk government is also investing in expanding the domestic and family violence duty lawyer program over the next two years. That will assist vulnerable members of the community in obtaining high-quality legal advice and representation while they go through the justice system. In addition, DV counsel notes provisions in a recent successful case in terms of the sexual assault counselling privilege through our legislation. In May 2016 we provided extra money for the sexual assault counselling privilege. On 30 March 2017 the Queensland parliament passed that legislation. The Queensland sexual assault counselling privilege is based on the New South Wales system.

In terms of legal support, Women's Legal Service Queensland, in partnership with Legal Aid, is delivering the Counselling Notes Protect service, which provides legal advice and representation around sexual violence complainants seeking to have their sexual violence counselling records protected from use in criminal trials. I am pleased to report that on 13 June this year the first application to subpoena a complainant's counselling records was dismissed in R v JML 2019, with Women's Legal Service Queensland acting for the young 15-year-old complainant. If it were not for those new laws that we created, potentially that counselling would have been released. That could be a real disincentive to victims getting the counselling and support they need through those processes. I am glad—and I think we all should be glad—that the laws we pass in this parliament actually make a difference for people out there, particularly victims of sexual assault.

Ms McMILLAN: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General outline how the budget allocation for QCAT will help Queenslanders, in particular with lemon motor vehicles, and any reforms to the Australian Consumer Law being advocated?

Mrs D'ATH: The member probably knows that this is a bit of a pet project and a passion of mine since 2014, when Ashton Wood first walked through my door and recounted his personal story. Many people I have met over the past five years have told me their stories about buying a brand-new vehicle

and how within a very short period of time they started having problems. They were completely dismissed in relation to their complaints—being told that there was nothing wrong with the vehicle and women being told ‘it’s the way you drive’. We also heard of people being told, ‘We’ve fixed all of that,’ or, ‘Pay me another few thousand dollars and we’ll fix everything,’ only for those vehicles to still have the same failures when being driven away.

I am really pleased that we have done our part at a state level by changing the jurisdiction of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In the past, people could only go to QCAT if they were claiming up to \$25,000. There are not too many brand-new vehicles under \$25,000 nowadays. People would have to go to a higher court or just settle for a lower amount for a brand-new vehicle if they wanted it resolved at QCAT. That is now up to \$100,000 and is for motor vehicles more broadly, not just cars—so motorbikes and motorhomes. Those changes will come into effect on 1 September. It has taken some time. Of course, I am very pleased that we have provided funding in this year’s budget. An additional \$340,000 out of the \$680,000 recurrent funding per annum has been given for QCAT in the midyear allocation, but QCAT overall is getting an additional \$11.309 million over four years, with \$2.536 million per annum ongoing to maintain and protect the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders. This will make a big difference. It has taken a bit of time, because QCAT has to change its systems as this will go from minor civil matters, which are dealt with differently, to major matters before the tribunal. It is still keeping down costs and still seeking to have those matters dealt with as quickly as possible for people. All of that is really pleasing.

Of that \$11.3 million to which I referred, QCAT will receive \$1.353 million over four years, including \$346,000 ongoing, specifically to deal with what I expect will be an increase. There will be people coming forward and going to QCAT. This will also fund an extra 1.5 FTE registry staff and funding for more paid hours for sessional members to hear those matters. Of course, the reinstatement of class B warranties will also come into effect on 1 September. There is additional funding of \$2.72 million for improvement of facilities at QCAT.

There were a number of measures that ministers at the national level agreed to at the Legislative and Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs in October 2018. Those agreements are really important as well, because they seek to clarify what is a major failure. It was agreed that a major failure includes multiple minor failures. It might be lots of different things with the vehicle but, collectively, it makes it a major failure for the purpose of the Consumer Law. The Queensland government put forward a proposal in relation to providing consumers with a 60-day refund or replacement if a motor vehicle or caravan is immobile or not drivable. No-one expects a brand-new vehicle to break down in the first 60 days and it should be, without question, refunded or replaced. Unfortunately, that is still up for discussion. The jurisdictions have not agreed to that one as yet, but we have agreed to a number of other initiatives.

The Commonwealth government has not yet acted on any of it. It has not introduced a bill to make amendments to the Australian Consumer Law to reflect these further protections to which we all agreed in October last year. We have a consumer affairs meeting in August. I really hope that we will get an update on where all of that is at. I assure Queenslanders that I will continue to lobby for further changes at the federal level, particularly around that 60-day refund or replacement, because I think it is more than reasonable. Not only is it more than reasonable; it is actually in line with what the ACCC is doing in getting court ordered directives with some of the major manufacturers and wholesalers in this country—that they must replace or refund within 60 days if it is immobile. We are simply playing catch-up, because I want the federal Australian Consumer Law to reflect what the ACCC is already doing with some wholesalers and manufacturers.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: I defer to the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: Director-General, I note the Attorney-General’s comments that the meeting was held with the Public Guardian in February and there were some discussions between you and the Public Guardian post that meeting. Can you confirm whether the Public Guardian sought additional resources to better observe or deal with the watch house crisis or watch house issues?

Mr Mackie: Thanks for the question. At the time, if we are talking about earlier this year—say, in February—when the Public Guardian and I probably were talking quite regularly around the issue, I think the Public Guardian herself made her own decisions around what resourcing she needed to prioritise to deal with visitations in that location. Certainly going forward the Public Guardian had raised with me the resource issues to be able to cover not only what normally her organisation would cover in terms of visits in detention centres or otherwise but also cover police watch houses.

Mrs D'ATH: For the benefit of the member I just advise that the government committed back in the 2018-19 budget a total of \$28.221 million over five years for the Office of the Public Guardian in relation to their funding to oversee their important role as far as their community visitor program and other functions, and I believe—I am just looking for the figures in front of me—that there may have been additional funding in relation to the NDIS as well. I might ask the Public Guardian to come up and just clarify that for me, but I understand we have allocated \$2.2 million recurrent per annum for investigations into elder abuse and the National Disability Insurance Scheme for this budget and there are additional FTEs and \$9.7 million. I might ask the Public Guardian, Natalie Siegel-Brown, to come forward and clarify that. Natalie, I ask you to clarify any additional funding in this year's budget and the purpose of that funding that that will be used for in the Office of the Public Guardian.

Ms Siegel-Brown: Thank you, Attorney. It is true that we have received an enormous injection of funding for the Office of the Public Guardian not just for a time limited period but for an ongoing basis. The organisation will receive \$22 million over the next four to five years which will result in \$11 million per annum as of the year 2022-23. On top of that, there is an extra \$2.2 million recurrent for the agency to deal just with the extra work imposed by the NDIS. I might say that, as a comparison, this means that in the year 2022-23 the organisation will be operating at 60 per cent more than its current budget.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Public Guardian. Public Guardian, I have some RTI documents relating to community visitors reported in—

Ms McMILLAN: I raise a point order.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Mansfield. Member for Toowoomba South, you have to direct your questions to the Attorney-General.

Mr JANETZKI: I will ask the director-general. There were RTI documents relating to internal emails within the Public Guardian that reported in February this year that children were refusing to drink water from the bubblers because they were located on top of toilets. Is that correct?

Mr Mackie: I was not party to that RTI and I have not actually seen the RTI documents at the end of the day, so I cannot collaborate that.

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to ask the Public Guardian to clarify it.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you. Public Guardian, did you want me to ask the question again? I get the feeling you are well across it.

Ms Siegel-Brown: No. Thank you, member, for your question. That is correct.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Public Guardian. Director-General, I will come back to you because I cannot ask questions directly of the Public Guardian. This does seem to put into question the affirmations of the Minister for Police, who was adamant that each young offender has or did have access to constant clean drinking water.

Ms McMILLAN: I raise a point of order.

CHAIR: What is your point of order?

Ms McMILLAN: The question is one of opinion and certainly reflects imputation.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay; I will move on to my next question. Director-General, I will go through you again. Can you confirm if community visitors reported that girls developed urinary tract infections while in the watch house as a result of the unhygienic water?

Mr Mackie: No, I cannot. I would not have been privy to that.

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy for the Public Guardian to answer that.

Ms Siegel-Brown: Thank you, member, for your question. I cannot verify that the urinary tract infection was contracted as a result of unhygienic water and, as you might be aware, urinary tract infections can be developed from a number of sources. What I can say is that children had reported to the community visitors that on occasion they had discovered faecal matter in the bubblers that were directly above the toilet. My office worked with the Queensland Police Service, which responded very quickly by providing children with fresh bottled water. Subsequently this was changed to foam cups and people circulated the cells with jugs to pour the water into the foam cups for the children.

Mr JANETZKI: I will again go to the director-general. What measures or what warnings had the Public Guardian given prior to February of this year in relation to the watch house issue?

Mr Mackie: I am happy to pass that straight to Natalie, I have been advised.

Ms Siegel-Brown: If you do not mind, but when you say 'what types of warnings' are you asking how many and to whom?

Mr JANETZKI: Yes, I am.

Ms Siegel-Brown: Thank you, member, for your question. On 20 April I wrote to the director-general of the then Child Safety, Youth and Women department raising my concerns. I continued to raise my concerns throughout 2018. I also raised my concerns with the Ombudsman and the Queensland Family and Child Commission. In November and December of 2018 I raised my concerns with the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I continued in dialogue with the director-general and his then successor, Ms Rachel Hunter, and her staff, including other directors-general and the then Police Commissioner, and those conversations continued and have continued to date.

Mr JANETZKI: Through you, Director-General, how were these briefings or warnings given by the Public Guardian to these various ministerial officers? Was it in writing? Was it in meetings? Was it in phone calls? Clearly there was some insistence and some consistency to the warnings. How were they given?

Mr Mackie: Yes. The Public Guardian might want to supplement my answer, but I am aware because the Public Guardian had emailed me at one point just briefing me again on the issues that she had raised with those other organisations and other directors-general from other departments. I believe they received letters, whether they be through letters attached to emails or otherwise, for that period. It was after probably that period of time when the Public Guardian did contact those other agencies. Even though it was not my bailiwick in terms of youth justice apart from the court component, very quickly all relevant directors-general who could have an impact on that system issue that we had got together on a regular basis. There were formal meetings and workshops to work out what we could do urgently. The Public Guardian was invited to some of those forums as well over a period of time. I do not have the exact dates, but I am happy for the Public Guardian to supplement that answer if she wishes.

Ms Siegel-Brown: Thank you, Director-General. Thank you, member. Yes, it is correct that I used the forms of communication, being letters written, emails, telephone calls, meetings. I met on approximately 5 December with the then director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Subsequently, we were in direct communication. He was very responsive and sought to arrange a workshop, which was meant to occur in January, to discuss my concerns with the relevant directors-general. Unfortunately, due to a number of events, including the rain events in Townsville, that meeting did not occur until 22 February. A range of oversight bodies were invited to raise their concerns and be advised of any actions that would then occur as a result of that meeting.

Mr JANETZKI: Director-General, what actions did the Public Guardian observe being taken by DJAG and other government departments with respect to her warnings given throughout 2018?

Mr Mackie: I would have to refer that question to the Public Guardian herself. Obviously, I cannot answer that.

Ms Siegel-Brown: Thank you, member. The first action that occurred was when I identified that there were no education services at all going into the watch house. I was advised on 22 February, after I had raised that matter for some months, that a teacher would be going in and spending 15 minutes in a cell per day with each of the children except on school holidays. In respect of my other concerns, I am still in discussions with the department to understand what is occurring.

Mr JANETZKI: Through you, Director-General, what is the Public Guardian's understanding of actions taken in the last three to four weeks of taking these kids out of watch houses now in terms of their locations, the support being given to these kids and where they are now?

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order.

CHAIR: Yes, thank you, member for Mansfield. Can I ask you to ask one question at a time? That was quite a few questions.

Mr Mackie: If I may, I think the question was asking me really for an opinion and her understanding, which I cannot give, obviously.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay.

CHAIR: Yes. Thank you. Rephrase it.

Mr JANETZKI: What observations has the Public Guardian noted in respect of the children being brought out of watch houses over the last month or two months?

Mr Mackie: Again, I would have to refer that to the Public Guardian for a response.

Ms Siegel-Brown: Thank you, member, for the question. It is true the numbers were as high as 86 two months ago. Today, I understand the number of children in watch houses across Queensland is 11. I am sent the custody sheet each day. I have noted that over the last two to three weeks the number has varied between six and 14 children. Most of the time these children are not held in the Brisbane city watch house, although I do note that this week there were two young girls held in the Brisbane city watch house for two days. The children I am now seeing in the watch houses are located in the regions across Queensland.

In respect of your question regarding the support services that have been provided to children in the regional watch houses, other than the standard Queensland police arrangements, I am not aware of any other service delivery going to those regional watch houses, although I was advised about a month ago that Mount Isa, Cairns and Townsville watch houses would begin to receive some support from Youth Justice staff. I do not have an update at this point as to the nature of that service delivery.

CHAIR: I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the department's aim to deliver safe, fair and responsible communities. Can the Attorney-General advise of the work that the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council is doing to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I want to firstly acknowledge the work that the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council is doing. I think a body such as this is an invaluable tool to be able to provide that independent evidence around sentencing and to help the community better understand how sentencing works. Often they just go off media reports, and they often do not capture all of the circumstances that the court has to take into account and what the actual offences relate to. I really am pleased with the great work that they have done, and I am really proud of the fact that the Palaszczuk government reintroduced the Sentencing Advisory Council after it was shut down by the previous LNP government.

In terms of what they are doing in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, this is a principal focus that has become one of the council's core values—to look at the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system. We have all heard the statistics over time. We know that this needs to be a focus across the justice system but more broadly as well.

This has meant that the council publication that presents sentencing data always provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status as a basic demographic feature. When anyone looks at all of the research that the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council does, they are able to see this specific data going to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In addition, the council has committed to ensuring that any specific impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of any reform options is also considered. When they make recommendations to me on any referrals, they are mindful of and consider what impacts that may have, intended or unintended, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As an early project, the council selected Cunnamulla as a site to undertake engagement with the community about sentencing. The council spoke to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous members of the Cunnamulla community and found a number of misconceptions about key sentencing issues that may have contributed to the high breach rates of parole or other community based sentencing orders. Following the council's work in Cunnamulla, it published a *Queensland sentencing guide* in 2018 to provide more information to Queenslanders about sentencing.

In November 2018, the council launched the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel. This is a nine-member group headed by the council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member. The panel represents a number of different communities across Queensland and aims to ensure that the world view and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities are reflected in the work of the council. Panel members are paid fees and out-of-pocket expenses to enable them to attend meetings. As at 30 March 2019, they have already met twice.

The panel has provided advice to the council about its current terms of reference, which is on community based sentencing orders, imprisonment and parole. The council anticipates that the advisory panel will be instrumental in assisting the council in producing culturally appropriate communication materials about sentencing based on information contained in the *Queensland sentencing guide* to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to understand various sentencing orders and conditions. It is hoped that increasing awareness about sentencing may well reduce the number of breaches of orders that are currently observed in these communities.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 6 of the SDS. Can the Attorney-General advise on the conviction rate for the offences of choking, strangulation or suffocation in a domestic setting?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. The Palaszczuk government's commitment to stamping out domestic and family violence continues to be unwavering. On 5 May 2016, the government introduced a standalone offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting in response to recommendation 120 of *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*.

The strangulation offence, which is contained in section 315A of the Criminal Code, carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. The *Not now, not ever* report acknowledged strangulation both as a common feature of domestic and family violence and as a predictive risk factor for future more severe violence including homicide. QSAC's analysis of courts data from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018 found in relation to the strangulation offence 404 matters resulted in a sentence for the offence of strangulation, a total of 482 charges. A sentence of imprisonment was the most common penalty imposed for strangulation, so 79 per cent resulted in a penalty of imprisonment, with an average sentence length of 1.9 years. The longest sentence of imprisonment was four years.

Almost half of the cases also involved a breach of a domestic violence order. Offenders were typically male aged between 20 and 29 years, non-Indigenous and sentenced on a plea of guilty. The oldest offender was 60 years old, the youngest was 15 years old, the average age being 31.8 years. Of those sentenced, five—1.7 per cent—were women and 99 per cent of offenders with strangulation as their most serious offence pleaded guilty. Two recent Court of Appeal decisions have indicated, I am very pleased to say, that higher sentences are warranted for the strangulation offence.

In addition, in its 2017-18 annual report the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board notes that a high-risk indicator was non-lethal strangulation. Where non-lethal strangulation was known to have previously occurred, there was on average 18 risk indicators, where it was absent there were nine. This highlights the need for all service providers to be adequately equipped to identify and respond to non-lethal strangulation. The Palaszczuk government will explore opportunities to improve the evidence base regarding non-lethal strangulation and continue to support training initiatives so that responders understand the signs of and appropriate responses to non-lethal strangulation in a domestic and family violence setting.

As a point of clarification, I spoke before about caps for clubs and pubs. I spoke about them on the whole. Just to clarify, the regional caps apply to hotels only. For clubs it is a statewide cap, for hotels it is regional caps.

Ms McMILLAN: To finish on a positive note, in relation to page 5 of the SDS can the Attorney-General advise of the popular baby names for the last 12 months?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for the question. I do not know if there are any new babies on the panel this year for any of the members, but I know members have been interested in these in the past. Statewide Oliver was top of the list for males and Charlotte for females. William, Noah, Jack, Henry, Leo, Harrison, Thomas, James and Hudson are the top names for boys. For the girls, Charlotte, Isla, Ava, Amelia, Olivia, Willow, Mia, Harper, Grace and Matilda. For any of those members interested, I can tell their tops for their electorates. Interestingly there is not consistency across all of them. The member for Southern Downs may be interested that Thomas and Charlotte are topping his list but Oliver is certainly up there for most of them.

Can I say in all seriousness that the work of Births, Deaths and Marriages is really important. They have digitised all of their records which has made a significant improvement in the operations of Births, Deaths and Marriages. I have spoken previously about the staff in Births, Deaths and Marriages who go above and beyond. I should not be surprised but I am always pleasantly pleased when I wander around the state and people come up to me and say how much Births, Deaths and Marriages helped them.

People might think it is just a birth certificate or it is just a marriage certificate but it is not. Sometimes it is for urgent reasons that they need a birth certificate: they do not have a passport and a loved one may be terminally ill overseas and they need to get a passport very quickly. We saw it with the terrorist act in London. I was in London at the time when it happened. We contacted the father to see whether he would be travelling over there. He said, 'I don't have a passport because I don't have a birth certificate.' Within I think it was 48 hours he had his birth certificate, his passport and he was on a plane to go and see his daughter who was in hospital.

I have told the sad story of our first same-sex marriage here in Queensland where the staff of Births, Deaths and Marriages went all out to create the system, get the register approval and relevant documents so that they could be married because one of the women was terminally ill. She later passed away, but she was able to be married before that happened. The family still keep us informed of what a difference that made for them and her loved ones.

They do really important work. We have talked about the marriage certificates and I have even in the past been asked by the opposition about the commemorative certificates and, yes, we do have football certificates for births. We do a lot of fantastic work in the regions. Births, Deaths and Marriages partner with other agencies to go into our Indigenous communities. It may surprise committee members that there are still children born today from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents whose births are not registered. If they are born in a hospital the hospital has a record of the birth, but hospitals do not register births. It is up to the parents because it is up to the parents to put which parent will go on that birth certificate, whether both parents will go on that birth certificate and the relevant details. It still is the obligation of parents to register that birth. That is not happening everywhere.

A lot of work is going into not just finding older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote communities who have no birth certificate so consequently very little identification and getting them their certificates but also making sure new mums register births. We are partnered with other bodies and Deadly Choices where there is a gorgeous Indigenous onesie that they get for free and a beautifully designed commemorative birth certificate if they register and immunise their baby. These are really important factors in keeping people safe in their communities and the broader community. I acknowledge their tremendous work and thank them for what they do, especially in those remote communities.

CHAIR: The time allocated for consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio of Justice and Attorney-General has expired. There were a number of questions taken on notice during this session. Do you wish to answer those now?

Mrs D'ATH: No. I will need to get that information from the office of the Public Trustee. They will continue to be taken on notice.

CHAIR: The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 3 pm on Tuesday, 30 July. You can check the exact wording of any outstanding questions in the proof of transcript of this session of the hearing which will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within approximately two hours. I would like to thank you, Attorney-General, and departmental officers for your attendance. Is there anyone you may wish to thank?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the chair and the committee members for their consideration of the 2019-20 budget estimates. I also thank my director-general and all of the staff across the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for the work they do each and every day. They are not easy jobs. The justice portfolio is not an easy portfolio. They are exposed to sometimes the worst in society, the most vulnerable in society, and I know they serve the people of Queensland very well in the work that they do.

I thank them for the preparation for estimates, because that is always a lot of work, but more importantly I thank them for the work they do each and every day. I also thank my ministerial staff and the support they give me in my role as the Attorney-General because I would not be able to do my job without all of the support that I get from the department and my staff.

CHAIR: The hearing will resume at 1.30 with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services.

Proceedings suspended from 12.49 pm to 1.30pm.

ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE— POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES

In Attendance

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

Ms E McIntyre, Chief of Staff

Mr C Elliot, Senior Policy Adviser

Queensland Police Service

Ms K Carroll, Commissioner

Inspector L Fordyce, Manager and Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Policy and Performance

Mr M Condon, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Regional Operations

Mr B Codd, Assistant Commissioner, State Crime Command

Ms T Linford, Deputy Commissioner, Strategy, Policy and Performance

Mr S Dabinett, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Operations Support Command

Mr A Guild, Manager, Weapons Licensing

Prostitution Licensing Authority

Mr W Tutt, Chairperson

Public Safety Business Agency

Mr D Smith, Acting Chief Operating Officer

Queensland Corrective Services

Mr P Martin APM, Commissioner

Mr R Wood, Chief of Staff to the Commissioner

Mr J Koulouris, Deputy Commissioner, Organisational Capability



CHAIR: The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2019 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services until 6 pm. We will break from 4.15 to 4.30. As a brief housekeeping matter, persons on the floor of the red chamber may use mobile phones or other electronic devices in silent mode. Mobile phones are not permitted to be used in the gallery above the chamber. I remind everyone that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber. The visiting member present is Trevor Watts, the member for Toowoomba North.

I remind those present this afternoon that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland 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 also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue. They should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that 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 department 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 police open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

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

Mr RYAN: Good afternoon, Chair, members of the committee and those people who are viewing on the parliament website. I start by acknowledging our new commissioner, Katarina Carroll. It is day 18 in the job, but she is raring to go and is already delivering for the great people of Queensland.

The Queensland Police Service is world class. We have more than 11,000 sworn police officers working diligently every day to keep our community safe, and the community has confidence in our police. It has been a remarkable transformation. Recently we marked the 30th anniversary of Tony Fitzgerald's landmark inquiry into political and police corruption. He forensically exposed the workings of a corrupt and broken system that betrayed all Queenslanders. Thanks to his work and his recommendations, those dark days are long gone. The Queensland Police Service has become a model example of modern policing: a service that is characterised by transparency and accountability; a service that always looks to the future, embracing cutting-edge technology; a service that responds quickly to community needs; a service unafraid to adopt the latest strategies and philosophies of policing to deliver a world-class level of service to the community.

The Queensland Police Service has adopted a borderless policing model. There are no lines on maps anymore. People flow in numbers to where they are needed, when they are needed. This is not theory. It is not hypothetical. This model governs the way that police operate on a daily basis across our state. It has been enabled by advances in technology, and police now spend far less time behind desks and way more time out on the road. That is because of advances such as the provision of handheld tablet devices such as QLITEs, which enable police to access and input information on the move. Police are more mobile and agile than ever before, and our modern communication centres allow for the fast deployment of police to where they are most needed.

Our government, the Palaszczuk government, has been a staunch supporter of the Queensland Police Service's modernisation. The government has funded the provision of technologies such as body worn cameras. This is in stark contrast to the former government, which refused to provide police with that technology and officers had to buy their own body worn cameras and backup on software on QPS systems. Just before entering parliament today, I announced another major step in the government's continued support of our police. I announced that there will now be an additional rollout of body worn cameras, so that all uniformed first responder officers across Queensland will have one. That takes the total body worn camera fleet to about 7,700 cameras. This is about giving our police the technologies that allow them to be a world-class operation and it builds on our funding commitment of \$6.3 million over three years to support the rollout of this program.

Our support for the police never wavers. The recent state budget delivered a record police budget, which is a 20 per cent increase since we were elected in 2015. Our police have an unswerving commitment to serving our community, so it is only right that this commitment should be reciprocated by our government. A total of \$2.6 billion in operating and capital budget has been allocated to the Queensland Police Service this year. We have committed an extra \$67 million to further support the Queensland Police Service in keeping the community safe. It demonstrates the government's commitment to delivering the frontline services that Queenslanders need. Additional funding has been allocated to make Queensland's unique Task Force Orion a permanent fixture in the Queensland Police Service. In conjunction with Task Force Argos, Task Force Orion leads the world in hunting down online child sex abuse predators and setting free the victims.

There is also additional funding to continue the boost to police efforts to combat organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. Task Force Maxima and the Organised Crime Gangs Group have led the way in tackling organised crime so that more than a quarter of bikies are now behind bars. There are no bikie clubhouses operating in Queensland anymore. Members are leaving the gangs due to constant policing pressure. Bokie numbers are down 17 per cent since 2015. We are maintaining the pressure. In this year's budget \$5 million has been committed to tackling organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs.

There is also \$28 million to continue work on the Counter-Terrorism and Community Safety Training Centre at Wacol and a further allocation to increase the Special Emergency Response Team numbers in Queensland. The government has allocated \$10.8 million to complete a new police facility in Arundel and there is \$4.9 million to continue work on a replacement police facility at Pormpuraaw. The list goes on. Many of those projects are delivered by the Public Safety Business Agency. I acknowledge them and their commitment to public safety. I particularly acknowledge our acting chief operating officer, Doug Smith.

This year, \$1.8 million has also been allocated to the highly successful Project Booyah initiative to provide community based youth support and mentorship across nine locations throughout Queensland. Before I finish, I acknowledge the important work of the Prostitution Licensing Authority. The authority's staff play a vital role in making sure that only suitable persons own, operate and manage licensed brothels. In particular, I pay tribute to the authority's board chair, Wally Tutt.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: Thank you, Mr Chair. I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr WATTS: Let me add my congratulations to the commissioner on her appointment to lead the thin blue line in Queensland. I would also like to thank all of the ACs and officers who work in that thin blue line every day in Queensland.

My first question is to the commissioner. The Public Guardian revealed earlier today that children were observed consuming water in watch houses that was contaminated with faecal matter because the water bubblers are located above the toilets. Can the commissioner confirm whether she is aware of these reports?

Commissioner Carroll: As you know, it is not uncommon to have children in our watch houses. There are lot of services that obviously assist when children are in our watch houses. However, I am informed—and I went to the watch house yesterday to get a brief in relation to recent events—that every person has access to clean drinking water within their cell. In addition to this access, young persons are provided with clean drinking water and/or milk five times per day when meals are delivered. The water provided is bottled water which is then dispensed into cups. All meals provided to young people are supplied by Youth Justice.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, how often are the bubblers in the cells tested for faecal matter?

Commissioner Carroll: Through the minister, I will take that on notice. There would be some regime of inspection, but I cannot answer that exactly, unless one of my staff from the Brisbane metropolitan area can.

Mr WATTS: Is it okay if we put that on notice, Minister?

Mr RYAN: Let us just check whether the assistant commissioner has that information. We will take it on notice.

Commissioner Carroll: We will take that on notice.

Mr WATTS: Have all the children who have made these complaints about the faecal matter contaminated water now been tested for hepatitis and other communicable diseases?

CHAIR: Excuse me member for Toowoomba North, is that a question that is relevant to this portfolio?

Mr RYAN: I will seek your guidance, Chair. These young people who would be on remand are Youth Justice clients. Their health and wellbeing would be the prime consideration of Youth Justice. I will take your ruling on the matter, bearing in mind that the time to ask questions of the youth justice minister was yesterday.

Mr WATTS: If I might say, they were being held in police facilities at the time. Obviously the cleaning regime and the water provided would be a police matter?

CHAIR: That was a further question that you asked. I do not wish to debate it. I believe that is outside the minister's portfolio responsibilities. Can you ask your next question, please?

Mr WATTS: Certainly. Minister, from one father to another, is it appropriate that children are given water with faeces in it inside a Queensland government facility?

Mr RYAN: Point of order, Mr Chair. That is asking for an opinion.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba North, could you rephrase the question so it does not seek an opinion?

Mr WATTS: I will move on to the next question. Minister, your recent correspondence to the Leader of the Opposition—and I have copies of the correspondence to be tabled—on 8 July said that each young offender had access—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order, Mr Chair. We would need to see that—

CHAIR: Please wait. Are you seeking leave to table the letter?

Mr WATTS: I seek leave to table the letter.

CHAIR: Is the committee happy for it to be tabled?

Mr RYAN: Excuse me, Chair, I do not have a copy of that.

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair, have you put the question as to whether we grant leave for it to be tabled?

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr WATTS: The minister's correspondence to the Leader of the Opposition dated 8 July said each young offender had access to constant, clean drinking water. Is your letter misleading?

Mr RYAN: Your very first question was to the commissioner and she answered by saying that young people have access to bottled water. They have access to water facilities. They have access to milk. The commissioner has already answered your question. That is that young people do have access to drinking water and/or milk five times per day.

Mr WATTS: The letter was clear. It said 'constant, clean drinking water'?

Mr RYAN: This is based on advice. The commissioner's answer was very clear. Let me read it.

Mr LISTER: So was yours, Minister.

CHAIR: Do not interrupt, please.

Mr RYAN: That is very rude. I am answering the question. This is what the commissioner informed the member in answer to his very first question. He has a very short memory. She stated—

Every young person has access to clean drinking tap water within their cell. In addition to this access, young people are provided with clean drinking water and/or milk five times per day when meals are delivered—

Mr WATTS: We have heard this answer, Minister.

CHAIR: Do not interrupt, please.

Mr RYAN: It continues—

The water provided is bottled water dispensed into cups.

CHAIR: Order! Please do not interrupt the minister.

Mr RYAN: I have answered the question.

Mr WATTS: My next question is to the commissioner. Has a complaint to the CCC dated 15 May 2019 from a gang rape victim and the Leader of the Opposition been allocated to the police officer whom the complaint was against?

Commissioner Carroll: Can you repeat the latter part of that question?

Mr WATTS: Certainly. I will read the whole question.

Commissioner Carroll: Thank you.

Mr WATTS: Has the complaint to the CCC dated 15 May 2019 from a gang rape victim and the Leader of the Opposition been allocated to the police officer whom the complaint was against?

Mr RYAN: Point of order, Chair. The member in his question has referred to a complaint being made to the CCC. Surely those matters are inappropriate to be discussed in a forum like this. If it is a matter currently before the CCC, however it might be dealt with—whether it is dealt with directly by the CCC or devolved to the agency—it is inappropriate to ask those questions.

Mr WATTS: It has been sent back to ethical standards is my understanding and then allocated to the police officer whom the complaint was against. I am just seeking information to confirm those facts.

Commissioner Carroll: I do not have a brief on the circumstances spoken about. I will have to take that matter on notice.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to take it on notice?

Mr RYAN: I acknowledge the commissioner's request to put it on notice. May I just put my protest that I do not think it is appropriate for a question about ethical standards investigations or CCC matters to be asked in a forum like this.

Mr WATTS: Can I seek your guidance about whether that was taken on notice, Chair?

CHAIR: The minister was happy to take it on notice.

Mr WATTS: When will the investigation into the destruction of the gang rape evidence be concluded?

Mr RYAN: I raise a point of order. Chair, I am not going to take this one on notice.

CHAIR: No.

Mr RYAN: Fair dinkum. How many times do we have to raise the issue of matters being before the CCC or ESC?

CHAIR: Thanks, Minister. I ask you to move on to your next question, please.

Mr WATTS: Chair, this is a very serious matter where evidence has been destroyed or lost. I am very concerned about the probity around this matter. All of those matters are under the financial—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba North, I will remind you of a number of things. First of all, I have made a ruling in relation to your previous question. Secondly, you are here at the invitation of the committee. Can you please stop asking questions about this particular issue? Ask your next question, please.

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Chair. Commissioner, in the QPS budget submission did you seek a larger percentage of the Queensland budget—that is, more money than has actually been appropriated this financial year—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order.

CHAIR: Is this a question in relation to something that would have gone to the CBRC?

Mr RYAN: I would imagine so.

Mr LISTER: Chair, the commissioner answered this question last year.

CHAIR: If it is a budgetary discussion that went to the CBRC then the question is not appropriate.

Commissioner Carroll: If you wish, Chair, I can answer it generically.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Commissioner Carroll: Often, if we require additional resources that are not budgeted for we will submit submissions for those additional resources. If we do not get that, we can go to the midyear review, so there are a number of options. Within any budget, some of those obviously are granted and others are not, and others will be absorbed within our current budget. Generically speaking, that is the process that we adhere to and go through each year.

Mr WATTS: It could always be more. Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner, given that this year's police budget is only 4.02 per cent of Queensland government revenue, which is a significant reduction from the LNP's average of 4.39 per cent—in dollar terms that is, in fact, a cut of \$222 million this financial year—would \$222 million have helped the Queensland police reduce crime rates across the state if that had been appropriated this year?

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba North, you are seeking an opinion in that question. Could you rephrase the question, please.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, with an extra \$222 million in the police budget—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order.

CHAIR: Again, you are seeking an opinion from the commissioner. I ask you for the last time to rephrase your question.

Mr WATTS: I will move on. Commissioner, in terms of police officers per 100,000 in Queensland, according to the annual statistical review, in 2016 there were 245 officers per 100,000. In 2017 there were 242. As at 30 June 2019, how many officers per 100,000 were there? Also, do you have the figure for 30 June 2018?

Commissioner Carroll: If you do not mind, I will talk to the head count. As at 12 July 2019, the total actual head count of police officers, recruits and staff was 15,805, which was 122 more than as at 30 June last year. This included an increase of 36 police officers, an increase of 24 recruits and an increase of 62 staff as opposed to last year.

I take your point, though. You are talking about a ratio. Whilst the numbers have decreased, I just caution that it is very difficult to compare numbers without adding that technology has changed what we do dramatically. Whilst you might see a decrease in numbers, you do see a more highly visible Police Service, particularly with our QLITE and body worn videos. Where once upon a time you would have to go back and commit time to your desk, our officers are spending a lot more time out on the street, so it is difficult to just compare numbers without putting that in context.

Mr WATTS: Whilst I appreciate that answer, Commissioner, the figure I am after is the number of police officers per 100,000 as at 30 June 2019.

Mr RYAN: I heard the question. We will take it on notice.

Mr WATTS: Thank you very much, Minister.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS which refers to detecting and solving offences. Will the minister please advise of measures that the Queensland Police Service is taking to keep communities safe in my electorate of Toohey?

Mr RYAN: Thank you very much, member. I acknowledge your strong advocacy for your community, particularly around issues of community safety. It has been extraordinary. I want to put on the record your commitment to community safety in your electorate and surrounding areas.

Community safety is the Palaszczuk government's No. 1 priority. That is why we delivered a record police budget this year. That is why we have increased the police budget by 20 per cent since coming to government. That is why there are more police in Queensland than ever before, with more to come. That is why our police are better trained and better resourced than ever before.

We have listened to Queenslanders, including Queenslanders in the electorate of Toohey. In mid-May the Queensland Police Service launched a special operation, Operation Romeo Airtight—an ongoing targeted campaign to boost community safety in the Sunnybank region. It continues to deliver a greater police presence and a more sustained police presence in the Sunnybank and Sunnybank Hills area.

The operation involves officers from the Upper Mount Gravatt station and neighbouring police divisions. As well, it has police from specialist units including detectives, the Tactical Crime Squad, the mounted unit, the Public Safety Response Team, the railway squad, the bicycle squad and Road Policing Command. Their focus is on crime hotspots. This is a six-month targeted campaign that will be re-evaluated at the end of the year. As at 18 July, the operation has resulted in 224 arrests, 489 charges, over 4,000 random breath tests, 715 street checks and almost 1,900 traffic infringement notices.

Police regularly engage with community groups throughout the community including the Chinese Community Crime Prevention Consultative Committee. The last crime prevention meeting was held only a few months ago and the former police commissioner attended. Police, including Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking police liaison officers, regularly meet with the community and community groups, working holiday groups, schools, businesses and Chinese consular officials providing updates on community and personal safety. These interactions are backed by public safety messaging across mainstream media and online media platforms like Facebook, WeChat and Twitter.

In response to an evidenced based analysis of crime, police from the Upper Mount Gravatt Police Division and the South Brisbane District Crime Prevention Unit have a range of proactive crime prevention strategies. There are community engagement activities such as community safety pop-up stalls; community crime prevention displays; not Coffee with a Cop but 'bubble tea with a cop', which I am sure you will appreciate, member for Toohey; and safety forums with local members. These events are an opportunity for community to talk directly to our public safety experts.

As at 31 May, the Upper Mount Gravatt Police Division, which polices your community, member for Toohey, had an improved strength of 67 permanent police positions. The duties of these officers include general duties and providing staffing resources to the police beats at Sunnybank Plaza and Garden City shopping centres. In addition to the officers stationed in that police division, the area has access to specialist policing services within district, regional and centralised support functions.

Police liaison officers fluent in many languages—including Mandarin and Cantonese—and representing several different faiths, cultures and religions are also a key component of police resourcing in the member for Toohey's community. I am also informed that for the reporting period 2018-19 an analysis of crime statistics for the area, including the suburbs of MacGregor, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills, Rochedale and Eight Mile Plains, shows significant decreases in a number of crime classes, including: break and enter of dwellings and shops, unlawful use of motor vehicles and unlawful entry of motor vehicles.

Ms McMILLAN: Minister, I refer to the departmental overview on page 3 of the SDS, which refers to providing equipment, technology and facilities to support frontline staff. Will the minister please inform the committee of the resources being delivered to frontline police in my great electorate of Mansfield and across Queensland in this year's state budget?

Mr RYAN: Thank you, member for Mansfield. It is a great electorate with a great local member. Not as great as the Morayfield electorate, but pretty close.

The government recently delivered a record police budget. In fact, since coming to office the Palaszczuk government has increased the police budget by 20 per cent. That is why there are more police in Queensland than ever before, and that is why our police are better trained and better resourced than ever before. The record budget delivers resources to frontline policing, including investments in equipment, technology, facilities and training and recruitment. This government is committed to providing frontline police with access to critical resources to keep police and communities safe. It is why

we have funded additional tasers and associated equipment, which brings the total fleet of tasers across the state to 5,000. As part of the rollout the Mount Gravatt patrol group received an additional 134 tasers.

Today I announce the additional rollout of body worn cameras so that all uniformed first responder police officers across the state will have one. I know, member for Mansfield, it is very important to you because on behalf of your officers you have specifically advocated for them to have a body worn camera, so I acknowledge your advocacy. Of course, this stands in stark contrast to the former government, which did not provide that equipment to our police and refused to fund those body worn cameras. In fact, it required officers to buy their own body worn cameras.

In this budget we have allocated \$85 million to the Queensland Police Service capital works program for 2019-20. This is for all major capital works projects, including air conditioner replacements, closed-circuit camera upgrades, electricity optimisation and minor works. Queensland continues to be a leader and is recognised as such for police mobility. As at 31 May this year, I am advised that the Queensland Police Service had a fleet of 6,800 mobile devices, or iPads—commonly called QLITEs—deployed across the state. This essentially means that every uniformed first responder will have access to a QLITE. I am advised that officers at the Mount Gravatt Police Station have now been equipped with over 60 of these QLITE devices. In neighbouring police facilities like Holland Park, officers have been equipped with over 40 QLITE devices. QLITE devices provide enhanced officer safety as well as improved service delivery to the people of Queensland. It shows that our government is committed to investing in our police and providing the resources they need to keep Queensland safe.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, my question refers to page 5 of the SDS: capabilities to target serious and organised crime gangs, including outlaw motorcycle gangs. Will the minister inform the committee about such enforcement and recent reports in the *Tweed Daily News* about bikies moving to the Tweed to escape tough Queensland laws?

Mr RYAN: That is a very, very good question. This government is totally committed to keeping Queenslanders safe. That is why this year we have delivered a record police budget and why there are more police in Queensland than ever before. It is also why our police are better trained and better resourced than ever before. It is also why I announce today that all uniformed first responder officers will have body worn cameras.

We back our police. That is why we have introduced the strongest laws in the nation to tackle organised crime, including outlaw motorcycle gangs. Queensland police use laws to disrupt the bikies' activities. There are no clubhouses in Queensland. More and more bikies are leaving the clubs because of relentless pressure from police. They cannot wear their colours; they cannot congregate. Their visible presence has been snuffed out. They are on the run with nowhere to hide. I am advised by the Queensland Police Service that their operations, tactics and strategies have been effective, with Queensland's outlaw motorcycle gang full-patch membership falling by 17 per cent since 2015. I am advised that in 2018, 1,179 people were charged by the Queensland Police Service's State Crime Command Organised Crime Gangs Group with 3,665 offences. This is the highest number of charges in any year since Taskforce Maxima was established.

As mentioned in your question, only yesterday the respected *Tweed Daily News* published an article attributing our tough laws as the reason behind bikies leaving Queensland to seek safe sanctuary in northern New South Wales. I will table the document at the end of my question, but I thought it was important to highlight some of the statements from that article because we did not say it: these are politicians in New South Wales commenting on our tough laws. The article states—

Queensland bikie gangs cannot operate on the Gold Coast due to—
Queensland's—

tough laws, but once they cross the border into the Tweed, it is game on—and they operate as they wish ... Put simply, Queensland bikies are coming to NSW to escape Queensland's tough and uncompromising laws.

I have to quote the last sentence as well—

The Rebels and the Mongols laugh at the NSW Police Minister—and fear the Queensland one.

I seek leave to table the article.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr RYAN: Members, the State Crime Command continues to target the assets and facilitators of organised gang crime in Queensland. Since the inception of the strongest, toughest and most comprehensive legislation against organised crime in the nation, to 30 June this year 55 matters have

been referred by the Organised Crime Gangs Group—with the assistance of the investigative accounting unit—to the Crime and Corruption Commission for consideration of proceeds of crime. Forty-one restraining orders have been obtained over property worth over \$12.2 million. That is just further proof of our exceptional laws, which are keeping Queenslanders safe and continuing to apply pressure on organised crime here in Queensland.

Mr LISTER: I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr WATTS: Minister, I refer to the answer to question on notice No. 11, which says that the approved police strength as at 30 June 2019 was 11,866. I also refer to the answer to question on notice No. 10 asked on 15 February 2018, which said that the approved strength as at 30 June 2017 was 11,735. The increase in the last two years has only been 131 officers, when the government election commitment was an additional 535 officers over four years. Why has the government only managed to approve less than half of the police needed to fulfil its election commitment?

Mr RYAN: Member for Toowoomba North, we still have a number of years to deliver our commitment. The commitment will be delivered by 2021-22, which is just under three years away. We are a quarter of the way through that target with about three years to go. If you get your calculator out, that is tracking well. I have been assured by the Commissioner that we will deliver that commitment by 2021-22, and that is what the government's expectation would be.

Mr WATTS: Given the spectacular failure to keep up—

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Mansfield. Member for Toowoomba North, can you rephrase the question?

Mr WATTS: How can Queenslanders in places like Cairns, Townsville and the Gold Coast have confidence that the government will in fact deliver on its election commitment with this go-slow?

Mr RYAN: Member for Toowoomba North, you must have your earplugs in today because it was just 30 seconds ago that I said we are tracking well towards delivering those police growth numbers by 2021-22. I have received an assurance from the commissioner and also the Queensland Police Service that we will deliver the government's commitment of a 535 growth in police personnel numbers by that date. We are tracking well. We have delivered a quarter of it and we have almost three years to go. There are recruits in the academy right now. Those recruits are going through their training and we will continue to put recruits through the academy and continue to deliver extra police growth numbers and of course deliver it by 2021-22.

Mr WATTS: So there is no intention to fast-track this recruitment to deal with the crime crisis?

Mr RYAN: There is an imputation there and also an opinion being sought.

CHAIR: Yes. Could you rephrase the question, please.

Mr WATTS: I will move on. The people of Townsville tell me they perceive that crime is skyrocketing—with the unlawful use of motor vehicle up 52 per cent from when Labor took office in 2015 and robbery up 113 per cent. The community is calling for additional officers. Labor promised Townsville an extra 53 officers two years ago at the last state election. However, these officers have not been delivered. Will they be delivered in the financial year 2019-20?

Mr RYAN: Member, let me correct some of your understanding as well. There was also a commitment made in the 2017 budget to deliver 20 extra police to Townsville. They have been delivered. There was also an election commitment to deliver further numbers. As I said in my previous two answers, the commissioner and the Police Service have assured me that those growth numbers will be delivered.

When we are talking about Townsville, let us also consider the resourcing that the previous government provided to Townsville. There was a quite distressing article in the *Townsville Bulletin* from 25 September 2012 which said 'Cops to hit beat without vital kit'. This is because when the LNP were in power they failed to fund the accoutrement—the police cars, the uniforms—of the police growth numbers that they committed to. In fact, in the 2012-13 LNP budget, funding for operational equipment fell some \$24 million—

Mr McDONALD: Mr Chair, I have a point of order on relevance. It is not in line with the question.

Mr RYAN: It is talking about police resourcing in Townsville.

Mr LISTER: We are talking about this government's police resourcing in Townsville.

Mr RYAN: You are one of the rudest people around.

CHAIR: No argument. I am trying to deal with a point of order.

Mr WATTS: Chair, if I may—

Mr RYAN: We are talking about police resources in Townsville.

CHAIR: Can I deal with the point of order?

Mr RYAN: Yes.

CHAIR: There is no point of order. I ask the minister to continue—

Mr WATTS: Chair, the question was very clear. Will they be delivered in this financial year?

CHAIR: I have already made my order. Can the minister please continue. Minister, if you have anything further to add—

Mr RYAN: Yes. I am happy to talk about the LNP's record when it comes to—

Mr LISTER: Point of order, Mr Chair. The question was not about anything other than the current resourcing.

CHAIR: I have already made my ruling.

Mr LISTER: The minister just stated that he is going to be talking about a government other than his own.

CHAIR: I have already made my ruling. Do you want to go out into a private session?

Mr LISTER: No, but are you protecting the minister?

CHAIR: Do not argue. I have made my ruling. I have invited the minister to conclude his answer.

Mr RYAN: As I said, Chair, in my two previous questions, the election commitment we made was to deliver police by 2022. I have an assurance from the commissioner that those officers, be they going to Townsville or other parts of Queensland, will be delivered by that date.

CHAIR: Minister, do you wish to seek leave to table any of those documents?

Mr RYAN: Absolutely, I will table that article because it is pretty embarrassing for the LNP how they short-changed Townsville police. It is disgraceful, really.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, can you advise why six general duties police officers were redeployed from Townsville police station to staff the Upper Ross facility?

Commissioner Carroll: Yes, I can. That was an operational decision. They were patrolling that area so, really, it was just an operational closer to the action. They start and finish their shift there and it is easier to get to—less time frames. It was purely an operational decision to do that, and we do that often depending on where the resources are required at the time.

Mr WATTS: Thanks very much. Commissioner, can you confirm that since Labor took office robbery in Queensland is up 61 per cent, unlawful use of a motor vehicle is up 45 per cent and assault is up 32 per cent?

Commissioner Carroll: I will get to the exact figures that you have asked. I can say that there has been a two per cent increase in overall crime from 2017-18 to 2018-19 and a less than one per cent decrease in offence against the person. However, I just want to comment on this before I go to your exact question. There has been in the last 15-year period an 11 per cent decrease in overall crime. Crime cannot be looked at in isolation year upon year; it needs to be looked at over an extended period so we can look at the trends that are occurring in that period.

Mr WATTS: If I may, Commissioner, my question is over the last five-year period.

Commissioner Carroll: Yes. The only reason I am taking my time is that I do not have them over the five-year period. We would have to take that on notice. I have them year on year out, and I would have to sit here and do the math for the five-year period.

CHAIR: Is the minister happy to take that on notice?

Mr RYAN: Yes, we will take that on notice.

Commissioner Carroll: Sorry. I would have to sit here and literally add and subtract while we are sitting at the table and it might take some time.

Mr WATTS: That is fine. Commissioner, a recent question on notice, No. 585, revealed that police overtime costs for supervising children in watch houses totalled \$938,000 in 2018-19, which grew by 185 per cent from the previous year. Commissioner, how much of the \$938,000 did the department of youth transfer to the police budget?

Commissioner Carroll: I thank the member for the question. I understand it was from central funds. It did not come from the police budget. The government provided an additional \$938,000 to the QPS for the period January to June 2019 to support the QPS in providing a custodial option while other youth justice initiatives have the opportunity to reduce the demand. It was an additional \$938,000 provided by government for that.

Mr WATTS: From central?

Commissioner Carroll: From central.

Mr RYAN: Just to assist the member, I want to refer the member to the budget documents because there is a specific reference in the budget documents to that. Let me just find the page for the member. It is on page 117 of Budget Paper No. 4 where it says 'Youth justice investment—police overtime for supervision of young people in watch houses', and the figure is \$938,000. It is a specific allocation from central funds.

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Minister. Commissioner, can you tell us what the total cost for transporting children from watch houses around Queensland to the Brisbane watch house has been in 2018 and 2019?

Commissioner Carroll: Member, thank you for your question. It is an extraordinarily complex question. Depending on whether they were in detention for our purposes or youth justice affects how they were transported. There would have to be a lot of manual working out to get you that answer. If you do not mind, through the minister, we could take that on notice because it will take us a bit of time to get that together.

CHAIR: Does the minister want to take that on notice?

Mr RYAN: The component that I will take on notice is obviously the cost for police prisoners, because there is a distinction. Once a young person is on remand, they will be a YJ—a youth justice—client and those expenses are generally paid for by youth justice. It will only be for police prisoners.

Mr WATTS: So that I can be clear, Chair, the number I am seeking is the police expenditure in relation to that.

Commissioner Carroll: Thank you.

CHAIR: Just to be clear, it is for police expenditure. It will not include any expenditure from youth justice.

Mr RYAN: That information would have to be gathered from the Department of Youth Justice.

Commissioner Carroll: Chair, for clarity, there was an additional part of that question. It was for police but was it movement from other watch houses to Brisbane?

Mr WATTS: Watch houses to the Brisbane Watch House.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to take that component on notice, too?

Mr RYAN: I am happy to do that. I am predicting what the answer will be. Up until recently when capacity constraints were freed up in the youth detention centres, a young person who would have been transferred to the Brisbane Watch House would likely have been a remanded young person being transferred from a regional watch house to the Brisbane Watch House. If they were given bail, they would generally have been given bail from—

Commissioner Carroll:—that watch house.

Mr RYAN:—their watch house. I am just foreshadowing that the number might be very, very low.

Commissioner Carroll: It would more likely be the case that it would be youth justice children who would be moved to the Brisbane Watch House. I agree; it would be lower numbers, but that is fine; we will get them back to you.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, in 2018-19 the Queensland taxpayer spent around \$3,700,000 in damages and repairs to the watch house. The figure has risen quite substantially since last year. How much of this damage was caused in the youth wings?

Commissioner Carroll: I am briefed that we do not differentiate. Particularly throughout that period of time when the watch house had a lot of young people in it and were moved from wing to wing it would be almost impossible to get you an accurate figure as to whether damage was caused by adults or children. We could attempt to do this, but I think you would not get an exact answer because of the complexity of working that out. I will explain why. Not all the children sat in one wing or in one pod. The children obviously were put where they had to be put for a period of time. That may be in

different areas of the watch house over different periods of time. Adults would have been in that area as well over different periods of time. We would literally have to go back to a period of time and see where they were, for what period of time and who caused the damage. I believe it would be extraordinarily difficult for us to get an exact figure for you.

CHAIR: Minister, is that one of those questions that is too onerous—

Mr RYAN: I do not think it needs to be taken on notice because a prehearing question on notice, question 16, asked about a similar thing. It states—

... will the Minister advise the total cost of repairs in all watch houses caused by adults and children ...

The answer states—

... the QPS has advised that they are unable to break down costs incurred for repairs caused by adults or young offenders.

We have already considered the issue.

CHAIR: I now move to government questions.

Ms McMILLAN: Minister, I refer to SDS page 4, which refers to maintaining public order and safety, and I ask: will the minister please advise the level of financial support being provided to the Queensland Police Service to keep the community safe?

Mr RYAN: Member, as you know, our government backs the police 100 per cent. We provide them with the resources, the training and the personnel that make the Queensland Police Service truly world-class. Our police have an unswerving commitment to serving the community, so it is only right that that commitment should be reciprocated. This year the Palaszczuk government has delivered a record police budget. The government has provided an operating and capital budget for the Queensland Police Service of about \$2.6 billion, the biggest ever. The Palaszczuk government has committed an extra \$67 million to further support police in keeping our community safe. It demonstrates the government's commitment to delivering the frontline services that Queenslanders need.

Among the budget highlights are the following: additional funding has been allocated to Queensland's Taskforce Orion to make it a permanent fixture in the Queensland Police Service; a further \$2.34 million over the next four years and ongoing funding will be allocated to integrate Taskforce Orion permanently into the Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group to tackle the making and distribution of child exploitation material. There is also additional funding to continue the boost to police efforts to combat organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. Taskforce Maxima has led the way in tackling organised crime. With the support of the Organised Crime Gangs Group, there are now no bikie clubhouses operating in Queensland. An amount of \$5 million has been committed to tackling organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. Capabilities will also be enhanced to tackle alcohol fuelled violence and the drug ice.

Funding in this year's budget also includes funding for capital projects like our counterterrorism and community safety training centre at Wacol. There is also funding for our Special Emergency Response Team to expand their operations.

We also have funding to support Project Booyah, a brilliant initiative which provides community based youth support and mentorship across nine locations throughout Queensland. It is an award-winning initiative. Project Booyah makes a real difference. It turns young people's lives around and it gets them back into education and work.

Increasing the ability of our hardworking police officers to keep our community safe is a top priority of the Palaszczuk government. This additional funding that we are providing covers a significant cross-section of the organisation and will allow our officers to continue to serve the community and reduce crime and harm.

We are also committed to upgrading police facilities for our police, which will enhance working conditions and service delivery for communities across Queensland. This is one reason why the Queensland Police Service is world-class. On behalf of all Queenslanders, let's thank them for the work they do for our community.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, SDS page 3 refers to addressing the threat of terrorism and radicalisation, and I ask: will the minister please provide the committee with a progress report on the building of the new training centre at Wacol?

Mr RYAN: Member, as you may have heard given your past occupation, there is a lot of excitement about this facility. It truly is a world-class facility and it is going to be based here in Queensland. This facility will set a new benchmark for Australia. I know that other jurisdictions and law

enforcement agencies have already shown great interest in having access to this new counterterrorism training facility once it is complete, and that is not surprising. This will be a game changer and it is another concrete example of the way our government provides police with the resources and infrastructure they need.

It is because of Labor governments that Queensland has a world-class Police Service. The Palaszczuk government is backing police with a record police budget this year. It is up 20 per cent compared to when we came to office. There are more police in Queensland than ever before and they are also better trained and better resourced than ever before. Of course, this new facility will take that training to the next level.

Our government has invested \$46.7 million with an additional \$6.1 million contingency, bringing the total project to \$52.8 million over four years for a world-class use of force, weapons and counterterrorism facility at Wacol to be delivered in 2020. The budget for this project is currently approved and construction is underway.

I am advised by the Queensland Police Service that the Wacol campus currently houses the Queensland Police Service leadership centre and is also being used to deliver driver and practical skills training. The new counterterrorism facility will include indoor firearms ranges, a scenario village and specialist training areas to increase capability in managing terrorism and other critical incidents. This facility will be co-located with that police driving skills facility that I mentioned to enhance training on the growing issue of vehicle attacks such as those recently seen interstate and overseas.

FK Gardner & Sons, a Queensland owned and operated company in Toowoomba—the member for Toowoomba North should be excited about them getting the job—was selected in March 2019 to build the facility, which will support 130 jobs. The company has extensive experience in delivering high-quality building and engineering projects, including previous projects for the Queensland Police Service. Our official sod turning was conducted on 17 May. Site establishment works commenced in early July and, as I said, the facility is due to be completed in 2020. Quite aptly and appropriately, this facility will be named after former police commissioner Bob Atkinson.

CHAIR: I refer to page 8 of the SDS which makes reference to *Safer roads, safer Queensland: Queensland's road safety strategy*. Will the minister update the committee on the proactive measures being undertaken by police to bring down the road toll and to keep communities safe in regional Queensland?

Mr RYAN: As already mentioned, we are backing our police with a record police budget. This is about investing in community safety. When it comes to safety on our roads, it is a responsibility of everyone every day. The road toll is one of those raw statistics that does not reveal its true nature until we look behind the number. The road toll is a very personal catalogue of loss and human suffering. It is a tally of despair, shock and bereavement. It is a measure of human frailty, an indicator of too many occasions where lives ended needlessly, so we must never give up. The Queensland Police Service never will.

Road policing enforcement activities in Queensland are highly visible and strategic in nature and are intended to improve road user behaviour. On this particular point I want to thank Byron Bindley, who wrote to my office only last month and said—and our officers from the Queensland Police Service have not heard this yet, so I hope our officers on the Gold Coast are listening –

Dear Minister

I have mentioned the positive response I received, both from yourself and the Southport police and residents of the apartments are most grateful for any reduction of speeding motorbikes and hoons along Marine parade and indeed anywhere on the coast.

Thankyou for your response to our plight and I personally ... give my support ...

Thankyou once again for your help.

That is an example of the many letters of thanks we receive from members of the community about the great work of the Queensland Police Service.

I am advised that all police in Queensland have a role in road safety. Their road enforcement statistics are worth noting. From July last year to 31 March this year, almost two million random breath tests were conducted, with more than 12,600 drink-driving offences detected. Over 52,000 roadside saliva tests were undertaken, with almost 10,700 drivers testing positive for one or more relevant drugs. Over 120,000 speeding infringement notices were issued, and 7,000 infringement notices were issued for not wearing seatbelts. It is simple stuff. People are still not wearing seatbelts. Over 9,300 infringement notices were issued for using mobile phones.

As a specialist unit of the Queensland Police Service, the Road Policing Command serves its mission to regulate driver behaviour, stop crime, make the community safer and reduce road trauma. I particularly give a shout-out to all our officers in the Road Policing Command. They are exceptional officers, they do great work and I thank them for their service to Queensland.

Ms McMILLAN: Page 4 of the SDS refers to working with the community to stop crime and make Queensland safer. Minister, can you please update the committee on the working partnership with Crime Stoppers?

Mr RYAN: Of course, our government is a very strong supporter of Crime Stoppers. The Queensland Police Service works very closely with Crime Stoppers, especially since the Crime Stoppers board, an independent board, decided to close the organisation's call centre due to it not being financially viable. As in all other Australian states, and just as it was in Queensland until a few years ago, calls to Crime Stoppers are now handled by the Queensland police contact centre.

Historically, Crime Stoppers Queensland has been the nation's most successful in solving crime and continues to be. Support for this successful organisation continues. The Queensland Police Service has also supported the board by providing additional administrative assistance and funding support. This government and the Queensland police greatly value the work of Crime Stoppers. Police continue to partner with Crime Stoppers through involvement with area committees, providing community with information on media releases as well as in-kind support through acknowledgement of sponsors on police vehicles.

I am advised by police that internal data demonstrates that, when it comes to service delivery to callers, Policelink is performing similarly to the former Crime Stoppers independent board-run call centre. I take this opportunity to commend Policelink and its staff for their great work. On this particular note, I have another acknowledgement letter from a member of the community. It says—

Dear Sir,

It gives me much pleasure to write to you now, express my sincere gratitude I have towards Policelink staff. When I made contact recently staff were so well mannered and polite to me. I received outstanding service from them ... I convey to you now.

...

Yours sincerely

From

John Bradley.

I thank John for expressing his thanks to our great staff at Policelink. The Queensland community demonstrates ongoing confidence by reporting of criminal intelligence to Crime Stoppers and police. This assists with making Queensland communities safer. For those people listening in today, I continue to encourage them, should they have any information relating to any crime, to contact Crime Stoppers and provide that intelligence to the Queensland Police Service.

Mr ANDREW: Congratulations on your recent appointment, Commissioner Carroll. Minister, in both Sarina and Mount Morgan in my electorate the police seem to have no four-wheel drives. When will the government issue four-wheel drive vehicles to some of these rural stations?

Mr RYAN: I am happy to pass to the commissioner to provide a bit more information on this, but we do have police issued four-wheel drives. They are located strategically across the state. In fact, last month I was at Kowanyama station. There are a number of four-wheel drives at that station. I know that a number of stations that have a coastal presence have four-wheel drives as well. I will hand over to the commissioner as she will have more information.

Commissioner Carroll: As alluded to by the minister, we do have four-wheel drives. Currently, there are 291 wagons, 420 dual cabs and a number of two-wheel drive dual cabs as well. There is a fleet review currently underway with PSBA. Acting Deputy Commissioner Condon is in charge of that piece of work. It would be valid for him to provide a little more detail, because it will certainly change the mix of where four-wheel drives go.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Condon: My substantive portfolio is southern regions. I am very in tune to the challenges of getting the right vehicles in remote and rural areas. Currently, we are undergoing a review of the fleet to provide a more effective vehicle to those areas. In some regards, we are driven by global drivers in terms of the manufacturing industry. We have a number of vehicles that have a four-wheel or all-wheel drive capacity, but we are restricted in some regards by what is called an OEM—original equipment manufacturers—bull bar. Some of the vehicles simply cannot take those types of bull bars because of impacts on the airbag sensors and the ANCAR safety rating.

In consultation with the PSBA, currently we are reviewing all four-wheel drives in remote and rural areas and looking at what vehicles we have on the eastern seaboard. As of yesterday, speaking to the GM out there, we have identified approximately 50 vehicles we want to change over to the remote and rural areas. Those vehicles will be capable of being fitted with an OEM bull bar, sufficient lighting and other equipment to keep officers safe whilst out on patrols in some of the remote areas. Of equal importance is the capability of those vehicles on the types of roads that Queensland has, and we have also identified a particular tyre that will make our officers much safer and provide a much more robust time frame in terms of tyre changeover. I am happy to take any further questions.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, after an outlaw motorcycle gang situation earlier this year, Superintendent Charysse Pond from Queensland State Crime Command conceded that there had been an absolute escalation of violence in relation to organised criminal gangs. Commissioner, can you confirm how many consorting warnings have been issued since section 77B relating to the habitual consorting offence was enacted?

Commissioner Carroll: Thank you, member, for that question. Since the inception of the legislation to 30 June 2019, 1,275 official consorting warnings have been issued.

Mr WATTS: Thank you. Further to that, after Villains gang member Harley Barbaro successfully challenged Labor's consorting notice legislation in the Southport Magistrates Court on 7 March, how many consorting notices have the QPS been forced to reissue?

Commissioner Carroll: I will not comment on that matter because it is obviously before the court. I will just get some advice as to how many more have been issued since that date. Just bear with me.

Mr RYAN: While we get that information, the matter which the member for Toowoomba North refers to is currently before the Court of Appeal.

CHAIR: Okay.

Mr RYAN: It is an Attorney-General brought motion before the Court of Appeal.

CHAIR: In that case, I will have to rule the question out of order under the sub judice rule because it is currently before a court.

Mr McDONALD: I raise a point of order. The question had some context around it, but the question was about how many consorting notices the QPS has been forced to reissue.

CHAIR: Okay. I am sorry, but I heard the part about—

Mr WATTS: Sure.

Mr RYAN: Maybe to make sure it does not infringe standing order if it does, withdraw that part of the question.

Mr WATTS: I withdraw that part of the question. Since 7 March this year, how many consorting notices have the QPS been forced to reissue?

Commissioner Carroll: I am advised that we have not issued any because of the legal challenge involving this matter. I do have Assistant Commissioner Brian Codd who could elaborate on that response if you wish. It literally is pending the appeal of that matter.

Assistant Commissioner Codd: Thank you for the question. The answer is pretty clear. We have not reissued any. Of the 1,275 pending the outcome of the appeal, we will consider the notion of whether there needs to be a reissuance and the issues surrounding any reissues. We obviously are working on contingencies depending on what the outcome of the appeal is.

Mr WATTS: Thanks very much. Commissioner, do you believe there are more—

Ms McMILLAN: I raise a point of order.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Mansfield. That is clearly seeking an opinion. I ask you to rephrase it.

Mr WATTS: Okay; thank you. Commissioner, do you have enough police officers on the Gold Coast to deal with organised crime?

Commissioner Carroll: I have enough police officers on the Gold Coast in my view, and organised crime is a part of their duty on the Gold Coast. We have found that the legislation since its introduction has been quite effective as it targets serious and organised crime. It is a broader remit, so

it includes organised crime gangs, as you know child exploitation networks and also major fraud syndicates. I do believe I have enough police on the Gold Coast and part of their remit is to deal with organised crime, and that is also heavily supported obviously by the State Crime Command in relation to gangs and serious and organised crime as well.

Mr WATTS: There are no budgetary constraints dealing with the growing network of organised crime in Queensland, particularly on the Gold Coast?

Commissioner Carroll: I do not know of any budgetary constraints in relation to that on the Gold Coast.

Mr RYAN: There is a specific line item in the budget around additional support to continue the boost to the Queensland Police Service around organised crime. There was \$5 million allocated in the budget. The important thing to recognise about efforts by the Queensland Police Service when it comes to organised crime is that there are a number of centralised functions which are available for deployment anywhere in the state.

With regard to the State Crime Command with its subsets such as the Organised Crime Gangs Group and Taskforce Maxima, yes, they have a presence in some locations around Queensland like the Gold Coast, but there are also other resources which are based in Brisbane and other parts of Queensland which can be deployed to the Gold Coast as and when necessary. That is the whole feature of how the Queensland Police Service operates when it comes to centralised functions and deploying them as and when they are needed.

As I mentioned in a previous answer, last year the Organised Crime Gangs Group arrested 1,179 people on 3,665 charges, which is the highest number of arrests in any year since Taskforce Maxima was formed. The police are using the resources they have to catch bikies, arrest them and bring them before the courts.

Commissioner Carroll: In addition just to answer that, the Organised Crime Gangs Group was established as a permanent unit on 1 May 2017. This is how important this matter is. On top of that, we work very closely at the national level in terms of organised and serious crime as well. Locally we are supported by State Crime and also supported heavily at the national level as well.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, earlier this year police applied to extend a restricted premises order over the Rebels former Albion clubhouse before it expired on 9 March, but the court refused the application. I understand that all clubhouses on restricted premises orders were due to expire in March this year. My question is: how many clubhouses were automatically declared restricted premises from March 2017?

Commissioner Carroll: There are none at the moment and the reason, I understand, why that was not named as a restricted premises is that there was actually nothing taking place at that premises. There were 28 places listed as restricted premises in Queensland, but at the moment there are none operating as bikie clubhouses in Queensland.

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner, on 8 November 2018 the government released a tender for supply of integrated load-bearing vests, an all-in-one vest which provides greater protection against stabbing and shootings. Has this tender been finalised and when do you expect the vests to be delivered?

Commissioner Carroll: This tender has not been finalised. Evaluation is currently being conducted into a potential suitable alternative to the overt ballistic vest and the load-bearing vest. The reason is that there are many factors that need to be considered in the design, the safety, the suitability of the new vest and the practicality of its use in terms of human movement, storage and climatic conditions. We have purposely put a lot of time and effort into this to make sure that we get this right. We will be in a position to announce the timings and locations of any trials by the end of 2019. I think it is best that we do take a bit of time to get this right. It is extraordinarily important. We will undertake those trials and have those decisions by later this year.

Mr RYAN: Just as a point of clarity, there are overt ballistic vests which are issued to our officers. It is not like they do not have ballistic vests. They are issued. There are about 6,000 of them statewide. This is the consideration of the next generation of vests. I was just speaking—

Mr LISTER: Point of order. The question was to the commissioner. If the minister wishes to speak, it should be out of government time. That is well accepted. Perhaps we should move on to the next question.

Mr RYAN: Point of order, Chair. The member knows full well that under the standing orders I am able to add any information to any question.

Mr LISTER: That ought to come out of government time. Is that agreed?

Ms McMILLAN: Point of order: standing order 115, Mr Chair.

Mr RYAN: I will be only 30 more seconds. I am sure the member is taking note of the minutes that he has anyway. I think they are running a bit generous towards the opposition side, but I am happy—

Mr LISTER: The people of Queensland want to see you grilled.

Mr RYAN: Ask better questions.

CHAIR: Excuse me, member for Southern Downs, no argument. Just let the minister finish.

Mr RYAN: What I was going to say—and it is relevant to the commissioner's answer—is that I was just speaking to one of our officers today who said that one of the really important considerations about integrated load-bearing vests is that our officers have to be able to swim with them. You might be jumping in a river, and if the vest is too heavy our officers will drown. Similarly, Queensland is a very decentralised state. The hottest day in North Queensland is very different from the coldest day in the Lockyer Valley. We have to make sure that it is climate sensitive. I support the commissioner 100 per cent on this. We need to get it right and we will.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr WATTS: Chair, could I call forward the chairperson of the Prostitution Licensing Authority, Walter Tutt, please. Has the Prostitution Licensing Authority done any financial modelling on the costs associated with the decriminalisation of prostitution?

Mr Tutt: No, member, it has not. Decriminalisation really is a matter for the government of the day. It does not concern the Prostitution Licensing Authority directly. As you know, we are concerned only with the regulation and administration of licensed brothels in Queensland. Decriminalisation is a completely separate matter and is a matter entirely for government to determine.

Mr WATTS: Thank you very much.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 4 of the SDS in relation to working with the community to stop crime. Will the minister please update the committee on the government's support for community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch Queensland?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for Macalister. I know that you have some great Neighbourhood Watch groups down your way, because I have often run into great Neighbourhood Watch members from the Logan, Beenleigh and Gold Coast areas. It is a very important partnership that we have with Neighbourhood Watch. The Queensland government—the Palaszczuk government—is very proud of its support of Neighbourhood Watch. The government understands the extraordinary value of supporting and partnering with vital community based organisations. We thank those volunteers in organisations like Neighbourhood Watch Queensland for their ongoing commitment to community safety. I take this opportunity to wish them well as they celebrate 31 years of helping to keep Queenslanders safe.

Our government has provided funds to support Neighbourhood Watch Queensland over a three-year period. I am advised by the Queensland Police Service that this support includes not only funds but also in-kind support to the value of \$200,000 from the PSBA and the Queensland Police Service. I am informed by the police that the support received from this valuable community group is extraordinary and well appreciated. Officers across our state actively support their local Neighbourhood Watch groups to engage with their communities, encourage greater community participation and reduce crime and the fear of crime.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS, which refers to maintaining public order and safety. Will the minister please advise of the measures in place to ensure that the community is kept safe from child sex offenders?

Mr RYAN: Thank you, that is a very important question because nothing is more important than keeping our community safe, particularly those most vulnerable members of our community: our children. That is why this government has made our strong laws even stronger. We changed the law to ensure that child sex offenders will continue to be monitored even after their supervision orders have expired. Our changes means that the Police Commissioner will always know where this cohort of offenders live, where they travel and where they work. Because of the changes that we have made, this cohort of offenders will be monitored for the rest of their lives. We backed up our tough laws with

money. That was highlighted in this year's budget—\$27 million of funding over five years and a boost for police surveillance and enforcement with ongoing funding, which is important as well, of \$5.72 million per year.

Our laws will also make it easier for police to successfully apply for offender prohibition orders. Under these orders, an offender can be forced to wear a GPS tracker and be ordered to reside at a particular address. We understand community expectations. That is why we make no apologies for making our law stronger and, I would go to say, the strongest in the nation.

Ms McMILLAN: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS, which refers to maintaining public order and safety. Will the minister please advise what level of police resources is allocated to the monitoring of reportable offenders?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member. Again, it is a very important issue. It is a critical issue about keeping our most vulnerable safe. There are around 500 Child Protection and Investigation Unit officers across the state who work very closely with the Child Protection Offender Registry to manage reportable offenders. On top of that, our specialist investigators also monitor the reporting conditions of offenders on the register. These specialist investigators from the Child Protection Offender Registry and the Child Protection and Investigation Unit officers are supported by officers from State Crime Command and detectives, intelligence specialists and, in fact, every single general duties officer across the state. This means that all police officers are dedicated to monitoring reportable offenders in Queensland.

There are more police in Queensland than ever before. In fact, there are more than 11,000 of them. This year we delivered a record police budget, which includes additional resourcing for monitoring and supervising those people who are listed on the Child Protection Offender Register. Our police are better trained and better resourced than ever before. Of course, our police are absolutely dedicated to community safety and ensuring that our most vulnerable stay safe.

Mrs McMAHON: Page 4 of the SDS notes that youth justice reform initiatives are being undertaken with partner agencies. Will the minister please advise what steps and actions the Queensland Police Service is taking to address the issue of youth offending in regional areas of the state?

Mr RYAN: Thank you very much, member. The Palaszczuk government is taking action to break the cycle of youth offending. The starting point is to recognise that early intervention is the key to get to troubled youths soon enough that they can be encouraged to turn away from criminal offending. Get to them early enough and they can be persuaded to re-engage with education and training. Get to troubled young people before they become habitual offenders and the whole community is safer.

I am advised by the Queensland Police Service that they continue to recognise the important role that collaboration among government agencies and service providers has in addressing youth offending and its underlying causes. The Youth Justice Strategy and the 'keep communities safe' priority from Our Future State plan highlight that no one agency can address or solve the issue of youth offending on its own.

This collaboration extends even further, to non-government service providers, particularly in regional areas, where organisations are recognised as a significant resource for supporting local communities and young people. I am informed that the Queensland Police Service has taken and continues to undertake steps to address the issue of youth offending throughout the state. These are largely focused on the Youth Justice Strategy priorities of keeping children out of custody and keeping children out of court. As we know, detention of young offenders increases the chance of repeat offending, so providing alternative pathways and opportunities for young people to address offending behaviours is a key step in reducing their chance of offending again.

The Queensland Police Service has numerous initiatives designed with the detention-as-a-last-resort principle in mind. These include increasing the number of officers authorised to give a young person a caution. As at June 2019 there were approximately 2,220 officers authorised to give cautions, with over 1,500 more officers enrolled in the training. In 2018-19, 203 officers undertook youth caution facilitator training, meaning that cautioning training can now be delivered to frontline officers anywhere across the state without the need for officers to leave their home region.

The implementation of a protected admissions scheme, with the trial starting this month, will allow for more young people to be eligible for diversionary action by providing the opportunity to overcome legislative barriers that require an admission to the offence. In relation to the Intensive Bail Support Program, in the 2019-20 state budget this government provided \$9.4 million to enable the Queensland Police Service to provide intensive support to youth on bail to enable them to fulfil their conditions and avoid reoffending. This program will not only help address the need to support young people on bail,

but also strengthen the relationship between the Queensland Police Service and the community. Positive relationships between police and community have been shown to reduce crime and improve community safety.

The Queensland Police Service youth bail framework will assist officers to make the right decisions regarding bail for young people and promote the detention-as-a-last-resort principle. The framework will be rolled out pending passage and commencement of proposed amendments to the Youth Justice Act. The Queensland Police Service also continues to work tirelessly with other agencies and community organisations to deliver on commitments outlined in the Youth Justice Strategy and *Our future state: advancing Queensland's priorities*.

This is well highlighted in the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group. This multiagency group, led by the Queensland Police Service, aims to reduce youth crime, improve the functioning and economic participation of the young person and their family and build a stronger and safer community in Townsville. The action group identifies at-risk young people and actively coordinates services to support the young person and their family to engage with and participate in those services. This is more than a referral service, but rather intensive coordination of targeted programs. Since it was formed in 2016 the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group has had contact with or monitored 251 families of young people who have offended or are at risk of offending. Sixty-four families have provided signed consent to receive intensive support from the action group. The Queensland Police Service, along with the other partner agencies, is considering how place based programs such as this may be rolled out in other regional areas across the state.

Project Booyah is another success story that continues to help address youth offending in regional areas across the state. Project Booyah targets at-risk young people and seeks to address their disengagement with family, community and education and reduce offending. Project Booyah provides a structured 16-week program that incorporates the three core values of respect, strength and engagement. The program is developing vocational pathways and employment skills through structured activities aimed to encourage a connection with family, community and culture. Project Booyah supports identified at-risk young people aged 15 to 16 years to regain self-worth, build resilience and make better life choices. Project Booyah has also demonstrated a capacity to encourage young people to pursue further vocational pathways, gain meaningful employment and engage with education.

In 2016-17 our government approved funding of \$7.4 million over five years and ongoing funding, which is important, of \$1.9 million per year to deliver Project Booyah in nine sites including regional areas. Those sites are Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Moreton, Redlands, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Logan. There is a great article, which I seek to table, which reads—

Police program helps 'Booyah Boys' get back on track.

Turning your life around for the better is no easy task but for one southside teen who made poor choices at school, a police initiative has saved his life.

It is a really good story.

CHAIR: Is leave granted?

Mr LISTER: Aye.

Mr RYAN: Finally, a further \$1.76 million was committed in 2018-19 over three years to continue funding the Framing the Future initiative as part of Project Booyah. This is important funding because this provides the after-program support. Sadly this was funded by the federal government and they refused to continue the funding. Because it is so important the state government stepped in and provided that \$1.76 million to continue the Framing the Future initiative. I am advised that these are just some of the initiatives the Queensland Police Service is undertaking or is involved in to address the rate of youth offending in Queensland.

Mr ANDREW: Minister, it has been brought to my attention that some Queensland police assets—housing—is being sold. Can I ask where the money has gone or if this is affecting officers and their families in the rural regions?

Mr RYAN: Sorry, can you ask the question again?

Mr ANDREW: I have been made aware that there has been Queensland housing assets sold. I would just like to ask where the money would be spent when they were sold and if this is actually affecting Queensland officers and their families?

CHAIR: Minister, I do not believe that housing is part of your portfolio.

Mr RYAN: I imagine you are talking about housing provided for police officers?

Mr ANDREW: That is correct.

Mr RYAN: As it applies to police housing owned by the police or the Public Safety Business Agency we will give you some information on that in a second, but if it is housing which is owned by the Department of Housing and Public Works, of which there is a suite, you will have to ask the minister for housing about that. We have a significant investment in police housing. In fact, I actually think it is worth getting Acting Deputy Commissioner Condon up. I am going to embarrass him here because Acting Deputy Commissioner Condon actually led some really good reform work around enhancing the police housing policy which has seen more money invested into police housing and a lot of improvements and better facilities in police housing. You are probably really interested in hearing this. Sorry to embarrass you, Acting Deputy Commissioner Condon.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Condon: In June last year I led a committee to review the housing policy that was in place at the time in the QPS. We looked at 1,076 houses of which about just over 600 were PSBA owned and occupied by our officers. It is true to say that the further we moved out into the remote and rural areas some of the houses that our police were occupying were not desirable in terms of the standard. We worked with both the unions and the government in terms of looking at a way forward, eventually coming up with a model which effectively is an accommodation contribution model of 2.5 per cent and 1.5 per cent depending on the occupancy type in terms of who was living in the house and for what purpose.

On 1 January 2019 that policy was implemented and generates a considerable amount of funds on a fortnightly basis of which the net return is quarantined and directly implemented into bringing the houses up to standard. Between 1 January 2019 and 30 June this year we committed those funds to replacing 48 kitchens and bathrooms across the state and that was equally divided up across the three major remote and rural areas. That process is ongoing. We have also had \$2.5 million quarantined for the ongoing maintenance of those houses across the state. We are working closely with BAS and PSBA to develop a maintenance formula that eventually will reduce the cost of maintaining those houses and therefore the efficiencies gained will be pumped back into the house.

The feedback from the members is extremely positive. The feedback from the union is extremely positive. We look forward to the continued development of new special projects to enhance the quality of housing for our members across Queensland. In terms of any sales of houses, that does not come within the QPS mandate and is managed by the PSBA.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, in your experience in service have you seen evidence that links organised crime and illegal prostitution?

Commissioner Carroll: I am just thinking: I did spend an awful lot of time in my early career working in prostitution related offences but not recently. I cannot say. Being back in the organisation for 18 days, if I answered that question I do not think I would be getting it utterly correct. I gather there may be some links, but certainly I would not know to what extent.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, referring to the Our People Matter policy, what is the current budget allocation for the policy? Has any additional money been allocated to fund this policy?

Commissioner Carroll: It is a strategy that has been implemented since February 2018. It is an excellent strategy. When you look at some of our results in Working for Queensland, I believe that actually has increased as a result of Our People Matter. A lot of it is built into the current business that we already do. I am advised that \$200,000 per year has been allocated to the strategy for local initiatives. Other than that, the strategy is built into everything that we do within BAU.

Mr WATTS: Again with Our People Matter, I understand that a survey was done amongst the workforce. Can you tell us the results of the survey?

Commissioner Carroll: Can I seek clarification? The organisation takes part every year in a Working for Queensland survey over a range of matters in terms of leadership, engagement—you name it. That is compared year in, year out. There are many parts to that survey. Are you referring to that survey or in particular a survey around the strategy of Our People Matter?

Mr WATTS: I am referring to the SDS at page 3, 'supporting healthy, safe and inclusive workplaces and promoting a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve'. The survey that was done as part of that is the survey I am interested in.

Commissioner Carroll: Deputy Commissioner Linford will be able to speak to that specific matter. It is her purview, obviously, so I will call her to the table.

Deputy Commissioner Linford: In 2017, we ran a survey specifically around Our People Matter. That generated some 20,000 ideas from our members in terms of what we could do going forward. It also included a lot of face-to-face workshops and forums to elicit those ideas. Last year we formulated the Our People Matter strategy. In February of last year we launched the strategy.

The strategy has many different facets. It is a four-pronged approach, so we are rolling out initiatives around healthy bodies, healthy minds, safe workplaces, and fair and positive workplaces. Many of the things that we have rolled out, that come under the umbrella of Our People Matter, since that time, for instance, include a flexible working arrangements policy. We are about to launch our fatigue management policy. We are in the final throes of our draft of the mental health strategy. We have also run a significant number of different types of health forums. We have had prostate cancer forums—I have the figures with me on how many have attended all of those forums—and health expos and we run weight-loss programs. We have a whole range of things that are about helping our people get fitter and get healthier.

Most recently, we rolled out a new app that allows our people to be connected. It allows our people to see all the different activities going on across our policing units, so that they can be better placed to be hooked up with one another and get support from one another. We recognise that that is really important in terms of looking after the mental health of our individuals. On top of that, we have a big support program around looking after our mental health. We have a number of psychologists within the organisation, injury management consultants, something like 600 peer support officers and chaplains. We run a service that allows our people to get free counselling. They can get that internally, but they can also go externally to get that service if, for whatever reason, they want to keep it very private from the organisation.

In late last year we also launched the Juniper program, which is the Queensland police response to looking at sexual predatory behaviour, bullying behaviour and antidiscrimination. It is our way of addressing that. That has a three-pronged approach. We have a cultural engagement unit and we have an investigations unit. The unit has fast triaging for people to come in and seek advice about how they might want their complaints managed. They can make a choice about whether they want that investigated and whether or not they want any counselling. We can refer them to that counselling if they need it. Under the Our People Matter banner, there are a whole lot of different things going on.

Mr WATTS: That is great, thank you. Through you, Commissioner, if I may, when there has been an incident where an officer has had to either use their weapon or has been fired at themselves, can you tell us what sort of support structure is in place for them?

Deputy Commissioner Linford: We have counselling services that are available to them. They would automatically be connected with that. Our police unions will also provide a level of support to our members when they are affected by an incident such as that.

Mr WATTS: That would apply to someone, through you, Commissioner—

Mr RYAN: Point of order. As you know, Chair, questions can only be asked of the minister or the commissioner. We can choose to invite someone else to answer questions. However, the member should be not directing questions to the deputy commissioner.

Commissioner Carroll: I am comfortable that the deputy continues answering the questions.

Deputy Commissioner Linford: As I mentioned, we have peer support officers as well. There are chaplains, injury management consultants if an injury is involved, the police psychologists who are available and, again, the external service of counsellors who are there.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba North, please direct your questions to the commissioner.

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Chair. I will. Commissioner, what safeguards are in place to ensure all evidence will be retained for the required 75 years under the retention and disposal schedule to ensure that the same thing that happened in the rape case mentioned earlier does not happen to anyone else?

Commissioner Carroll: The Forensic Services Group and Queensland Health have an exceptionally long history of collaboration and work very well together. They obviously also work with other partners for better outcomes with sexual assault victims. The QPS has recognised that there is an opportunity to improve the audit processes for property holdings at divisional and district level. As a result, Ethical Standards Command is working in partnership with the PSBA internal audit to conduct a review of all property points, audit procedures, policies and guidance, and full audits of statewide property points, including high-risk items and sample audits, are currently being undertaken. I am confident that, with the processes already in place and what we are now doing, that should not occur again.

Mr WATTS: Further to that, could you tell us how many other cases might have been jeopardised by evidence being lost or destroyed by the QPS?

CHAIR: I am sorry to interrupt, Commissioner. Again, is that a question that is too onerous to be able to answer? I seek some guidance.

Commissioner Carroll: It is almost impossible to answer, unless someone were to come forward and make a complaint that that was the case. We have full audit processes that obviously, if there are issues, will reveal that. However, to that very point, I think it would be almost impossible to answer.

Mr WATTS: I understand that currently evidence is held at West End and that that facility is scheduled to be closed for a school. What plans are in place to look after evidence in a new facility?

Commissioner Carroll: As your question is specific in terms of the address and those facilities, I might refer the question to the Operations Support Command and Acting Assistant Commissioner Dabinett.

Mr RYAN: While the acting AC comes up, I will point out that we are building a new warehousing facility at Wacol which is state-of-the-art. It is well advanced. The advice I have is that it will be finished in the next few months. It is about \$20 million worth of building.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Dabinett: My understanding is that there is currently a project underway to relocate that facility. The project is working with all the stakeholders. The facility will be moved out to Wacol to the existing land that is owned out there. The entire process will be moved to that location.

Mr ANDREW: Minister, given the staffing numbers at rural and even inner-city police stations, when people are on leave those stations are left very short of staff. Are there plans by government to bolster staff levels when people are on sick leave or maternity leave which leaves stations very short of people?

Mr RYAN: I will hand to the commissioner in a moment because obviously the allocation of police resources and staffing is a matter for the commissioner. The advice that I have received previously is that the modelling done around staffing police stations and facilities takes into account the prospect that people will be doing training or on sick leave or away on holidays. The planning takes into account those things. In a few moments I will get the commissioner to add a bit more to that. You talk about increasing police numbers. I point out that we are doing that. There will be 535 extra personnel by 2021-22. We are on track to deliver them on time.

Commissioner Carroll: As was indicated, there is an allocation for each station. I appreciate that sometimes when there is extended leave, sick leave or maternity leave that may put pressure on those numbers. It is always an operational decision to determine what is required at that time. It is easy for us to move people around the state.

I was in charge of the cape area of Queensland for many years. There is no reason we cannot get people from Brisbane to fill those positions when required. They will be there on a temporary basis and probably getting travel allowance. All of those things come into play as well. The decisions would be made at the local level initially, but they can be looked at more strategically higher up the organisation as well.

CHAIR: I refer to page 4 of the SDS which refers to maintaining public order and safety. Will the minister please advise of measures in place to ensure community safety during protest activities that block major transport routes and disrupt the community's ability to go about their daily lives?

Mr RYAN: The starting point is of course acknowledging that people do have the right to protest, but with every right there comes a responsibility. The responsibility is that when you are exercising your right to protest that you do so lawfully, peacefully and respectfully. Quite frankly, some of the activity that we have seen over the last few weeks is idiotic. I have called these protestors idiots before. They are still idiots the way they carry on.

They have to respect the law. We are happy to facilitate protest activity in Queensland. The Queensland Police Service is well trained with negotiators and supports in place to help facilitate people exercising that right to peacefully, lawfully and respectfully protest. When people cross the line and do not exercise that responsibility to lawfully, peacefully and respectfully protest then there are consequences.

The commissioner has said publicly that these protesters have had enough warnings and that the police will take action. The police will use every aspect of the law available to them to ensure that people in our community are able to go about their business without being disrupted by protesters who are acting contrary to the law.

There are some significant penalties for people who act contrary to the law when they are exercising their right to protest. The fundamental is always that people have a right to feel safe in their homes and their businesses and have the right to get around peacefully. When people interrupt that right the police will take action.

Ms McMILLAN: My question is to the minister. I refer to page 4 of the SDS which refers to maintaining public order and safety. Will the minister please advise the level of financial support being provided to the Queensland Water Police?

Mr RYAN: As I have said in previous answers, community safety is a key priority for our government. With our record police budget this year we are able to invest in our police by providing them with additional world-class resources. Today I announced that body worn cameras are to be rolled out to all our uniform first responders, expanding the fleet to some 7,700 cameras.

We also continue to invest in the Water Police. We have a specific line item in our budget. We have had it for the last couple of years. It is a great approach taken by the Queensland Police Service and our government to have a specific line item in the budget for these Water Police resources—these new vessels. It means that the investment goes to the right place. The investments we are making are very impressive.

It was only last week that I was out with the Water Police at Mooloolaba on their new state-of-the-art 17-metre vessel. It is a very impressive piece of equipment. It is some \$3.2 million worth of Water Police vessel and truly is world-class. I hope the member is a boat person. I know this will mean something to you anyway. It is powered by two Scania 16.4 litre, eight-cylinder twin turbo charged diesel main engines and is surveyed to 200 nautical miles with a range of 440 nautical miles. It was built by an Australian builder—Hart Marine—and is the first of its type in Queensland.

I had the opportunity to chat with some of our Water Police based out of Brisbane and Redland Bay late last week. Already there is a little bit of jealousy about this police vessel. People are keen to see where the next investment in our Water Police vessels will be. Certainly this is an impressive vessel and it is here in Queensland. It is here in Queensland because of the foresight of the Queensland Police Service, backed up by our record police budget and investment in our police.

We will obviously continue to support our police, and in this instance our Water Police. We know that providing them with the resources they need can be the difference between life and death. I have to give you the example that this new vessel that we provided to the Water Police at Mooloolaba was used relatively quickly after it was handed over to assist in the rescue of two men and a young boy and saved their lives. That is what makes a difference.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 29 of the SDS. Can the minister outline how QGAir is supporting community safety in the Townsville region through its aviation service?

Mr RYAN: As you may be aware, the Queensland Government Air service, QGAir, plays a vital role in supporting community safety in the Townsville region. It does this with both fixed-wing aircraft and two new helicopters which were delivered this year to Townsville. These two new helicopters are AW139 helicopters and they replace the existing Bell 412 helicopters.

This was a significant investment by our government in those aircraft—some \$45 million from memory. These are important assets. Like I mentioned before with our water police assets, these assets can be the difference between life and death. During 2018-19, QGAir rotary aircraft performed over 400 aeromedical and interhospital transfers, they attended over 90 primary motor vehicle accidents and they assisted with 47 search and rescue operations. Our two new helicopters are, of course, state of the art. These aircraft perform aeromedical retrieval, primary incident response, search and rescue activity, and significantly also police operations.

All three of our helicopters are based in the north and far north. We have two at Townsville and one at Cairns. They are all the same type of helicopter—AW139s—so they are interchangeable between the two locations. They are available for police operations as and when needed, which is important to note. These helicopters not only assist with aeromedical but, should they be required and they are available, they can also assist with police operations, and they have done so in the past.

The new replacement AW139 helicopters are a larger aircraft and have the capability to carry additional fuel, allowing them to travel further and faster to help more Queenslanders in the Townsville region. As I have mentioned, the helicopters have also supported the Queensland Police Service operations with search capability in targeting and tracking stolen cars in the Townsville region. As well, the fixed-wing aircraft operate a regular return coastal service to Townsville from both Cairns and

Brisbane two to three times a week, providing transport for police personnel and equipment. The fixed-wing coastal service also provides transport for Queensland Corrective Services officers and persons in custody between Townsville and Brisbane.

QGAir played a major role in the response to the devastating Townsville floods in February. This is a particular opportunity to acknowledge their contribution and to thank the crews for their courage and commitment to assisting people during that natural disaster event. During that event there were three fully crewed helicopters supporting flood relief, providing assistance in airlifting patients and critical medical supplies within this area. A fourth crew from Cairns was also positioned in Townsville should an increased response have been needed. The QGAir fixed-wing aircraft transported emergency services personnel to Townsville and surrounding areas both during and after the flood.

As you will see, this is a significant commitment and a commitment that is not only well accepted and acknowledged by the communities in the north and the far north but also an honest commitment in terms of the resources available. I am a bit worried about a policy which the LNP announced at the last election—which is still on the member for Toowoomba North's website—about a so-called dedicated police helicopter for Townsville. It just does not stack up with the money that they are suggesting.

They say that it is \$10 million over four years. If you break down the maths, you are probably only getting about an hour a day of helicopter use which is, I think, a wasted resource and a wasted investment when we already have two helicopters in Townsville and one in Cairns which are available for police operations should they be available and should they be required. I think it is really important that we are honest with communities about investments in aeronautical services like helicopters because to not be honest gives false hope and undermines community confidence in those services.

CHAIR: I call the member for Mirani.

Mr ANDREW: I do not really have another question at this point in time.

Mr RYAN: I can suggest one, if you like.

Mr ANDREW: Actually, I will ask a question. Has the overtime budget for the rural regions been cut, Minister?

Mr RYAN: I will get the commissioner to consider that. Obviously those considerations are matters for the Queensland Police Service. The government provides the Police Service with the global budget. That global budget is used for many things in the Police Service including, of course, police personnel and paying overtime where appropriate. I can say, though, that the government has made additional appropriations to the Queensland Police Service to cover some of the overtime obligations of police. We had a question just before about overtime in watch houses. That was supplemented—it is a budget line item—by \$938,000 from central funds to support that overtime. In fact, \$9.4 million for one of the initiatives that was announced in the budget—the intensive bail support service, which is being run by police—will go towards paying overtime as well. Commissioner, you might be able to add something about overtime.

Commissioner Carroll: Each of our budgets is delegated to the district level. To answer your question correctly, I would have to directly go to that district. Across the state, each district officer allocates overtime as they see fit. With the reprioritisation, it is always incumbent that everything we do supports the front line including all of the savings that we make, whether from innovative ways or particularly from non-frontline areas. In answering that question, I do not know what your overtime budget is in that district, but that is delegated to the district officer and it is up to them how they utilise their entire budget.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, when the helicopters are used in the southern part of the state here, how often do they use the forward-looking infra-red camera?

Mr RYAN: Can I ask for clarity? Are we talking about the QGAir resource or the Polair resource?

Mr WATTS: The Polair resource.

Mr RYAN: While you get that information, Commissioner, I have been able to meet with Polair on a number of occasions. In fact, I was able to see the FLIR in action. On both occasions that I have been with Polair, the FLIR has been activated. I have seen it in action. It is an impressive resource. For those who are interested, you can see images that are 10, 12 or 14 kilometres away. You can read street signs from 14 kilometres away which, from a situational awareness perspective, provides a significant added benefit to police. Commissioner, you might have some of that information.

Commissioner Carroll: That is correct. It has extraordinary benefits using Polair. The infra-red camera technology has been used to locate 74 missing persons and has been used extensively in the search and rescue operation. As for the exact hours, I do not have that figure in front of me. We can get that. It is used very proactively. It is technology that has extraordinary benefits and, as I have indicated already, to assist in finding 74 missing persons is quite extraordinary.

CHAIR: The commissioner took something on notice. Are you happy to take that on notice, Minister?

Commissioner Carroll: I was asking whether you wanted me to get the exact hours.

Mr WATTS: No, that is fine. I do not need it. Minister, do the helicopters in North Queensland have forward-looking infra-red cameras?

Mr RYAN: Let me get the acting COO of the PSPA to come to the table to answer that. I did receive some advice a few months ago, but I would need to check my notes to refresh my memory.

Mr Smith: One of the three aircraft in North Queensland has forward-looking infra-red.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, in relation to my own patch in Toowoomba, we are scheduled to have a police hub and a police station built. Can you advise this hearing that those are both on track in terms of their timing?

Commissioner Carroll: Yes. There is a commitment to build a new police facility at Highfields and Newtown in Toowoomba. There is in-principle agreement with the Department of Education to acquire land on Bridge Street, Newtown, adjacent to the Toowoomba special school. The Public Safety Business Agency has confirmed that the proposal for the Newtown police facility has been relodged with the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.

The PSBA—and we have the COO back at the table—is currently working with Building and Asset Services on awarding the construction tender for the Newtown police facility. Once that has been tendered, a construction program will be developed. The PSBA has confirmed that the process has been lodged with the department of state development. That relates to the Highfields police facility.

A ministerial infrastructure designation for the newly acquired site is required to facilitate the development of essential business community infrastructure and will include a 20-business-day community consultation phase. Consultation is pending. The Department of State Development, Manufacturing and Planning's preliminary assessment of the proposed list is currently expected to commence in July 2019. I will ask if the COO can add anything else.

Mr Smith: With respect to the facility at Newtown, a contract was awarded to Hutchinson on 27 June for the modular build for that facility, so that construction will commence on the site if it has not already. With respect to Highfields, it is in the design stage so it has gone through that designation phase. As you know, it is just over the road from the tavern so it is in a very good location. We will get the design in conjunction with the Police Service, and construction will commence in financial year 2019-20 as soon as those designs are approved.

Mr WATTS: Minister, I note that you applied to the court to extend restricted premises orders over the Rebels' Albion clubhouse.

Mr RYAN: Sorry, did the QPS apply? I did not apply.

Mr WATTS: Sorry, the QPS applied. With respect to the 27 other clubhouses on restricted premises orders, has the QPS applied to the court for these clubs to also be extended?

Mr RYAN: You apply if they are still operating clubhouses. With one exception, which is the facility at Albion. We wanted to test the law. The court confirmed that the premises at Albion was not an operating clubhouse. The law is that you apply to have a designation under the legislation if it is an operating clubhouse. These facilities, because of our tough laws—the strongest, toughest, most comprehensive in the nation—are not operating as clubhouses anymore. The laws are having their desired effect. You cannot just go in and say, 'I'm going to put an order in over the member for Toowoomba North's house,' just because I want to. You have to be able to satisfy yourself that it is a clubhouse. If it is not a clubhouse you cannot make the order. I think it is an example of the laws being really successful that we do not have any bikie clubhouses in Queensland.

Mr WATTS: None of those 27 premises has reactivated since the court challenge was upheld previously?

Mr RYAN: The advice that I have is that there are no operating bikie clubhouses in Queensland. A number of those from the original list of 28 have been sold. A number of others have been disposed of in other ways. Our police at the Organised Crime Gangs Group keeps a very close eye on the

activities of organised crime members, particularly outlaw motorcycle gang members. Should any of them take steps to establish a clubhouse, then we will move swiftly to disrupt that. There was an example just last year in the Petrie-Lawnton area where the police took preventative proactive steps to disrupt the Rebels from attempting to set up a clubhouse there. We took those proactive steps and disrupted that activity. Guess what? There is no clubhouse there.

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair, I have a question for the commissioner. Congratulations on your appointment, Commissioner.

Commissioner Carroll: Thank you very much.

Mr LISTER: In the rural electorate that I represent I have farmers who have a requirement for firearms in their work. They have applied for renewals of their licences—in many cases they have had them for decades—and they tell me that without an alteration to their fitness, that is, lack of criminal convictions and all that sort of stuff, and without any change to their occupational requirement, the Weapons Licensing Branch has declined to renew their licence. Can you tell me what considerations other than someone's fitness or their occupational requirement might bear upon that decision?

Commissioner Carroll: Your question is quite specific to the reissuing of licences, so I might refer that question to the acting assistant commissioner. I am not quite sure if he is able to answer that question either, so I will just bring him to the table.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Dabinett: I will not talk about the specifics of it; I will talk about the generalities. Our assessment officers are required to make assessments on renewals and applications as if each one is a fresh one. They are bound by rules and regulations, guidelines, the law and the national firearms framework. In relation to category H weapons, which I assume is what you are speaking about in terms of the question, they must be engaged primarily in primary producing. The actual size of their property and the nature of the terrain is also relevant. Each of these is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The fact that you have had a licence for a period of time does not automatically mean you will get it renewed. We try and stay consistent with the national firearms framework. If you need more than that, I would probably defer the question to the manager of weapons licensing for further detail.

Mr LISTER: Thank you for the response. I am interested in knowing what criteria might apply in a case where there have been no changes to the things the Commissioner referred to between a previous approval and a future denial. What circumstances would lead to that decision, which flies in the face of the previous approval?

Commissioner Carroll: I understand that there is a QCAT appeal which we have not received the results of.

Mr LISTER: Can I ask if you can provide on notice the criteria that apply?

Mr RYAN: I can answer it.

Mr LISTER: No, Mr Chair, the question is not to the minister: it is to the Police Commissioner.

Mr RYAN: But I can answer that anyway.

Mr LISTER: The minister has not been asked a question. Will you please rule on that, Mr Chair?

Commissioner, I would be grateful if you would take on notice what criteria are considered and what may cause the refusal of a renewal where those criteria have not changed since the last renewal.

Commissioner Carroll: I can have that question answered now by an officer from weapons licensing, who will be able to answer that question as we speak. I will bring him to the table. Inspector Adam Guild will be able to give you that answer.

Insp. Guild: In relation to an application for a weapons licence or the renewal of a weapons licence, weapons licensing receives approximately 300 new applications every week and, on average, in excess of 800 licence renewals each week. As part of the process the person making the application for renewal would submit the paperwork every five years or 10 years, depending on the type of licence.

As with every application that is received, in relation to the Weapons Act we look at the genuine reason as to why that person has possession of a licence. Depending on the category, for category H—primary production—a person primarily engaged in primary production would have a genuine reason to acquire a category H licence. A 'genuine reason' may be established through providing various documentation in relation to the size of their property, the type of farming they undertake or any other supporting evidence in relation to their application.

The second part of the process is to look at the fit and proper status of a person. It is looking at the criminal history and traffic history of that particular person over a period of time—which makes part of the decision-making process—and also looking at any charges, any occurrences within our QPRIME system in relation to mental health or any other concerns that operational police may have in relation to a particular licence holder. Assessing a licence renewal is very similar to assessing a new application; it is still substantiating the need for that particular licence.

What we did in relation to category H primary production was to work with AgForce and other shooting bodies, including the Shooters Union, to identify further information that could be provided during the application process to enable people to apply for a category H primary production licence specifically. That was looking at the type of terrain that the person may use the property on, how often they used a handgun for their primary production purposes, coupled with the recent QCAT decisions that have been made over the past several years in relation to determining whether a licence for primary production is necessary in the course of their duties. The extra information was provided to establish whether that person had a necessity to use that particular firearm for that particular purpose. Coupled with the genuine reason test and the fit and proper test, the application is then processed.

Mr LISTER: Thanks, Inspector. I might hand the next question to the member for Maiwar.

CHAIR: No. We will go to government questions now. I refer to the departmental budget summary on page 10 of the SDS. Will the minister please outline the benefits of the police budget for people living and working in every region across Queensland?

Mr RYAN: Can I just say before answering this question that I could have saved the member a lot of time if he had just let me say something for 10 seconds, because I know he was having a whinge about not having enough time to ask questions of me.

Mr LISTER: I beg your pardon. Mr Chair, I think that is inappropriate. I ask you to rule on that.

Mr RYAN: He has only had a chance to have one question anyway. Perhaps he needs to talk to his colleague.

CHAIR: Minister—

Mr RYAN: What I was going to say—and Inspector Guild provided a very comprehensive answer—is that, as an outcome of the Ministerial Firearms Advisory Forum, the Weapons Licensing branch sat down with AgForce to develop a guideline to assist people with the renewal of their licence, particularly category H rural use licences. That is on the QPS website. It is also available from AgForce. The quick answer would have been that all the criteria and all the information is on the website. There is this special guideline which was created by Weapons Licensing, AgForce and the Shooters Union. If your constituents need more information about completing those renewal applications, direct them to the website because that guideline is there.

I also wanted to provide some clarity around the FLIR that is available in North Queensland. I have been advised by the PSBA—and it is good news—that it is actually interchangeable. The FLIR is able to be put on any one of those helicopters up there, particularly at the Townsville base.

In respect of your question, Chair, the Palaszczuk government is dedicated to keeping the community safe no matter where they live. That is why we have delivered a record budget this year—a police budget that has risen by 20 per cent since we came to government. There are more police in Queensland than ever before and police are better resourced than ever before. The Queensland Police Service is committed to providing the highest levels of policing to people in every region of the state. This year's budget has provided additional funding for a number of new and ongoing Queensland Police Service initiatives that will benefit people living and working in regional Queensland. The 2019-20 budget will enable the QPS to continue to deliver quality frontline policing services, reduce crime and harm and keep Queenslanders safe.

Operating funding highlights from this year's budget include the \$27 million over five years—and it is ongoing funding, which as I said is important—to monitor reportable offenders following amendments to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act. There is also, as I mentioned before, \$9.4 million to support the intensive supervision in the community of young people on bail. This program is a pre-sentence program for child defenders supported by a dedicated Queensland Police Service based police officer and police liaison officer compliance team. I am pleased to acknowledge that this program will be delivered in Moreton Bay, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns.

There is also the announcement today of \$6.3 million over three years to continue the body worn camera program which will extend the fleet to 7,700. There is \$7.74 million over four years—and it is ongoing funding, and again that is important—for civilian prosecutors to maintain the ongoing,

high-quality prosecutorial services to the judiciary and the community. There is \$2.35 million over four years—and ongoing funding—to integrate Taskforce Orion into the Child Safety and Sexual Crime Group. There is \$1.76 million over three years to pick up the slack from the federal government, which did not continue their funding for the Framing the Future initiative, which provides that ongoing support and mentorship to Project Booyah graduates.

There is also \$263,000 over two years to continue prosecution services to increase cases heard in the Childrens Court. There is \$871,000 over four years for two prosecutors in Townsville to support the Townsville community youth voice response. There is \$774,000 to maintain the ability to profile and assess persons of interest, source valuable intelligence and counter violent extremism. We have mentioned this before—and it is great—and there is \$5 million this year to continue the government's commitment to target crime hotspots throughout the state and issues such as organised crime, alcohol fuelled violence and the drug ice. There is \$5 million next year—which is good because it gives the police certainty of funding—to continue implementing the Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report recommendations. This is just an example of some of the investments we are making from a service point of view in regional Queensland.

We are also making infrastructure investments. From the capital budget that benefits the QPS and is administered by the Public Safety Business Agency, we are looking at investments like: our Wacol Counter Terrorism and Community Safety Training Centre; a new facility on Saibai Island, which is one of the more remote plates of Queensland up in the Torres Strait; our new police facility at Arundel; the new warehouse facility at Wacol, which we just spoke about; investments in a police facility at Pomppuraaw; investments in the member for Toowoomba North's electorate with the new station at Highfields and a new police facility at Newtown to replace the police beat that their government closed; facilities at Beaudesert and Coolum; and investments for Nambour police facilities. We also see investments at Caboolture, Logan Village, Yarrabilba and Biloela, as well as continuing to invest in that equipment that I spoke about, like police boats, police cars and the technical equipment like body worn cameras and QLITE.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to SDS page 4, which refers to maintaining public order and safety. Will the minister please advise of measures in place to recruit adequate police numbers to maintain community safety?

Mr RYAN: It might come as news to some people but Queensland does have two police academies. One is in South-East Queensland, at Oxley, and the other is in Townsville. Right at this moment, there are police recruits being trained. The Queensland Police Service is world class, and it is world class because of its people and also our government's investment in the people that make up the Queensland Police Service. Being a recruit—as the member for Macalister would know—is not an easy part of becoming a police officer, but it is very rewarding and it is very important because we want to build the best police officers that we can, and we do so through having rigorous training programs like the ones that our recruits undergo at the academies. We have very rigorous selection processes as well to ensure that we are recruiting appropriate people into the Police Service.

Our police are better trained and better resourced than ever before, and there are more police in Queensland than ever before as well. We continue to back the commitment that Queenslanders make by becoming officers of the Queensland Police Service by providing the resources that our police need. We have done so this year with a record police budget. We will continue to grow the Police Service as well. I have already mentioned that our election commitment of 535 police personnel by 2021-22 is on track and will be delivered on time on the advice that I have received from the commissioner and the Queensland Police Service. We continue to invest in our police and we will not shy away from that commitment.

I am conscious of time. With your indulgence, I can provide some answers to questions that were taken on notice.

CHAIR: If the minister wishes to do so.

Mr RYAN: Very much so. Commissioner, do you want to go first?

Commissioner Carroll: I can answer the question that related to the bubblers in the watch house. Bear with me; I think you need to see a photo of what this looks like and you will understand what the issue was.

Mr WATTS: I did try to gain access but the minister would not give me permission.

Mr RYAN: You are misleading the committee now. Point of order. Sorry, Commissioner. I am going to give the member an opportunity to withdraw that statement because he knows quite clearly it is wrong. The member has been informed on at least two occasions that the decision around access to

high-security facilities in Queensland is a matter for the commissioner. It was not my decision. I did the right thing and I forwarded his request on to the commissioner for consideration. Like I always do with his requests—like I did with his request to visit correctional centres—I forwarded it on. In all of those instances they have been granted. When you wanted to meet with the ELT, I forwarded that request on.

I do want to refer to one particular request that the member has made, and I am quite cranky about this. Let me read this, and I am happy to table it. It states—

Dear Minister,

Mr Watts would appreciate a time to meet with the Assistant Commissioner Ethical Standards Command to discuss a number of cases before the Ethical Standards Command ...

Member, it is quite outrageous for you to even make a request to meet with the Ethical Standards Command assistant commissioner. These are matters which do not need and do not warrant any political interference. These are matters which must be considered independently. They are matters which must be oversights by the CCC and they must be beyond reproach.

I was so cranky about this particular request that I actually wrote to the Integrity Commissioner seeking advice, and I am happy to table that advice for the member for Toowoomba North's interest. What does the Integrity Commissioner say here? You can read all the advice, but I will bring you the highlights. He stated—

I concur with the concerns you have raised about agreeing to the Shadow Minister's request for a meeting between the Shadow Minister and the Assistant Commissioner on the subject of current investigations.

I also agree that it is open to you to decline the request—

which I will do, member for Toowoomba North—

consistent with your obligations as Minister to act in the public interest. I base my views in this regard on the following:

- Such a meeting would be incompatible with the comprehensive framework of laws and related codes of conduct separating the legislative and executive arms of government.
- It would tend to circumvent the QPS Commissioner's oversight role and responsibilities in communication between the executive and legislature.
- There would be a high risk of a breach of the serious confidentiality obligations in any substantive discussion of the investigations, particularly given the Shadow Minister has no executive role or function with respect to them.
- As you note, the proposed meeting with the Assistant Commissioner on these issues is highly unusual, and seemingly unnecessarily gives rise to potential concerns, including undue influence.
- While the ethics principles include *accountability and transparency*, the investigations are already subject to direct or potential oversight, including by the CCC—

and you should know this, member, because you were the acting chair of the PCCC—

and the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commission.

...

Thank you for your request for advice. I commend you for recognising the importance of upholding the system of government and the comprehensive framework of laws and codes of conduct that support it.

This just shows that those opposite have not learnt the lessons of Fitzgerald, wanting to meddle in ethnical matters—

Mr WATTS: Full clarity, Chair.

Mr RYAN:—in transparency and accountability matters and in the operational matters of the police.

Mr LISTER: Point of order, Chair. Under standing order 118 this is not relevant.

CHAIR: Minister, do you seek leave to table?

Mr RYAN: I am happy to table it.

CHAIR: No, do you seek leave?

Mr RYAN: Yes, I seek leave to table the outrageous request from the member for Toowoomba North.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr RYAN: I also seek leave to table the Integrity Commissioner's advice about the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair, this is highly out of order. This is not in any way relevant to the estimates.

CHAIR: Let's move on now. Minister, I understand you were going to answer some questions—

Mr WATTS: I just need to add some clarity, Chair. There have been some accusations made and I need to add some clarity. The request was simply to understand the process that people need to go through.

Mr RYAN: You can read the Integrity Commissioner's advice.

CHAIR: Can we stop the arguing, please so we can get on with what we are here for this afternoon?

Mr RYAN: I think the commissioner has some information to provide.

CHAIR: Can I finish, please? I understand that there were some questions taken on notice that were going to be provided to the committee. Can that take place now, please?

Commissioner Carroll: The question I am speaking to is the question around the bubblers. I do have a photo if you would like to view it. The toilet is a combination of a bubbler system, which sits at the back of the toilet, which has independent and obviously two very different plumbing systems. It is considered to be the most effective and efficient way of having a toilet and drinking facilities in a cell.

Further to your question, the children did tell the OPG that they did not like drinking from these bubblers. There was a complaint to the OPG on 25 October that they thought that it was 'gross' to drink from the bubblers. On 6 December the bubblers were said to be dirty and built up with lime. Despite conversations with the children that the water is completely separate and very safe, there was a reluctance to drink from them. If the bubblers are not working, obviously the children are removed from those cells and put into another cell.

After the first complaint was received, however, additional water was provided in water bottles and then the water was put into a styrofoam cup and also given to each of the children at meals as well as the milk that we have spoken about before. Water was constantly given to the children. At no stage were any faecal matters raised by the QPS. The bubblers are actually cleaned by contracted cleaners with an antibacterial cleaner as well.

CHAIR: Are there any more questions on notice?

Mr RYAN: There are. There was a question about a matter which was referred to the CCC by the Leader of the Opposition. Of course, I expressed my concerns about airing those matters in this forum. I have received advice that the QPS—as the member for Toowoomba North should know, being a former acting chair of the PCCC, matters are devolved back to agencies in certain instances, but they remain oversighted by the CCC. The particular matter was devolved back to the QPS on 16 July but, of course, it remains oversighted by the CCC. The clear advice I have is that it is not appropriate to discuss the matter further for two reasons. The first reason is that there is still an ongoing ethical investigation into these matters. Secondly, there have actually been charges laid against these offenders and public commentary around this matter and the strength or otherwise of the evidence could potentially deny justice for the victim in this case. It is not appropriate to be discussing this in a public forum—or at all for that matter.

CHAIR: Minister, I understand there may be two other questions that were taken on notice?

Commissioner Carroll: Yes, there was the number of police officers—the rate—per 100,000, there was the crime rate over a five-year period and a third one, the cost to police of juveniles being transported to the watch house in Brisbane. That is juveniles in police custody.

CHAIR: Are they going to be taken on notice?

Mr RYAN: We will need to come back to you.

Mr McDONALD: Just a question, Mr Chair. Just for clarity, the rate per 100,000 is for both the financial years ending 2018 and 2019.

CHAIR: That question is to be taken on notice I understand.

Mr McDONALD: Yes. There was a comment made about the rate per 100,000. I am clarifying that it was for both years.

Commissioner Carroll: Thank you.

Mr BERKMAN: Commissioner, I am interested in the highly controversial arrest and detention of journalists on Monday for filming a protest near the Adani mine site which has been condemned by the journalists union and the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. I note that those charges have since

been dropped. Commissioner, can you confirm whether police were at the site of the protest on Monday on Adani's request and whether the state government took money from Adani in exchange for the police presence under what I understand might be called a special services deployment?

CHAIR: Can you ask one question at a time? There were two parts to that question, from what I can remember.

Mr BERKMAN: They are very closely linked. Were police on the site of the protest at Adani's request?

Commissioner Carroll: I have a brief that definitely that is not the case. The police were obviously onsite due to their operational reasons to be there. They were not there as a result of any request from Adani.

CHAIR: What was the second part of your question?

Mr BERKMAN: I think the second part of my question may have been answered by the first, but it was whether there was any money exchanged for the police presence.

Commissioner Carroll: Definitely not.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, in the past 12 months has the QPS had occasion to respond to calls to relocate an absconded client of the Forensic Disability Service?

Commissioner Carroll: That question would be extraordinarily difficult for me to answer. Unless someone has that information, I will take that question on notice.

Mr RYAN: Can I seek clarity around the question? I am not sure I even understand it.

CHAIR: Minister, is that a question that would be too onerous to answer?

Mr RYAN: Unless we get pinpointed an area or a date or a region—

Commissioner Carroll: Or unless there was a complaint made to the organisation.

Mr RYAN: It is a needle in a haystack otherwise.

CHAIR: Is it too onerous to answer?

Mr RYAN: I want to hear the question again just to see whether it is.

Mr WATTS: In the past 12 months has the QPS had occasion to respond to calls to relocate an absconded client of the Forensic Disability Service?

Commissioner Carroll: I do not believe my organisation can answer that question unless we specifically received from someone a complaint along those lines. It would be extraordinarily difficult to go through QPrime and data over that period of time to see if that occurred.

Mr RYAN: I think that is a fair enough answer. The commissioner says that it is too onerous to answer, unless the member has more particulars.

Mr BERKMAN: Commissioner, in relation to the arrest and detention of those journalists on Monday, can you explain why the charges have since been dropped?

Commissioner Carroll: Definitely. Obviously, that is just abiding by best practice at the local level. The decision was made at a local level to review the policies and procedures associated with those arrests. It was not just four people from the media; there was also a gentleman from Victoria. As a result of reviewing the arrests and the decision that procedures and policies could have been better adhered to, the matter was withdrawn. That is not unusual. Obviously I support my staff in doing that but, certainly, in terms of oversight from senior officers, that is why it was done.

Mr RYAN: There is an important tenet in policing—that is, the independence of the office of constable. Every one of our police officers takes that oath to hold the office of constable. It is like being a solicitor, taking an oath. One of those great things is that we respect the discretion of officers to exercise their powers in accordance with the law. No-one—not the commissioner, not me and not a supervising officer—can tell anyone what to do when it comes to exercising those powers. We respect it and support it.

Mr WATTS: Further to my previous question, for clarity, the incident I am interested in is the one referred to by Minister O'Rourke in yesterday's estimates hearings.

Mr RYAN: Do you have that transcript here? Otherwise, we cannot answer that question now.

Mr WATTS: I do not have the transcript in front of me.

Commissioner Carroll: If we can take that on notice and have a look—

CHAIR: Is the minister happy to take that on notice?

Mr RYAN: Sure.

CHAIR: Minister, would you like to make some concluding remarks in relation to the Queensland Police Service?

Mr RYAN: I thank you very much, Chair, committee members and those tuning in celebrating democracy by witnessing budget estimates here in Queensland. I take this opportunity to thank you all for the robust discussions we have had—the good questions and the not so good questions but, I am sure you will all agree, the excellent answers! I take this opportunity to thank Hansard, all of my support team here—my staff are exceptional—and every single member of the Queensland Police Service, not only those who are here but also those who are tuning in, who has supported us in preparation for estimates. Well done, Commissioner: day 18 and doing budget estimates. Congratulations. I also thank Doug Smith and the entire team at the PSBA. They do some great work. There are a lot of great people in the PSBA. I also thank Wally Tutt and the team at the Prostitution Licensing Authority.

CHAIR: I thank all officials from the Queensland Police Service for their attendance today.

Proceedings suspended from 4.15 pm to 4.31 pm.

 **CHAIR:** Welcome back, Minister and officials. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the Corrective Services portfolio. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes?

Mr RYAN: I do; thank you. Good afternoon again, Chair, members of the committee and those tuning in. I start by acknowledging our Commissioner Peter Martin and his entire team from Queensland Corrective Services and also Michael Byrne QC, the President of the Parole Board, and other Parole Board members who are here. These are exciting times for Queensland Corrective Services. It is important to note that Queensland Corrective Services only became a department in its own right in December 2017, less than two years ago. We are entering a period that will see the standalone department transformed with a record budget.

There will be a massive capacity expansion. There will be a massive increase in our workforce. There will be dramatic changes to the operations of our prison network so that it reflects the findings of Taskforce Flaxton. By 2023, the Palaszczuk government will have delivered 4,000 extra beds to the correctional system. In the recent state budget, we announced a \$618 million investment for a new prison facility at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre precinct. Planning for that project is already underway. It will be a major economic driver for the Lockyer Valley and surrounding communities. It will create more than 400 jobs during construction and, once complete, it will create over 500 permanent ongoing jobs. This is a major investment in regional Queensland and will provide a very significant economic boost. I have met with the Lockyer Valley mayor to discuss what this new facility means and I can tell you that she is very excited.

This is big bang investment in regional Queensland. This is about delivering the necessary infrastructure and at the same time generating permanent economic benefits to people and businesses in the regions. It is also about reducing recidivism by addressing the drug and substance abuse issues that plague many offenders. The new facility will have a health and rehabilitation focus and a particular emphasis on looking at drug addiction, including the ice epidemic. Also, construction of the \$241 million expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre is well advanced. Once complete, this project will generate an extra 232 permanent ongoing jobs at the centre. Again, this is the government building the infrastructure the state needs and doing it in a way that benefits regional Queensland.

This financial year is a watershed year for Queensland Corrective Services. As well as major infrastructure projects, we are also embarking on a process that will see consistency of operation across the correctional network. The two privately run correctional centres will transition to public operation. This reform will rectify what Taskforce Flaxton identified as the suboptimal nature of a hybrid correctional services network. By having all correctional centres under public sector control, there will be benefits. Correctional centres will be better staffed and that will lead to greater safety for our hardworking frontline officers. It will also deliver a more corruption resistant corrections system, one with high levels of transparency and accountability. Commissioner Martin is leading this major reform process with his highly experienced team. It is a big job, but I know the planning is well advanced. It is the continuation of Queensland Corrective Services's transition to a standalone, vital, frontline public safety agency.

Late last year the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre was converted to a women's only facility. That was its original purpose. That reform dramatically eased capacity constraints in women's correctional centres and now we continue the reforms by expanding capacity—expanding Capricornia,

building a new prison at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre precinct, creating new permanent jobs, stimulating regional economies, bringing all facilities under the direct management of Queensland Corrective Services. Queensland Corrective Services is entering a new age—an age that brings economic opportunity to people across Queensland but more importantly an age which enhances community safety for all Queenslanders.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair.

Mr LISTER: I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr WATTS: I thank the staff and the commissioner for the work that they do, sometimes in difficult circumstances, in Queensland. My first question is to the commissioner. Commissioner, are there more assaults in private prisons than in public prisons?

Commissioner Martin: I thank the member for the question. That is a difficult question to answer because, as we find, despite the large number of prisons across Queensland, they are uniquely placed and they are quite different from each other. To make comparisons from one correctional centre to another is incredibly difficult to make. In fact, the private prisons are unique to themselves and they are unique from the other government owned prisons across Queensland.

To highlight that case, if you look at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, it is a very large prison in terms of prison numbers, it is unique in terms of its layout and, more importantly, in terms of the nature of the service that it provides, having regard to the fact that it is a large prison in South-East Queensland that devotes its service primarily as a remand prison. It is distinguished from the type of prisoners, the nature of the prison population and the types of issues that they inherently have, so that is unique. With regard to the other private prison, the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, as the minister rightly pointed out in his address, although being government owned, it is privately run. It is a unique prison in that it is a women's only prison and the nature of the prison population there is unique.

It is probably relevant though to talk about issues of violence and officer assaults generally, whether they be public or private, and it is a very distinct and high priority for me, a distinct reality of the nature of work that our officers do and it is a significant challenge for us in terms of the way that we do our work. It is my No. 1 operational risk in terms of the safety and security of everybody in a correctional centre across Queensland, but more importantly the safety and the security of the workforce—a workforce of some 5,000-plus people who come to work every day trying to do their very best to manage amongst the most difficult and complex people in a population of five million people in Queensland.

To talk specifically though in terms of the issue of assault, which is to the very heart of your question, in 2018-19 there were seven prisoner-on-officer assaults. In the previous year there were six. In terms of assaults prisoner on officer, which is to a lesser category, there were 78 victims in 2018-19 and 49 in the previous year. That, of course, is prisoner-on-staff assault. It does not go to the heart of the issue of prisoner-on-prisoner assault. It is true that prisons in Queensland—prisons across Australasia, prisons in North America, the UK and indeed in other parts of the world—are complex, dynamic places that all have their challenges and all are unique. There are no two prisons in Queensland that are alike.

Mr WATTS: Minister, I refer you to a media release issued on 26 March and the headline reads 'All Queensland Prisons to be publicly run to boost staff safety'.

Mr RYAN: Great announcement.

Mr WATTS: It went on to say, 'One of the government's concerns was the number of assaults on staff occurring in privately run prisons.' Given what we have just heard and the numbers in the answer to the question on notice, is that statement a little misleading?

Mr RYAN: It is the government's view that a public operation model at prisons promotes safety. The reason is that you have more staff. That is how the public operation system works. More staff enhances safety. It is the government's view that if you are enhancing safety you are addressing the risk associated with assaults.

It is a little bit of a hypothetical question that you are posing because, as the commissioner mentioned, prisons are dynamic environments. They are very different from one to another, but the government's view is that if you put more staff into the private prisons you will enhance safety and by enhancing safety you are addressing the assault risk.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, the \$111 million is specifically just for wages in transferring those prisons back into the public system?

Commissioner Martin: A large component of that \$111 million is the differential between the model of staffing that is applied in the private system comparative to the state run system.

Mr WATTS: Thank you. Previously, Commissioner, you have declared that prison overcrowding is your biggest operational issue. Despite that, we still have a large majority of prisoners double bunking or sleeping on mattresses on the ground. Based on current and projected spending, when can we expect to have no prisoners doubled up in cells that were originally designed for one person?

Commissioner Martin: I thank the member for the question. You are quite right: I am on the public record as saying that the issue of overcrowding is a very significant operational issue for Queensland Corrective Services. It poses a significant challenge for me and I am very pleased to say that there are some really important initiatives afoot.

Since I commenced in the role as commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services, and as the minister rightly pointed out in November 2017, it has been obvious that overcrowding is the single most significant issue facing the portfolio. We have had a 50 per cent increase in the number of people being incarcerated since 2012. This is putting significant pressure on our built infrastructure and, more importantly, pressure on frontline officers. I note that there are also corresponding increases in the number of offenders being managed in the community. I know that is not specifically to your question, but it goes to the heart of the issue. The issues of throughput are putting pressure on Queensland Corrective Services both in terms of the custodial space and in terms of community corrections.

We have a built cell capacity of 7,197, which consists of 6,382 high-security cells and 815 low-custody beds. In 2018-19—as at 30 June 2019—there were 8,774 prisoners in custody in Queensland, consisting of 7,918 males and 856 females. The secure correctional centre estate was operating at 127-plus per cent in total. This is consistent of 131 per cent male and female at about 94 per cent.

This is not unique to Queensland; it is an Australasian-wide phenomenon generally. It is also characteristic of prisons in the United States and the United Kingdom, which are all grappling with this issue currently. We are not new in that regard. I think what is really important, though, is to say what we are doing about that, which goes to the very heart of your question, member. The minister rightly pointed out that, helpfully, with the work of the Crime and Corruption Commission through the work that they did with Task Force Flaxton, we have a blueprint for our immediate future, working in partnership with the government to address these particular issues.

The minister made the comment about the transference of Southern Queensland Correctional Centre into solely a women's prison. That was work that we undertook in the middle part of last year. That reduced the issue of women's overcrowding from 200 per cent down to 95 per cent, which is a very significant boon in terms of the way we humanely treat the women prisoners in our custody.

One of the other measures that we have in train at the present time is in 2018-19 the expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre. That work continues. One thousand bunk beds across Queensland correctional centres were installed by December 2018. Once these projects are completed in 2020 and 2021, more than 3,000 prisoner beds will have been delivered since February 2015. Of course, this will be bolstered by the recent announcement of the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre coming on line—phase 2 of 1,004 beds—in 2023.

These are important initiatives but, of course, none of us knows and nobody has a crystal ball in terms of the prisoner number projections in absolute terms. I can say, however, that the work that we are doing to put in place double bunks into existing cells, to bring new cells on line through Capricornia, and the commitment of a new prison in Southern Queensland Correctional Centre phase 2 will go a long way towards addressing the issues that we currently have and the issues that we will have in the medium term.

Mr WATTS: Thank you. With reference to the built environment and the double bunking, does that increase the number of staff required operationally for lock-up and unlock?

Commissioner Martin: I thank the member for the question. Generally, as the number of prisoners increases so, too, is there an arrangement through government, supported by Treasury, for the increase in resources commensurate with that. Over a period of time there has been support from government commensurate with the increase that we have seen. If you have a look at the increase that I was talking about from 2012 to the present—in the custodial space, that 50 per cent increase—there has been a significant rise in resourcing to meet that demand.

Mr WATTS: For clarity, currently that is an operational budget increase as opposed to a capital budget increase?

Commissioner Martin: That is an operating increase to facilitate a range of capability, particularly labour. That is right.

Mr RYAN: Can I also say that—

CHAIR: Does the minister wish to—

Mr RYAN: Yes. There is a specific line item in this year's budget to supplement staffing in correctional centres. It is \$14 million for up to 200 staff, which addresses the comments the commissioner was making that as the prison population increases within custodial environments the staffing to support that increase in prisoners also increases.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, with reference to Task Force Flaxton, the CCC found that overcrowding was one of the major factors culminating in corruption and that alleviating prison overcrowding is essential to reduce that corruption risk. As we are going through a process of reducing that overcrowding over time, what other steps have been put in place to reduce that corruption exposure?

Commissioner Martin: Member, thank you for the question. I want to also again support the work of the Crime and Corruption Commission in helping the department achieve probably much more quickly than it would have in terms of being that top-tier public safety agency, which is part of my ambitions for the department.

Task Force Flaxton made a number of recommendations. You are perfectly correct: in the literature there are five key corruption related risks. The issues associated with overcrowding and the implication that it has for corruption and corruption resistance of a department is incredibly important. There were 33 recommendations made by the Crime and Corruption Commission, all of which have been supported by the government—either supported directly or supported in principle. In terms of the 33 recommendations that were made in Flaxton, we have not been waiting for the government's endorsement of those; we have been working feverishly to give effect to them behind the scenes.

I have no doubt that with the Crime and Corruption Commission's help and with the government's support we will be able to do the things that we need to do to be a corruption resistant organisation for the future. Part of what we have been doing is, and the Crime and Corruption Commission has supported this, the development of a longer term strategic plan for the organisation and that plan has now been developed and will be launched. My understanding is that we are going to do that on 12 August. That is a long-term strategic plan for the organisation that will set the future direction, a plan that we have not had as a department ever in our history.

Some of the other things that we are doing is creating an ethical standards unit in a modern era modelled very similarly to that which occurs in policing that would not only look at the issue of the identification of unethical behaviour and corrupt behaviour but importantly put in place the issues associated with prevention to prevent people from acting in a way that is contrary to the code of conduct and also my expectations of them as a workforce; a complete organisational review, which is fundamentally seeing the structure of the organisation change; and building capability in all of those issues that we need to be a corruption resistant organisation, particularly around HR, the way we onboard, the way we manage people and the leadership capability of the organisation, finance, our accounting, our integrity systems more broadly and also internal audit and a range of other functions.

We are going to review all of our service operational procedures and that work has already begun. It is complex and there are also implications there associated with the types of people that we recruit and the way that we onboard those people, as I made mention of. All of these things, not one of them in isolation, are incredibly important. The other thing I would also like to say is that the government committed \$25.2 million over four years to assist us in implementing the Task Force Flaxton recommendations. It is just not empty rhetoric, it has been backed up by an investment of funding and that is funding that we are using currently to give effect to those recommendations.

CHAIR: Do you have anything to add?

Mr RYAN: I wanted to highlight that final point the commissioner made which was that there is a dedicated line item in the budget for implementing the recommendations: \$25.2 million over four years.

Ms McMILLAN: Minister, I refer to SDS page 3, which refers to the construction of stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct and I ask: would you outline the benefits of building a new prison in Gatton?

Mr RYAN: Thank you very much, member. I know the member for Lockyer has a big smile on his face about this one. It is a cracker for his region and it is going to deliver some really good outcomes, not only for local jobs and local businesses, but also, of course, better community safety outcomes as well. Member for Lockyer, you are right to have a big smile.

The government has announced plans to build a new men's prison near Gatton. This project will deliver a massive economic boost to the Lockyer Valley. As I mentioned in my opening statement, the project is expected to create more than 400 construction jobs over the three-year build program and eventually deliver more than 500 permanent ongoing jobs in the Lockyer Valley. It is the Palaszczuk government that is delivering significant financial benefits to regional Queensland with this investment. This government has allocated \$618 million in capital funding, held centrally, for completion of the facility which is planned to be completed in 2023. Final funding for the project will be subject to competitive tender, as we would all expect, to ensure that we get the best price and the best outcome for Queensland taxpayers. This is about investing in regional jobs today and growing the economy for the future.

I mentioned the mayor of Lockyer Valley Regional Council Tanya Milligan in my opening statement, but I think it is important to reflect on some of her comments when she heard the news. I gave her a phone call the day we announced it and she said to me that it was the best news she had heard in a long time and that she was very excited that we would have this new prison which would equal jobs and opportunity and work as a catalyst for more investment in the Lockyer Valley. There were comments in the local paper, the *Gatton, Lockyer and Brisbane Valley Star*, where the member for Lockyer welcomed the move saying—

while some community members had concerns, there would be significant benefits ... I'm sure that this extension will provide even further employment and economic opportunities.

The member is spot on. Mayor Milligan was quoted in the *Queensland Times* as saying—

A new prison will equal 'jobs and opportunity' and work as a catalyst for more investment in the Lockyer Valley.

I am happy to table those two articles for the benefit of the committee.

CHAIR: You are seeking leave?

Mr RYAN: I seek leave.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr RYAN: These glowing endorsements from the member for Lockyer and also the mayor of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council are, of course, well placed and recognise the importance that this project will have in that particular region. In summary, planning has commenced for a modern, evidence based prison which will support safer communities through enhanced mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services with a focus on addressing the ice epidemic and its link to violence and property crime. I think it is important to reflect on this because this will not be like any other prison. This prison will have that focus on enhanced mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services and a specific focus on the ice epidemic and its link to violence and property crime.

The government's stage 2 expansion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct will deliver jobs, jobs and more jobs for the region while providing approximately 1,000 beds for male prisoners upon completion. It will help address overcrowding and, of course, improve safety for our entire community.

Mrs McMAHON: In relation to your previous answer and referring to jobs being created by the \$618.8 million construction of stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct, will you outline the benefits of building correctional capacity and any other alternative policy positions?

Mr RYAN: Thank you very much, member. You are right, I have mentioned the numbers around the economic and employment impact, but I think it is worth saying it again because it is such a good news story for the Lockyer Valley. We are talking about, for this project, the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct stage 2, 400 construction jobs over the three-year build and 500 permanent ongoing jobs in the Lockyer Valley region. This is good news for regional Queensland with significant long-term financial benefits—of course, from our government's investment.

It is important to note the economic impact that correctional centres have in a particular community. I have mentioned the jobs, but it is also the local businesses which have an uplift. When correctional centres are closed there is obviously a hole created in the community. We have a recent example of that, unfortunately. There was an article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* in 2012 after the Newman government announced that it was not building a new prison, it was actually closing a correctional centre at Westbrook on the outskirts of Toowoomba, the Darling Downs Correctional Centre. The local MP, who is here at the moment, said to the 48 prison staff who were going to have to be relocated or take redundancies or lose their jobs—

We are working hard to give ourselves a bright future, but unfortunately that means some short-term pain.

How would you feel if you were a worker living in the Toowoomba region and your local MP said to you, essentially, suck it up, you are going to have some short-term pain? This was an important facility. The mayor at the time, Paul Antonio, who is still the mayor now, said that the facility was an important one for the Darling Downs and he was taken aback when he heard the announcement from the Newman government that they were going to close it. I seek leave to table that article.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr RYAN: There are some big differences between the two approaches of government. We invest in infrastructure, which creates jobs, particularly jobs in the region; the other side takes away facilities which rips economies apart and forces local workers to either take redundancies or move away.

CHAIR: I refer to SDS page 3, to provide safe, modern and responsive corrective services and I ask: will the minister outline the measures being taken to increase custodial capacity in Queensland in correctional facilities?

Mr RYAN: You have already heard a bit of a summary of the investment that we are making in Queensland Corrective Services. It is worth highlighting those investments, because this year our government is delivering a record budget to Queensland Corrective Services of more than \$1 billion. That is a 42 per cent increase since we came to government. Capacity constraints, as the commissioner mentioned, are not just a challenge in Queensland; they are a challenge around Australia and around the world. It is how governments respond to that by increasing capacity that is important. Of course, our government has responded by making significant investments in infrastructure expansion as well as increasing the number of staff in our correctional centres to enhance safety.

Our government has taken major steps to ease the pressure on the prison population. I am advised that, in the coming financial year, more officers will be brought on across the state to safely manage the prisoner population. It is our government that is boosting correctional capacity across Queensland and delivering regional jobs today and growing the economy for the future. Importantly, as I have already said, by 2023 we will have delivered more than 4,000 extra beds in correctional centres since being elected in 2015.

This stands in stark contrast to the previous government which, as I mentioned in my previous answer, closed the Darling Downs correctional centre. During their time, 180 corrections staff lost their jobs. They gutted rehabilitation programs and diversionary courts. They slashed prison industry programs, which are an important rehabilitation component for prisoners. The LNP's failure to plan exposed our hardworking correctional officers to increased risk, because the LNP's legacy is one of ripping resources out of correctional centres and not investing in them.

Their wrong priorities and warped views continue when it comes to the serious issue of community safety and officer safety in our correctional centres. Again, I note some public comments that were made relatively recently—only 12 months ago—by the member for Toowoomba North in the *Whitsunday Times* on 29 June 2018. Mr Watts said—

The prisons are full of non-violent people who have done stupid things and we need to have a better way of dealing with them.

Those people have been found guilty of committing crimes against our community and we are not going to let them out. To let them out, as the member for Toowoomba North suggests, would undermine community safety. We often hear those opposite muse about who is tougher on crime. If the shadow minister is saying 'I am going to let them out', I will let you join the dots as to who is tougher on crime. I seek leave to table the article.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Ms McMILLAN: I refer to SDS page 3, 'To provide safe, modern and responsive correctional services'. Minister, will you outline some of the challenges in keeping Queensland correctional centres free from contraband?

Mr RYAN: That is a great question. Our government—and I know it is a view shared by Commissioner Martin and everyone in Queensland Corrective Services—has no tolerance for contraband in Queensland's correctional facilities. Prisons are tightly controlled for good reason. Every action taken in a correctional centre starts with safety and security at its core. To ensure safety and security, a range of surveillance techniques are used to prevent, detect and swiftly respond to contraband of any kind. Random and targeted drug testing of prisoners, together with searches of their cells and prisoner mail, are conducted by trained custodial staff, often using passive alert drug detection dogs that are trained to detect even the smallest traces of illicit substances.

Before entering a correctional centre, people are subjected to a combination of security checks: electronic and PADD dog searches, metal detection, X-ray scanning of property and drug testing using an ion scanning device similar to those in airports around Australia. Anyone found trying to bring contraband into a correctional centre will face the full consequences of their actions, which can include criminal charges. A visitor to a correctional facility who is found committing or is suspected of committing a security offence, including attempting to conceal or introduce an item of contraband, may be temporarily detained by QCS staff until they can be handed over to the Queensland Police Service. Again I stress that prisons are tightly controlled and for good reason, as every action taken in a correctional centre starts with safety and security at its core.

That being said, I seek clarity from the shadow minister and the LNP about whether or not they have a different policy to safety and security at our prisons, especially when it comes to contraband. I am concerned because I received a letter from the member for Ninderry—

Mr WATTS: Point of order, Chair. The minister does not get to ask questions until he is in opposition.

Mr RYAN: I am not asking. You don't have to answer it now, but you can if you like.

CHAIR: Minister, I bring you back to the answer, please.

Mr RYAN: The invitation is for the LNP, after this estimates hearing, to clarify their position, because if they do not clarify their position the only thing that we have to go by—

Mr LISTER: Point of order, Mr Chair, on standing order 118: relevance. This is about the appropriations and the minister is not discussing the appropriations.

Mr RYAN: You cannot just invent points of order.

CHAIR: Minister, I bring you back to the question, please.

Mr RYAN: This is the written policy of the LNP when it comes to safety and security at our prisons. It is from the member for Ninderry.

Mr LISTER: Point of order, Mr Chair. I have made it clear that this is not relevant to the estimates. It is not relevant to the budget. Would you please get the minister to adhere to guidance and stick to the estimates?

CHAIR: My understanding is that, in answering a question, the minister is able to answer the question in whatever way he chooses.

Mr LISTER: You are required to make sure that the minister remains relevant, Mr Chair. I ask that you do so.

CHAIR: There is no point of order.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Chair. The question is about safety and security and contraband, and I am speaking about safety and security and contraband. I will seek leave to table this letter in a moment and you can read the whole letter. The member for Ninderry says—

My constituent has twice failed the drug test that all visitors are required to pass before entering the facility ...

...

I am confident that my constituent was not carrying any illicit or unapproved items, and that the fail results were the result of a flawed screening process.

There currently appears to be no recourse for visitors who fail this process, and I am concerned that visitors are being excluded for reasons outside of their control ...

We will not ever compromise when it comes to the safety and security of our correctional facilities, particularly when it comes to keeping out contraband. If the LNP's position is that they want to water down those safety and security measures, they need to come out and acknowledge that. Otherwise, they need to clarify their current written policy as contained in the member for Ninderry's letter. I seek leave to table it.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted. I hand back to the deputy chair.

Mr LISTER: Mr Chair, I defer to the member for Maiwar.

Mr BERKMAN: Minister, when deciding to spend \$620-odd million on a new prison, which is more than the spend on new social housing this year, did your department undertake any kind of options analysis comparing the efficacy of this spend with new beds in Housing or support services or drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities, for example?

Mr RYAN: There is a business case that was done. It is on the Building Queensland website. You can have a look at that. There is also a custodial capacity issue that we have to deal with right now. I would have thought that, of all the investments in custodial infrastructure, you would welcome an investment that has a rehabilitative approach—one that focuses on mental health support and one that focuses on substance addiction, with a particular focus around the addictive drug ice. The government's decision is around investing in that correctional infrastructure, but we are doing so in a way that will have an operating model that supports rehabilitation outcomes.

Mr BERKMAN: With the business case that you have referred to, as I asked initially, was there that kind of comparison and options analysis with the provision of new correctional facilities?

Mr RYAN: That is not a consideration for Queensland Corrective Services. Queensland Corrective Services has a mandate about supporting community safety outcomes through managing offenders. The considerations that Queensland Corrective Services makes are about delivering the infrastructure for custodial capacity and supporting rehabilitation outcomes. That is why we have announced the model that we have at Southern Queensland stage 2.

Mr BERKMAN: So the business case presupposes that this is the approach that should be taken?

Mr RYAN: This is what government is about—making decisions about where you invest money. The business case was done. It shows that the project stacks up. The government made an investment decision that had a particular focus around increasing custodial capacity and enhancing rehabilitation outcomes.

Mr WATTS: With a view to not compromising on safety and security measures, my question is to the commissioner. I refer to the wedding at Palen Creek prison farm on 9 May this year. Can the commissioner confirm that a convicted drug trafficker who led a sophisticated cannabis syndicate is no longer at the facility and has been transferred to a high-security facility?

Commissioner Martin: The issue that goes to the heart of this particular prisoner relates to a very sensitive issue that was played out spectacularly in the media over a period of time. Can I say with respect to that issue that that is a regrettable situation. The decision-making that occurred in that particular situation should not have been made in that way and, more importantly, there have been significant steps taken to address that particular issue.

Going to the heart of the issue of identifying the prisoner, despite the fact that the media may have felt comfortable in identifying that particular prisoner, it is not prudent for me to speak about the matters that relate to an individual prisoner or the circumstances of that. That is something that I am not comfortable doing and I do not think it is right and prudent. Having said that, I am very happy to talk about issues peripheral to the matters relating to that prisoner, but in a way that does not disclose that particular individual.

Mr WATTS: At the said wedding were photographs and film taken to record the wedding?

Commissioner Martin: That is my understanding. My understanding is that one of the guests invited, but security screened by staff at the centre, was a photographer and that that person did take images associated with the wedding. That is my understanding.

Mr WATTS: Is anybody else allowed to take a camera into a prison and take pictures?

Commissioner Martin: That particular individual did not take the camera into the prison proper. The circumstances relating to the wedding occurred in a visitation area which is adjunct to the prison, but not part of the internal mechanisms of the prison. Therefore, the guests that attended that particular prison, while supervised by staff, did not enter the internal dimensions of the prison and therefore did not pose a direct security risk to the prison operation, including the photographer.

Mr WATTS: But they were on the prison premise?

Commissioner Martin: The visitation area is on prison grounds within Palen Creek Correctional Centre.

Mr WATTS: Can you confirm that alcohol was served at the wedding?

Commissioner Martin: I can confirm that no alcohol was served at that wedding. In fact, an independent investigation by the Office of the Chief Inspector has found that no food was provisioned by Queensland Corrective Services nor was alcohol served at that particular event. That is not within my knowledge and I believe is contrary to the investigation that was independent.

Mr WATTS: Continuing on this line of questioning. Were there extra costs of staff and security to be able to arrange this wedding and who foot the bill for those?

Commissioner Martin: Can I confirm for you that as part of that investigation by the Office of the Chief Inspector, bearing in mind that this was also a matter that was part of a Crime and Corruption Commission referral, it was found that there were no direct labour costs associated with the running of the prison—that is the portion of labour that was bought on specifically to facilitate this through overtime arrangements or some other manipulation of shift. Naturally, any time of the day, having regard to circumstances that can unfold, there is the appropriate movement of staff within a prison setting. There were no direct and independent labour related costs associated with the wedding is the brief that has been provided to me.

Mr WATTS: With regard to the guests and the prisoner interaction at this wedding were security checks or random alcohol and drug tests carried out of the guests and/or the prisoners as they moved in and out of the facility?

Commissioner Martin: The situation is that the guests were vetted prior to their arrival on site. Their personal circumstances were known to staff and they were vetted in terms of their antecedents prior to their arrival on site. The event was supervised by Corrective Services staff who were in attendance, given the fact that it was part of normal operations. Significant visitations to that particular correctional centre are part of business as usual. This was treated as a normal visitation would be to prisoners that occurred at the correctional centre on the day, notwithstanding the fact that prison weddings are reasonably uncommon. They occur infrequently, but they do occur from time to time.

Mr WATTS: Did you have prior knowledge that the wedding would take place?

Commissioner Martin: No, I did not. I did not have pre knowledge of the wedding nor did the deputy commissioner for custodial operations prior to execution of the wedding on the day.

Mr WATTS: Following up on your previous answer, when did you find out the costs specific to holding this wedding?

Commissioner Martin: When did I find out the cost specific to the wedding?

Mr WATTS: Yes.

Commissioner Martin: In reference to my previous comment, there were no costs associated with food. The food was provisioned by the party concerned. Food was bought onto the site, despite my grave reservations that the wedding should have occurred in the way that it did. Food that was not consumed was removed from the site. There was no alcohol consumed and there were no direct labour related costs so then there are no direct related costs that I have been able to identify associated with the event.

Mr WATTS: Can you confirm, because it has been reported, that Moreton Bay bugs, prawns and steaks were served as the menu for this wedding?

Commissioner Martin: What I can confirm is that there was seafood and there was meat. I cannot be specific in terms of what was on site, what was consumed and what might have been taken from the site. I can tell you that the food that was brought onto the site was consumed on site and that food that was not consumed on site was returned to the party to be taken off the site.

Mr WATTS: Have there been any other weddings since this wedding at this facility?

Commissioner Martin: The reality is no. I mentioned before that weddings are rare events. They are infrequent, but they do happen from time to time. The last wedding that occurred was in 2013. It occurred at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre. It was a very meagre affair. It comprised a small number of people—the two parties concerned, a wedding celebrant and a witness. It was very brief. It was a very modest and meagre affair.

Mr WATTS: Going forward would you change your practice and can you give some reassurance that a wedding such as this would not occur again in one of your facilities?

Commissioner Martin: Thank you for raising this. It raises a very important point for me. I can give you an assurance that this will not occur into the future. This is an incredibly regrettable situation. It should not have occurred. I have been on the record as saying that it should not have occurred.

I do not think it passes the public interest test. I do not think it passes the public scrutiny test. It does not pass the minister's test and it does not pass mine. I vented my disappointment with respect to the decision-making on this particular occasion. In fact, those officers who made the decisions to allow it were flawed in their decision-making. It might have been in accordance with the policy that existed at the time, but I do not believe it was appropriate and they should have acted in another way. I am very, very clear on that. I have very high standards when it comes to this.

In terms of putting in place those mechanisms to prevent this happening into the future, I have specifically raised the delegated level from general manager of a correctional centre to the deputy commissioner of custodial operations specifically, and that has changed. That is now the new standard. There has been a complete and thorough investigation into this matter. The two officers at the centre of this have been chastised with respect to their decision-making. I am confident that this will not happen again. It will not happen again into the future and it will not happen again on my watch.

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Commissioner. You are confident through those investigations that there is no corruption issue here with regard to the hosting of this wedding at the facility?

Commissioner Martin: From the advice that I have and from the investigation that has occurred, bearing in mind that the report has not been finalised, from the briefing that I have received I do not see any significant corruption related risk. Having said that, I have very significant concerns with respect to the decision-making, but I will need to wait for that investigation to be formalised completely.

Mr WATTS: Thank you very much, Commissioner. I think we can move on from that particular issue. With reference to the SDS, in 2018-19 the daily average prisoner population was 124.6 per cent across various facilities, which is 34 per cent higher than the government stated target capacity. Is the target capacity realistic?

Mr RYAN: That is an opinion.

CHAIR: I ask the member to rephrase the question please. You are asking for an opinion.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, when do you think you will be able to achieve the government's target capacity?

Mr RYAN: I raise a point of order. That is a hypothetical.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, when will you achieve the government's—

Mr RYAN: It is still a hypothetical.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba North, could you please rephrase the question or move on to a different one?

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Deputy Chair.

CHAIR: No, I am the chair.

Mr WATTS: Sorry, Chair. Commissioner, there is a 34 per cent gap between what is the objective of the government's capacity and the current capacity. Going forward with the budget that has been allocated, do you see that you will be able to meet that target?

Mr RYAN: I raise a further point of order. I think there is a hypothetical opinion sought.

CHAIR: Yes. That is a hypothetical. Member for Toowoomba North, could you please rephrase the question or move on to another question?

Mr WATTS: Minister, how was the government's capacity target set?

Mr RYAN: I will seek some advice around that. The SDS targets are generally set in consultation with central agencies. They are just that—targets. Let us take it on notice and we will come back to you.

CHAIR: I now move to government members.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS which identifies an investment of \$22.1 million in the Woodford Correctional Centre, the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit and the Brisbane Correctional Centre commercial laundry. Will the minister outline the types of improvements and how these upgrades will enhance safety and security?

Mr RYAN: Keeping the community safe is the government's priority. No-one has escaped from a high-security facility in Queensland in more than 20 years. This is a result of meticulous planning, sustained investment in infrastructure and security upgrades. We do this to ensure our hardworking corrective services officers can discharge their duties safely and keep the community safe. I know that Commissioner Martin and our government are committed to positioning Queensland Corrective Services as a top tier frontline public safety agency with the highest levels of safety, functionality and efficiency in our correctional centres.

In the 2019-20 state budget, we handed down the biggest budget for Queensland Corrective Services in the history of the agency. As part of our record investment in corrective services, we have committed \$22.1 million over four years for minor capital works and infrastructure upgrades. We are keeping our correctional centres secure by upgrading locking systems in identified centres around the state with up-to-date, state-of-the-art mechanisms. We are also reinvesting in the commercial laundry at the Brisbane Correctional Centre.

There are little projects that you get every so often which make a huge difference. I know Bernie Kruhse is very passionate about the commercial laundry—Bernie is the General Manager of the Brisbane Correctional Centre—because it makes such a difference. It positively engages prisoners in meaningful employment. Working in the commercial laundry in the correctional centre provides them with skills to have a job on the outside. We have managed to get money in this year's budget to go towards replacing those ageing laundry machines, which were close to the point of failure. I reckon Bernie would have done a few fist pumps when he heard that news.

The laundry consists of several pieces of industrial machinery which have stood the test of time. However, three of those machines have recently failed, after 27 years of operation. The laundry at the Brisbane Correctional Centre is not only integral to the centre's operations but also to a number of state facilities for which it launders linen. For this reason, we have committed to replacing the machinery in the laundry so that it continues its great work for Queensland.

We have also committed \$5 million this year towards a \$13.6 million upgrade of security intercoms at Woodford Correctional Centre. Every cell in our high-security prisons is equipped with an intercom to enable prisoners to connect to a control room operator locally in the centre in order to alert them of an emergency. As you can appreciate, intercoms are a key element for the safety and security of our correctional centres.

I am also pleased to advise of a \$2 million investment this year out of a total investment of \$3 million to refurbish the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit. The Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit is a secure facility adjoined to the PA Hospital that specifically houses male and female prisoners in a secure environment away from the general hospital population. The PA Hospital Secure Unit is a great example of Queensland Corrective Services and Queensland Health working in partnership to keep our community safe and provide world-leading health care.

CHAIR: With regard to the government's 2019-20 service area highlights, referred to on page 3 of the SDS, will the minister please inform the committee of the short-, medium- and long-term strategies to address demand on the correctional system?

Mr RYAN: In response to the question I took on notice before about setting targets, the target is informed by RoGS, the Report on Government Services, which is a national process that is published every year. This particular target is unique to Queensland but aspirational in scope and scale. I am advised that it is tied to government policy and informed by feedback from central agencies.

In response to your question, member, which was a great question, the government is investing heavily in Queensland Corrective Services. As mentioned, the government has committed to building a new correctional facility at the southern Queensland correctional precinct. The Capricornia Correctional Centre is undergoing a well-advanced \$241 million expansion. Our recommissioning of the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre has been completed. The Southern Queensland Correctional Centre stage 1 facility has transitioned to a women-only facility, which was its original purpose, greatly reducing capacity constraints in the women's corrections network.

By 2023, as I have already mentioned, this government will have delivered 4,000 extra beds to the Queensland correctional capacity. This government is building capacity to keep staff and prisoners safe. Over the long term, strategies have been adopted and will continue to be adopted to drive down recidivism and thus reduce demand. I will outline some of the major watersheds in our strategy to build capacity.

In 2015-16 we recommissioned the existing cell infrastructure at the Townsville men's prison and started the process at the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre to immediately increase system capacity. This was quickly augmented in July 2017 with a significant investment to swiftly bring additional bunk bed capacity through the delivery of our 1,000 bunk bed program. The first 1,000 bunks were installed across the system by December 2018. Because of its success a second tranche of 1,000 bunk beds has now been approved and will be installed over the next two years.

The Capricornia Correctional Centre expansion is delivering more security cells and is well advanced. Two years ago we approved \$200 million in the 2017-18 state budget for a 164-cell expansion to the centre. With prudent management and good work in a competitive tender environment, we were able to add a further 100 cells to the design at no extra cost. A further funding boost of \$41 million in 2018-19 increased the design by another 84 cells, thereby adding 348 high-security cells in total, which will come online next year. During 2018 the conversion of the 302-bed Southern Queensland Correctional Centre stage 1 into a women's prison, which immediately relieved overcrowding within women's facilities across the state, was completed.

The proportion of prisoners on remand is a significant demand on the justice system. Remandees comprise over 30 per cent of the prison system, and this is most keenly felt within the female prison population. Incidentally, 30 per cent is around average when you look across correctional systems, but it is still a large number. In response, Queensland Corrective Services contracted Sisters Inside to deliver the Supreme Court bail program for women. Sisters Inside is delivering real results and delivering savings for the state by reducing remand numbers and the cost to accommodate prisoners. In 2018-19 our government provided funding of \$3.9 million over three years to expand that bail support program to men on remand. This will ensure that male prisoners who are remanded due to homelessness or other vulnerabilities are supported to address their barriers to apply for bail and to make an application if assessed as eligible.

For Queensland Corrective Services the long-term approach is multifaceted and comprises rehabilitation, re-entry support, sustained reforms to the parole system and additional capacity for the future. As I have mentioned previously, planning has already commenced for the \$618 million facility adjacent to the existing Southern Queensland Correctional Centre stage 1 near Gatton. We are committed to developing a modern, evidence based prison which will support safer communities through enhanced mental health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services with a focus on addressing the ice epidemic and its link to violent and property crime. The stage 2 expansion will deliver at least 1,000 beds for male prisoners by 2023. In addition, long-term capacity, demand management and crime reduction supports safer communities through the implementation of the Sofronoff review reforms to the parole system.

The watershed *Queensland Parole System Review* reforms and an investment of over \$250 million by this government have delivered increased rehabilitation opportunities for prisoners to address the underlying causes of offending, most notably substance use, before they are released. It established a new independent Parole Board Queensland. It established GPS monitoring for parolees. More community correction officers to supervise offenders in the community were supported, expanded bail support programs like the ones I mentioned earlier and expanded service delivery of re-entry support and the rollout of opioid substitution treatment in partnership with Queensland Health.

As work progresses on the parole system reforms, Queensland Corrective Services is now focused on one of the most significant elements: a redesign to implement an end-to-end case management process for prisoners moving through imprisonment to parole. Prisoners who have access to basic needs such as appropriate identification, accommodation, income support and pre-release planning and post-release support have a better chance of remaining offence free once they are released. Investing in these demand management strategies is a focus of our government. It is about addressing the underlying causes of offending rather than building more prisons to accommodate more prisoners. It is about keeping the community safe.

Mr LISTER: I believe the member for Mirani has a question.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you for the good job you do in the Capricornia Correctional Centre in Mirani. Minister, we spoke earlier of tender processes and being competitive. With \$241 million for 348 cells, that brings it to about \$608,000 per cell. Is that the most competitive we could find in this situation?

Mr RYAN: Without getting into commercial-in-confidence discussions, that is actually pretty good. The back-of-the-envelope calculation is usually \$1 million per cell, so this is a tremendous commendation to Queensland Corrective Services for not only being able to deliver the scope that was funded but through a really good tender process in a competitive market get stuff included for no extra cost. Prisons are expensive places, there no doubt about that. You have to build them so they are secure so people do not escape. That means that there is significant investment not only in the hard infrastructure but also technology. That is one reason why we have not had someone escape from a high-security facility in Queensland for over 20 years.

Mr ANDREW: Can the minister advise what retail access prisoners have during weekly buy ups?

Mr RYAN: I will get the commissioner to add some comments here. Obviously, there are some differences depending on the correctional centre, the security classification of the prisoner and all sorts of variables. Commissioner, you might be able to answer or someone else might be able to assist.

Commissioner Martin: It is really important that we not only safely and humanely contain prisoners but that we work tirelessly to set them up for success at the point at which they leave. Part of this is to create almost an artificial economy within a correctional centre, and it drives part of the incentives and earned privileges program within a correctional centre. Fundamentally, there is a very, very small allowance paid to a prisoner, particularly those prisoners who are engaged in work and industries. What happens is that prisoners use that money for things that otherwise you would expect

the state to provide. That might be toiletries, deodorant and things like that. They can use those funds in ways that benefit them personally, particularly around personal hygiene, but there are small concessions they can make.

If they do the right thing and if they act in a way that is consistent with the expected standards of behaviour locally, then they can get small rewards that they pay for. What that means is that, particularly for prisoners in correctional centres, the amenity allowance to purchase personal hygiene products as required is around \$9.85 a week, and that is reviewed annually. It is very, very small, but it is enough to enable them to buy the things they need that give them the right to self-determination. But of course that is not the only thing that they can get access to by ensuring that they act in way consistent with the local policies and accepted standards of behaviour for things such as access to televisions, access to the library, books and newspapers, and a whole range of other things. It is a very important issue. You have touched on an important issue for us. That money is used very prodigiously to provision those sorts of things to prisoners in our custody and care.

Mr ANDREW: Ice users go in as ice users and then are put on a Subutex program and come out with additional narcotic additions. Are we watching that? Are we keeping a close look on making sure that, when we put people on programs, they do not incur another addiction rather than just going in with one?

CHAIR: That will be your last question, member for Mirani.

Commissioner Martin: I am very happy to take that question. I would probably preface what I am about to say within the context that I think a lot of what you are talking here should be directed appropriately to the Minister for Health and also the director-general of Health because it relates to a program that fundamentally we assist in provisioning but do not have responsibility for. What I can tell you is that we productively work with our colleagues in Queensland Health to always get the best outcomes for the prisoner, particularly within the context of the issue of dependency for alcohol and other drug related issues.

Mr WATTS: The Together union secretary, Alex Scott, commented in a recent news article that Queensland prison officers say assaults on staff members by prisoners are being under-reported and classified as low-level incidents in a bid to cover up violence occurring in prisons. Commissioner, are assaults on prison staff being under-reported?

Commissioner Martin: I have not seen evidence of that. I would be very disappointed if that was occurring. Can I also say to you that we have just come out of the most significant review of a correctional services department that I can recall anywhere in Australia in recent times through the work of the Crime and Corruption Commission. That was an exhaustive review that was facilitated with submissions and public hearings, and the Crime and Corruption Commission took evidence on a range of matters. I know that the Together union provided a submission and they made a senior officer available to be interrogated by the public hearing process.

I have gone on the record as saying that my view is that we need to be authentic and accountable and we need to have good governance. There are mechanisms internally currently to reflect appropriately the things that occur within correctional centres. My expectation is that all staff report matters productively. There are mechanisms to quality assure the reporting that occurs. I think it is also important to reflect that there are many pathways. If somebody within the organisation—whether it be a staff member or a prisoner—felt aggrieved with the way they had been treated or the way that a fellow officer was acting, there are mechanisms to prosecute that, not least of which is a referral to their general manager or alternatively a referral to the Ethical Standards Unit or the Crime and Corruption Commission.

I would be very disappointed if that was occurring. I have not seen evidence of it. In fact, it is absolutely contrary to the instructions that I have given to the deputy commissioners and also the general managers. I just have not seen that occurring.

Mr WATTS: Thank you. Commissioner, the obligations that corrective services officers will be subject to when the remainder of the Human Rights Act commences in 2020 are quite onerous, because in every decision an officer makes they must give proper consideration to all relevant rights protected under the act. What training is being or has been given to management and corrective services officers to prepare them for their obligations to make decisions and uphold the provisions of the Human Rights Act?

Commissioner Martin: Thank you for the question. This is a very important issue and it is a fundamental change for the way that we do our business. While the implications of the act loom large, bearing in mind that they come into effect on 1 January 2020, the time is moving very rapidly toward

that particular position. We know that it is going to require a very significant change potentially to legislation or regulation, but it will require changes fundamentally to our service operations and procedures.

One of the key elements of this is to prepare the workforce for the change that will occur. Already we are having conversations internally and starting to prep and plan for that. You do not want to do the training too early, but, equally, you do not want to do it just in time, so already the conversations are starting to occur throughout the organisation. People are being prepped for the changes that need to occur. We also need to be very clear in terms of the implications that the Human Rights Act will have for the organisation, so there is a bit of preplanning work that needs to occur in parallel with the training packages that will need to be developed, and then that training will need to be delivered across the organisation.

We need to start with the senior people in the organisation, particularly the general managers and the supervisors. We are also thinking about building this into the initial in-service training programs that occur and at every facet of the organisation. This will be a significant organisational change and internally will require some retooling.

Mr WATTS: Thank you. What is the total cost associated with enacting the Human Rights Act through Queensland Corrective Services?

Commissioner Martin: Thank you for the question, but I am sorry that I am not able to give you a definitive view about the full implications of the Human Rights Act. We are still working on understanding the full implications of the act ourselves. There will be some significant work to do in the coming weeks and months as we get clarity around the full implications of the impact of that significant piece of legislation.

Mr WATTS: Thank you. Minister, will sleeping on the floor next to a toilet in a cell designed for one person contravene sections of Labor's own Human Rights Act?

Mr RYAN: There is a consequential amendment which relates to that very scenario. The consequential amendment refers to two things. The first is that there is a carve-out around segregation between sentenced and unsentenced prisoners and there is also a carve-out around not being able to accommodate a prisoner in their own room. That is in the bill. You can read it. You were in the debate. You should know that.

Mr WATTS: Thanks, Minister. Commissioner, according to page 5 of the SDS, the QCS set a target of only two serious assaults for 2018-19 but there were in fact nine. The 2019-20 target remains at two. Is the target achievable?

Commissioner Martin: I am not sure whether that is—

Mr RYAN: You are referring to a rate, and it is also hypothetical.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba North, you are asking for an opinion but there is a hypothetical thrown in there also somewhere. Could you rephrase the question, please?

Mr WATTS: I will just move on. Commissioner, last December, prison guards walked off the job after a prison guard was seriously assaulted at Woodford Correctional Centre. The SDS reveals that prisoner-on-staff serious assaults were 3.5 times higher than predicted. Do you consider that good practice?

Mr RYAN: Point of order: it is seeking an opinion.

CHAIR: Again, it is seeking an opinion. I ask you to rephrase the question.

Mr WATTS: Commissioner, what level of assaults is acceptable in the Woodford Correctional Centre?

CHAIR: Again, you are seeking an opinion from the commissioner. Could you rephrase the question or move on.

Mr WATTS: I will just move on. Commissioner, overtime charges on rosters at different times can be significant. Can you outline for us what management practices are in place to manage overtime requests in the system?

Commissioner Martin: Thank you for the question. This is an important issue for us. The management of overtime, particularly in an environment where we are dealing with significant operational challenges, is a day-to-day, shift-by-shift proposition at every correctional centre in the state. This is what I can tell you, though. We are taking this incredibly seriously—to the extent that we have stood up a whole range of internal governance mechanisms to be able to monitor overtime performance on a weekly, fortnightly and month-to-month basis.

We understand the drivers of overtime. We understand the increases in sick leave. Importantly, we understand the operational drivers associated with provisioning safety for our workforce, particularly with respect to the safety of prisoners as we escort prisoners out of our correctional centre to a medical facility like an A&E, a hospital or something like that. The issue of overcrowding—the number of prisoners—is facilitating the increases in terms of hospital escorts, so this is a significant driver of the overtime. It is not the only driver but it is a significant driver of the overtime.

I point out that we have stood up, as I mentioned, the governance arrangements. There is the QCS absence management oversight committee that is monitoring and managing unscheduled absences and overtime to ensure appropriate management interventions are in place. Also, we are in the formative stages of a specific operational review, and one element of that operational review that will examine operations of correctional centres from one end of Queensland to the other will be on human resource performance, and particularly overtime.

This is an important issue for us, but I am confident that through the mechanisms that we have in place, assisted by the Crime and Corruption Commission, which has reviewed our oversight arrangements, we have a very good handle on this. Working with our workforce—and also partner agencies such as Queensland Health—we will be able to arrest the issues associated with overtime and ultimately get a better outcome so we can use unspent funds as discretionary funds to put back into operational equipment to make correctional centres even safer.

Ms McMILLAN: Commissioner, I very much enjoy and appreciate hearing your thorough responses, so I thank you. My question is to the minister. I refer to page 2 of the SDS, which references enhancing the safety of Queenslanders through modern, sustainable and evidence based corrective services to maximise rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. Will the minister please provide advice on initiatives and programs in place to achieve the government's objectives?

Mr RYAN: Before I get to your question, I have some really interesting information in relation to a question that the member for Toowoomba North asked, which was about assaults in private prisons compared to public prisons. The good people at QCS have pulled together an analysis for me for the 2018-19 year.

CHAIR: Minister, can you confirm if that is something you took on notice?

Mr RYAN: It was an interesting—yes, I think I did take it on notice, didn't I?

CHAIR: I have lost track.

Mr RYAN: I am happy to provide the information, anyway, because it is really quite interesting. On every measure the private prison assault rate is higher than the public prison assault rate. In the measure around serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, the private rate is about double the public rate. On the assault prisoner-on-prisoner measure, the private rate is about double the public rate. On other assaults prisoner on prisoner, the private rate is more than double the public rate. On serious assaults prisoner on staff, the private rate is over three times the public rate. On assaults prisoner on staff, it is slightly higher and on other assaults prisoner on staff, the private rate compared to the public rate is over three times higher. It is interesting, isn't it?

Mr WATTS: Chair, could I ask that the document be tabled, please?

Mr RYAN: I am happy to table it. This is a document—

CHAIR: Minister, are you seeking to table the document?

Mr RYAN: I do not have copies of it.

CHAIR: Do you seek leave?

Mr RYAN: How about I take it on notice and then I will provide that in a written document to the committee?

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr RYAN: It is really interesting information. It supports the government's view around public operations of prisons.

CHAIR: I am conscious of time, Minister.

Mr RYAN: Of course. I will answer this question and then I will provide some closing remarks, Chair, if you like.

I thank the member for her question. We want the people who spend time in the corrections system to emerge as better people than when they entered it in the first place. That objective is critical to creating a safer community. To achieve that goal, Queensland Corrective Services uses evidence

based strategies to deliver reductions in crime. Queensland Corrective Services is an evidence based, forward-thinking, top-tier, frontline public safety agency at the forefront of modern, sustainable corrective services. Again, this is why, as part of the 2019-20 state budget, we announced plans to build stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct, a state-of-the-art, 1,004-bed, high-security facility with a focus on mental health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. The centre will be the first of its kind in Australia. It is part of efforts to tackle the ice epidemic and the devastating effects it has on the broader community.

In this year's state budget we also committed \$2.86 million to continue providing for prisoners with a disability or mental illness through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is small money, but these sorts of initiatives make a huge difference in people's lives. That huge difference is potentially the difference between them being a recidivist offender and a good citizen, so these little things are worth highlighting. This program is about helping vulnerable prisoners with complex needs manage their disability or mental illness in order for them to get the support they need to lead a productive life, reducing their likelihood of recidivism.

I am also proud of our government's investment of \$2.5 million and ongoing funding—I love that ongoing funding—for the Aurukun Prisoner Reintegration Program. Our dedicated community corrections officers do an outstanding job in this remote part of Queensland helping those released from prison reconnect with their community, their land and their culture.

We have also committed \$1.18 million to the Tackling Alcohol-Fuelled Violence Policy, which will enable our community corrections teams across the state to continue delivering alcohol fuelled violence initiatives such as community service projects. This is not only about crime and punishment. This is about reparation, rehabilitation and holding offenders responsible. Ultimately, it is about creating a safer community.

CHAIR: I think we might have time for one more question.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, in reference to page 4 of the SDS, which refers to the transition of Queensland's two privately run prisons, Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, to public operation will the minister outline the reasons why these two correctional centres are to be run as a public operation?

Mr RYAN: As we have highlighted through this estimates hearing, this year the government announced its decision to transition the two privately run prisons, Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, a women's facility, to public operation by Queensland Corrective Services. This decision is part of a wideranging, transformative reform underway with Queensland Corrective Services under Commissioner Martin's lead.

Other transformational reforms include the corporate restructure; a new prison at Gatton, which we have discussed; the cell expansion at Capricornia Correctional Centre; and the development of the End-to-End Case Management Program, which I mentioned earlier. It is all part of transforming QCS into a top-tier, forward-thinking public safety agency.

This decision to transition the two privately operated facilities to public operations was made in the context of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton final report, which was released in December 2018. The Taskforce Flaxton report highlighted that Queensland's hybrid prison system with both public and private operational responsibility is not an optimal environment to address corruption risk within the correctional system. As I also mentioned and as we have just seen with some of the data, it is the government's view that a publicly operating model with more staff will enhance safety within those correctional environments.

On 5 July this year I announced that we would support or support in principle all 33 recommendations from the Taskforce Flaxton report. The transition will provide the opportunity for the government to ensure consistent implementation of the recommendations from the Sofronoff review and Taskforce Flaxton. This policy decision will enhance community safety through better staffing ratios and program delivery, and strengthen corruption resistance. The transition to Queensland Corrective Services will provide for more direct policy and operational levers to reduce the demand on our correctional centre.

Planning has already commenced for the transition of the centres, which will include extensive consultation with the private operators, staffing groups, industrial representatives and service providers to ensure the delivery of safe and secure prison services during the transition. Public operation of all prisons is in the best interests of Queensland. That is firmly the position of our government. We believe that public services should be run by public providers. I cannot think of a better public provider than Queensland Corrective Services when it comes to this. We have to be very proud of the work they do.

CHAIR: The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure—

Mr RYAN: Chair, can I give a closing—

CHAIR: I will get to it. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of police and corrective services has expired. I think there are a couple of questions still outstanding that have been taken on notice. Minister, I note that you have taken a number of questions on notice during the session. I understand you have answered as many of those as you could up to this point.

Mr RYAN: The only one I have is to give you the assault rate showing the public rate is lower than private.

CHAIR: The committee has resolved that any answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 3 pm on Thursday, 30 July 2019. You can check the exact wording of any outstanding questions in the proof of transcript of this session of the hearing, which will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within approximately two hours. Thank you, Minister and departmental officers, for your attendance. Minister, if there is anyone you wish to thank you may take this opportunity to do so now.

Mr RYAN: I start by thanking you for your very capable chairing of this session. There was a lot of robust discussion, but all of your rulings were correct and you have done a brilliant job. I thank committee members, the shadow minister, Hansard staff and the parliamentary staff. I want to take a couple of moments to acknowledge Commissioner Martin; his deputies; the entire QCS team; the parole board—Michael Byrne, the president, and the deputy presidents who are here.

Queensland Corrective Services is a very young department—I have mentioned that—of less than two years. In my time as minister—and I have been minister for almost three years—I have seen the real transformation of this agency. In part it is due to the magnificent leadership of Commissioner Martin and his leadership team. It is also due to exceptional people doing a really challenging job and a job that they should all be very proud of and a job that does not get the attention it deserves. I want to place on record how proud I am of this agency. They are doing a brilliant job, an exceptional job. Their efforts every single day are contributing to a safer community, and I think that is worth noting.

To the parole board, to Michael, Peter and Julie, I say thank you for attending today. There were no questions for them so they will be shouting the bar later on! Finally I thank my team, including my chief of staff, Ellen McIntyre. We have a good team in my ministerial office. I am very lucky to have all of them supporting me. I give a final shout-out to Donna O'Donoghue from the Premier's office, who has attended the hearing today. She is a great supporter of QCS and the parole board and I would like to acknowledge her support.

CHAIR: The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 6.30 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio of fire and emergency services.

Proceedings suspended from 6.01 pm to 6.31 pm.

ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE—FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

In Attendance

Hon. CD Crawford, Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

Mr P Clarke, Chief of Staff

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Mr M Wassing, Acting Commissioner

Mr M Roche, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Officer Fire and Rescue Service

Mr A Stevenson, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Chief Strategy Officer

Mr S Barber, Assistant Commissioner, Central Region

Office of Inspector-General Emergency Management

Mr A Dawson, Acting Inspector-General, Emergency Management

Mr M Shapland, Executive Director

Public Safety Business Agency

Mr D Smith, Acting Chief Operating Officer

Mr K Marsden, General Manager, Human Resource Management

 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2019 for the portfolio area of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 8.30. As a brief housekeeping matter, persons on the floor of the red chamber may use mobile phones or other electronic devices in silent mode. Mobile phones are not permitted to be used in the gallery above the chamber. I remind those present that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber. The visiting member present is Lachlan Millar MP, member for Gregory.

I remind those present that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland 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 also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief, relate to one issue and not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings this evening so that the relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that 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 commissioner, 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 commissioner. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of fire and emergency services open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

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

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you, Mr Chair, and good evening to committee members and visiting MPs. Before we get underway, I would like to mention a job this afternoon in the town of Tara out near Toowoomba. A house fire with initially unaccounted occupants would have been a very difficult job to deal with, but it is great to see that all occupants have been confirmed safe, due to the great work of our fire and rescue and Rural Fire Service crews out there.

Mr Chair, I appear before you tonight a humble and very proud man. I am humble because the past 12 months have shown me the very worst of nature and the very best of Queenslanders. I am proud because nature threw its worst at us, and the men and women of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services stood shoulder to shoulder with friends and strangers to deal with it. They were exceptional.

We have heard the word 'catastrophic' hundreds of times in relation to the last year's bushfires. Catastrophic is what our men and women ran towards. During the 2018-19 bushfire season our crews attended more than 2,300 fires. At the height of the season, almost 200 fires were burning at the same time. Some 1.4 million hectares of land was burnt and more than 35 of our communities were affected, one of them being Gracemere. I will remember until the day I die sitting in the Queensland Disaster Management Centre next to then commissioner Katarina Carroll and listening to the experts, who were informing us of our next step with Gracemere and the decision 'evacuate and evacuate now'. On that Wednesday afternoon, 28 November, about 9,000 residents left their homes, businesses, possessions and memories. They sought refuge from the flames bearing down on them. QFES was there on the front line among the responders who helped saved homes, businesses, precious possessions and of course memories.

Then we had Townsville. We heard the word 'unprecedented' hundreds of times in relation to last year's Townsville floods. That is where our men and women went to join others who helped with evacuations, mop-ups and recovery. During the period from November last year to April this year, we also dealt with cyclones Owen, Penny, Oma, Trevor and Ann that terrorised our coastline. At the end of these events, our SES alone had received almost 9,000 requests for help. More than half were received during the North Queensland monsoon trough. During that single event, QFES helped with more than 60 rescues and more than 800 relocations. To QFES I say, 'Exceptional doesn't do you justice.'

After the bushfires and the Townsville floods, I tasked the Inspector-General Emergency Management with producing an independent review into each. Last week, the Palaszczuk government released these reports. The bushfire review found the firefighting response to be exceptional, and QFES is now working to ensure the 23 recommendations are actioned. In the wake of the bushfires, QFES is releasing its own review called Operation Synergy. This report has found high levels of mutual respect and trust amongst crews, regional operations centres, personnel and the state operations centre. It found that targeted and intense use of aerial water bombing protected life and property and that the early engagement with the National Resource Sharing Centre meant that we had access to 1,200 international firefighters from outside Queensland.

There are also lessons to be learned, as there should be. Indeed, it would be remiss for an organisation with a core commitment to continuous improvement to not have learnings. They include the need for more clarity around the chain of command, the transfer of control arrangements and the flow of communication. The report into the North Queensland monsoon trough reviewed the planning by the Queensland government and local governments, the dam operations for the Ross River Dam and the recovery process. The government has accepted, either in principle or in full, all 14 recommendations.

Another review that is taking place is the blue water review into Queensland's Volunteer Marine Rescue Operations which I announced here in last year's hearings. An impressive amount of work has been done, and we will make some major announcements in the not-too-distant future. The review was completed by retired Royal Australian Navy Commodore Campbell Darby. One of his main recommendations was that a working group be established. This working group, which has had several very productive meetings this year, is already making recommendations. The most notable of these is that the two marine rescue groups that currently keep Queensland's coastline safe, the Australian Volunteer Coastguard Association and the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association, become a single entity with its own name and brand. QFES is also helping with an increased allocation of \$300,000 to each to cover insurance costs. I now look forward to seeing in the final implementation plan, proposed in November.

Finally, I acknowledge Queensland's new Police Commissioner, Katarina Carroll. Before she was the Police Commissioner, she was QFES's. Before, during and after each of the natural disasters and emergencies I detailed earlier, her leadership was—and here is that word again—exceptional. I have seen her in action across the state, from remote Cape York communities to our east coast regions around Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton. I have watched as she inspired the men and woman who make up her QFES team, many of whom sit behind me. In turn, I have been inspired by her. I also recognise Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing, who has assumed the mantle while the selection process for our next commissioner is underway. Finally, I thank the 48,000 staff and volunteers who make up this amazing department. Without them, Queensland would be a very different place to call home.

Given that we have a number of acting staff and a number of staff who have changed positions since particularly the 2018 fires, we might need to ensure that we get further about portfolio roles in terms of whether members want to speak to the person who is currently in that role or the person who was in that role back then.

Mr MILLAR: I thank the chair, deputy chair and committee for allowing me to partake in Estimates. With your indulgence, I put on record my sincere thanks and admiration for everybody in this room, especially the people wearing uniform. I know that over the last 12 months it has been a very difficult time and that they have done an outstanding job in often protecting people and their lives. We owe them a great debt of gratitude as they do a wonderful job.

My first question is to the Acting Inspector-General, Alistair Dawson. With reference to page 16 of the SDS relating to the office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management role in reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of Queensland's disaster management arrangements and recommending improvements, Mr Dawson, in the office review into the 2018 Queensland bushfires it made a series of recommendations and my question relates specifically to recommendation 9 which states—

... the framework of legislation relating to vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction, together with mitigation and preparation priorities should be re-assessed ...

Mr Dawson, why did the Inspector-General on the same day as the report was released feel the need to send a separate letter to Minister Crawford? I will table a copy for the committee.

CHAIR: Slow down. That is two things.

Mr MILLAR: I seek leave to table a copy.

CHAIR: Hang on. Just wait. Do you seek leave to table the letter?

Mr MILLAR: I seek leave to table the letter.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Is there a copy for Mr Dawson?

Mr Dawson: We have a copy here.

Mr MILLAR: They are prepared. Back to the letter, which has been tabled, clarifying recommendation 9, were you contacted by anyone from the government or the minister's office instructing you to do so, to write that letter?

Mr Dawson: First of all, thank you very much—

CHAIR: I do not want to keep interrupting, but I am aware of what the minister outlined earlier. If this is a question that you are unable to answer, please say so.

Mr Dawson: Thank you very much indeed, Chair, and thank you very much indeed for the question. I would like to first of all acknowledge the men and women of the IGEM office who have been in place for five years and for the excellent work that they do and also to acknowledge Iain MacKenzie, the Inspector-General Emergency Management, who is currently on extended leave. It is a very hard question for me to answer because I returned from overseas last Wednesday, so about a week ago. I can say to the committee that no-one has actually contacted me, but I can provide a brief around why the letter of clarification was written if that would satisfy the committee.

CHAIR: Is the information that you would give to the committee from your own personal knowledge?

Mr Dawson: It is information that has been prepared for me as the Acting Inspector-General Emergency Management.

CHAIR: You can answer the question any which way you see fit from the information that you have been provided with. However, if you need to refer to someone else in the room who may know more about it, I ask you to indicate that to the minister and the minister will request it of the committee.

Mr MILLAR: I raise a point of order. What I am looking for here is why the letter was sent. Did someone instruct the inspector-general to write the letter and send it to the minister? This letter came down on the same day as the report was released. That is what I am looking for.

Mr Dawson: Okay. With regard to that, I probably cannot specifically answer that question because I was not here. What I could suggest to you is that the advice I have been given was that, given the enormity of the fire itself and the incredible complexities surrounding the land and its management, the intent was around clarification on how to make application for exemption to undertake different aspects of land management as opposed to being very specific with respect to legislation.

Mr MILLAR: Thank you, Mr Dawson, and I certainly take your point that you were not around when the letter was written. That is basically what you are saying?

Mr Dawson: Yes.

Mr MILLAR: My next question is to the minister. How did this letter come about? Was anybody from your office or from the Labor government in contact with the Inspector-General with regard to this letter? Was there a conversation?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. As you will see, the letter is written by Iain MacKenzie, who is the inspector-general who completed the report. I had no conversation with him about that. I have had conversations after this came out with members of IGEM about what it means, but I had no conversations with Mr MacKenzie.

Mr MILLAR: You can see my difficulty in terms of what I am trying to find out. If Mr MacKenzie was here, we would be able to ask him directly why that letter was written. Is there any briefing note or any information, Mr Dawson, as to why this letter was sent? Is there anything in your department as to why this letter was sent to the minister given that the letter was sent the same day as the report was handed down?

Mr Dawson: Thank you very much indeed for the follow-up question. There is nothing in the briefing notes that I have and there has been no verbal brief to me that that is the case. The case, as I outlined and as is stated in the letter, is that—

... the desired outcome of the recommendation is, given the propensity for large scale events in the future, to enhance the ability for the reduction of risk through consistent and practical means of identifying, implementing and monitoring mitigation activities at a local level.

It is not the intent of the recommendation to initiate legislative review or reform of any particular piece of legislation but to develop improved means of navigating and applying existing legislative frameworks to achieve the above.

My understanding from the briefs that I have had is that it is acceptable to go online to seek an exemption to undertake clearing activities and I also understand that it can be done if you hold multiple parcels and you just need to put in the one application. I will just double-check that. Yes, that is correct.

Mr MILLAR: Thanks, Alistair. Minister, so we are not going around in circles because Mr MacKenzie is not here at the moment, are you able to take on notice why this letter was sent, what was the understanding and how this letter was sent on the same day? Are you able to take that on notice? It is just that we do not have the person—

Mr CRAWFORD: I am confused as to who would actually answer the question.

Mr MILLAR: Iain MacKenzie would be the perfect person to answer the question, but unfortunately he is not here.

Mr CRAWFORD: Yes, we will take that on notice.

Mr MILLAR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: Just to clarify, what you are seeking from Mr MacKenzie is why he sent that letter?

Mr MILLAR: Yes, why he sent that letter and why he sent it on the same day.

Mr CRAWFORD: Yes. We will take that on notice, Mr Chair. Only Mr MacKenzie can actually answer that—

Mr MILLAR: I do not want to go around in circles.

Mr CRAWFORD:—and, as you are probably aware, he is on long service leave.

CHAIR: Minister, if I could interrupt for one second. Sometimes questions are too onerous to be able to be answered. Does this fall into the too onerous basket?

Mr CRAWFORD: The complexity with it, Mr Chair, is that it is difficult. If he does not write a letter or if he does not want to write a letter, he is under no obligation to because he is not currently the IGEM. That then puts me in a difficult position because I cannot fulfil my obligations in providing answers to questions taken on notice.

CHAIR: Yes, and that is why I raised the issue.

Mr CRAWFORD: It does put me in a bit of a bind in that I am quite happy to see if we can get him to respond, but I cannot accept that obligation.

Mr MILLAR: I understand.

Mr CRAWFORD: I cannot force a man who does not currently work for us to do that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I think that clarifies where you stand.

Mr MILLAR: You can only do what you can do.

Mr CRAWFORD: Okay.

Mr MILLAR: My next question is to Alistair Dawson. Is the IGEM in agreement with the government's response to this recommendation, particularly in its claim that there is no need to amend the existing vegetation management laws?

Mr Dawson: Thank you very much for the question. Looking at the briefs that we have, it is a very complex area. As we look at the review itself, there are a number of different pieces of legislation that apply and a number of different methodologies that are available. One of the key ones is that an application can be made online for single or multiple parcels to get an exemption to undertake the clearing. As to whether we agree, I would say to you that when the report was written and tabled it was in the agreeance of the IGEM's office that the preferred option would be that there is greater clarity provided to landowners on how to apply, because that would help them to undertake the applications.

Mr MILLAR: Okay.

Mr Dawson: Sorry, the report and the recommendations were made. Yes, we agree that that is the recommendation and that was a recommendation that was put forward.

Mr MILLAR: Just to clarify, you do not believe that there is any change needed to the vegetation management laws whatsoever?

CHAIR: Excuse me. You are asking Mr Dawson for an opinion. Can you rephrase the question or move on to the next one.

Mr MILLAR: No changes to the vegetation management laws. That is what has been stated in the report and the IGEM agree with that?

Mr Dawson: That is not the intent. It is not the intent to recommend change to the legislation. The recommendation's intent was to provide better communication, or more enhanced communication to allow people to be able to access the exemptions easier.

Mr MILLAR: I will move on to the next question. The report referred to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's good neighbour policy as a favourable success. Would you call the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service a good neighbour to Queensland when it comes to fire management and mitigation?

CHAIR: Again, you are seeking an opinion. Can you rephrase the question or move on to the next one.

Mr MILLAR: Has the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service been a good neighbour under fire management and mitigation?

CHAIR: Again, it is an opinion.

Mr LISTER: That is the job of the inspector-general—to give that opinion.

CHAIR: It is my job to rule on points of order. I am telling the committee that that—

Mr LISTER: But there has not been a point of order.

CHAIR: As the chair, my role is to run the hearing. The question was seeking an opinion. I rule it out of order. I have given the member an opportunity to rephrase it. He does not want to rephrase it. Move on to your next question.

Mr MILLAR: In the bushfire report the inspector-general referred to a submission made by landholders and discussed the issue of the management of state controlled and public land and the lack of fire mitigation practices. Instead of singling out government agencies, the inspector-general put the onus back on landholders to work better with the government to resolve the issue. Why was there no clear direction for government to get serious about better management and conducting fire mitigation on its own land?

Mr Dawson: What I might do, through the minister, is ask for Mike Shapland to assist in the answer to this question, given that Mike has a bit more experience with the writing of the report. I would say that the good neighbour policy is around providing the highest priority to protecting life and property within the fire management activities whilst considering the protection of biodiversity, cultural and natural values.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service identifies that the primary focus in mitigation is on people, property and the environment. The landowners are, as you quite rightly point out, not only government but also private enterprise. When I invite Mike to come up, I will ask Mike to provide you with some statistical data that might help to put clarification around the question that you are asking.

Mr Shapland: You asked about the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and good neighbours. We heard in submissions that there was wide respect for the staff of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in their work to manage their land. In terms of the amount of land they control, we understand that the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service manages about 14 per cent of the bushfire-prone areas in Queensland and about eight per cent of the state's land. One of the ways they have achieved the respect of the communities that we talked to is because they have a good neighbour policy.

This is a forward-looking review. We are trying to look at ways to improve disaster management arrangements for the state going forward. That good neighbour policy was something that we thought should be better and widely adopted by a range of people who are responsible for managing land in this way.

Mr MILLAR: What are the performance measures for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's good neighbour policy? What are the performance measures that they need to meet?

Mr Shapland: That would be a question for the department rather than anything that we looked at specifically in the review.

CHAIR: I now go to government members for the next question.

Ms McMILLAN: On page 3 of the SDS there is a focus on developing a connected and capable Queensland in the face of emergencies and disasters. Queensland experienced a number of disaster events in the past 12 months. Will the minister please provide the committee with an overview of the QFES response to these disasters?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. The safety of Queenslanders remains the Palaszczuk government's No. 1 priority. The primary aim of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, QFES, is always the protection of life and property. We do not do this alone. We work collaboratively with partners and communities to deliver a world-class emergency response capability.

I tasked the Inspector-General Emergency Management to undertake reviews following both the bushfires and the North Queensland floods. Those reviews were recently tabled, as we have been hearing about tonight. The government has accepted, either in principle or in full, all 37 recommendations that those two reviews made. I am confident that, with the actions QFES will take following these recommendations and the work that they have already begun undertaking, QFES will be stronger than ever into the future.

In the 2018-19 bushfire season, Operation Synergy officially commenced on 1 August 2018. It ran through to 10 January 2019, with significant fires in many areas across Queensland. As you heard before, I mentioned 2,300 fires. Bushfires devastated 35 communities across eight Queensland local government areas. They burnt more than 1.4 million hectares of land. Despite those catastrophic fire weather conditions, only 17 dwellings were identified as damaged, with nine of those destroyed, along with damage to many sheds, vehicles and fences. Tragically, one life was lost—Mr George Bird in the Rolleston area.

During the event, more than 3½ thousand Queensland firefighters, emergency management specialists, Parks and Wildlife Service officers and support personnel were joined by 1,200 officers from across Australia. An unprecedented number of emergency alerts was used—54 in total for the state—with a further 1,984 bushfire community warnings issued. Air support was provided throughout the season by 72 aircraft. At the peak of the fire activity, 49 aircraft were airborne at the same time.

QFES made substantial use of its extensive predictive fire-modelling capability to inform the planning and management of these fires. More than 700 products were developed and disseminated to crews on the ground to support firefighting efforts. That included 98 fire spread prediction maps and 484 snap reports, which provide a summary of fire behaviour and fire weather estimates, to those users where we needed it most.

QFES initiated a comprehensive debriefing program to capture the considerable learnings from the bushfire management and operational response from the 2018 season. Over 5,000 observations were collected through a debrief process which were analysed with 15 operational themes identified. Of these 15 themes, QFES has identified four areas where strategic improvement projects are required: command and control, the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System, or AIMS, safety

and community engagement. Three of these areas are being addressed as continuous improvement directions during 2019 and the fourth project around community engagement commenced project scoping in late June 2019 with anticipated delivery time lines in early 2020. This program has provided QFES with many valuable insights across multiple layers. QFES will continue to work through the learnings and the opportunities to improve and inform our 2019 bushfire season.

In relation to the storm and cyclone season, the State Emergency Service completed almost 9,000 requests for assistance. Operation Convergence was declared to cover the 2018-19 severe weather season from 1 November through to 30 April and facilitate preparation and planning for rapid mobilisation and a coordinated response to the event. QFES worked in partnership with local governments and communities to improve resilience and enhance operational capabilities during these times of emergencies.

During the operational period, Queensland experienced six significant weather events. There was the South-West Queensland trough, Tropical Cyclone Owen, Tropical Cyclone Penny, the North and Far North Queensland monsoon trough, severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor and the Wide Bay and Burnett severe storms that occurred in October. The Queensland Disaster Management Committee, the QDMC, met on several occasions as well as the State Disaster Coordination Group. The monsoon trough brought unprecedented rainfall which significantly impacted Townsville and many areas around Northern and Western Queensland including McKinlay, Cloncurry, Richmond, Julia Creek and Winton. On 24 January 2019 rain began to fall on parts of North Queensland. The system moved slowly, with the most significant falls focused around the Townsville area.

Mrs McMAHON: A key priority for the department listed on page 3 of the SDS is a continued focus on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities. Can the minister please provide details about how the review into marine rescue is being implemented?

Mr CRAWFORD: As you would remember, this time last year we announced here at estimates that we were reviewing marine rescue. I know there has been a lot of interest from community members, from members of parliament, from local governments and certainly from a number of volunteers up and down the coast. To put a little bit of background to it, the situation around marine rescue was not one that QFES had direct command, control or oversight over so in order to review an organisation or two organisations that were not under our direct control meant that we had to get some very good advice. That advice said to us that we could conduct a review because it was part of Queensland government funding through QFES that was going into the two existing organisations. We used that opportunity under the Financial Accountability Act 2009 to undertake that review. That review, you would have seen, was done by Cam Darby and was delivered earlier this year. One of the recommendations from Mr Darby was to establish a working group of all the affected groups, mainly coast guard and Volunteer Marine Rescue, but also the other agencies as well that have direct impact or some even have oversight such as Water Police and other agencies as well like Maritime Safety Queensland.

A working group has been working since early 2019 that comprises representatives from both blue water rescue groups, from the Queensland Water Police, Maritime Safety, Queensland Recreational Boating Council, Surf Life Saving and Queensland Ambulance Service as well because Volunteer Marine Rescue does a lot of work with QAS. The working group has formed a vision for the future of the volunteer marine rescue sector along with other recommendations which are currently being considered by QFES.

There are currently two big ones. I mentioned one of them in my opening remarks about how they made it very clear that they will be recommending that there is one marine rescue organisation for Queensland. The next thing that they are currently looking at is what the governance around that organisation may look like. To be fairly brief, essentially it is do you want to be an organisation that sits inside the Queensland government, such as the Rural Fire Service, or do you want to be an organisation that still sits external to QFES, as they currently do or as Surf Life Saving Queensland does. That has formed a lot of the conversations that the working group has had around the state. There have been many, many meetings with their volunteers, with their various squadron leaders and commanders up and down the coast. I have been keeping track of those meetings and they have been extremely well attended. There has been very good robust conversation.

The next thing that we expect to see from the working group in November will be an implementation plan. That is the next big deadline certainly for us. It is about them coming to government and saying this is what we want our organisation to look like, how it is funded and how we can take it into the future. That obviously then will have to be considered by QFES, by government as a whole and we will then communicate back to them. Congratulations to everybody who has been involved in that. It has been a really, really successful project. I know there was quite a bit of uncertainty and politics that existed at the coalface a year or so ago.

Mr MILLAR: My question is with reference to page 8 of the SDS relating to the implementation of the emergency management levy. From 1 July 2019 Queensland craft brewers and distillers received a surprise tenfold increase to fire emergency management levy fees from \$527 up to \$5,224. Acting Commissioner, has a crisis meeting been convened between your department and the craft beer industry to discuss this levy increase?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: Thank you for the question. I will refer the detail of the question to my Acting Deputy Commissioner, Adam Stevenson, who looks after that area, but I will say that we moved very quickly to address what we saw would be a likely burden in terms of craft breweries and distilleries in terms of facing what would have been ordinarily the current arrangements in terms of that cost and the contributions which could have amounted to well over \$90,000 per annum in terms of that levy. Recognising that there had been a number of large breweries and distilleries for which the existing levy categories still are currently very appropriate. Obviously in more recent years what we have seen is the emergence of the craft brewery arrangements.

As we normally do, from time to time we make an assessment of the emergency management arrangements and the levy and how they are being applied and in this case found that discrepancy and did not want obviously that significant burden to go up to well over \$90,000 hence the proposed regulatory change, but I might ask the deputy to fill in a little bit more detail there.

Mr MILLAR: I will remind you that the question is: are you having a crisis meeting with the industry?

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: I can confirm that we have committed to engaging with the industry through the department of state development and manufacturing. A meeting date is yet to be decided. It is not a crisis meeting because the levy has not actually been increased, there has been a miscalculation, and we are discussing that the levy change is actually a decrease in the rateable amount.

Mr MILLAR: Acting Commissioner, how much money has been allocated to provide relief on a case-by-case basis to affected breweries?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: For relief?

Mr MILLAR: Yes.

Acting Commissioner Wassing: Because of the way the levy is, in terms of how it is legislated, there is no ability for us to create a waiver or something similar to that. In effect, there is no relief fund that we would have or have proposed, associated with this.

Mr MILLAR: Commissioner, how come the director-general of State Development told estimates that QFES was managing these on a case-by-case basis?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: What we have indicated to anyone who has those concerns is to either initially come to the council or come to our emergency management levy group, so that we can engage with them—because with each individual case there are different cases associated with their circumstances—to make sure that it has been administered appropriately and that they have been charged in the appropriate context. That is the terms of the engagement.

Mr MILLAR: I want to get a further understanding of the emergency management levy. I know the member for Southern Downs has plenty of those breweries in his electorate, as I am sure many members have, except for me in Gregory. In the past 12 months, how many fires have there been in breweries? How much has that cost the department to manage? I want to get an understanding of why we need this.

Acting Commissioner Wassing: I will ask the acting deputy commissioner to address that.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: Again, I do not have the number of fires to hand, but I can say that the levy is constructed across a number of groups. There are 16 groups. There are some 448,000 businesses in Queensland and within those 16 groups there are over 140 business types to which we apply the levy. You can imagine that we have to squeeze the levy rates across those 16 groups.

Some of the comments around the levy rate that has been charged are on the miscalculated rate, the \$527 rate. That is at the lowest end, but there have been businesses that have been charged some \$3,000 because councils have interpreted what group they are in, and the craft breweries industry has not been adequately applied across those 16 groups. We did the homework to give an undertaking to put it into levy group 7, which is equivalent to a tavern. A tavern is a licensed premises without

accommodation. There are a lot of similarities in terms of the threat to risk and the size of the business, so that is the group. Rather than relate the individual number of fires back to the rate charged, the levy is grouped across industry groupings, across 16 groups.

Mr MILLAR: Can you clarify how much the department expects to raise in the financial year from the increases in the levy fees on breweries and distilleries? What is the calculation of the cost? How much will you raise?

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: I can confirm that State Development's Craft Brewing Strategy notes that there are 90 craft breweries across Queensland. If they were all rateable at the rate at which they were going to be rated at had we not caught this before the end of the financial year, each and every one of those could have been charged over \$91,000. Under the new group 7, they will be charged \$5,224 if they are in an A-class levy. Some of them may be in a less metropolitan area and, therefore, will be charged a lesser amount. If they are in E class, they would be charged in the \$1,597 group. Without the geographical spread of where those 90 to 100 craft breweries are, at this point in time we could not do the calculation as to what they might be charged. Again, we would work with the councils to make sure there is a clear understanding of where the rateable group now sits within group 7 and we would seek to make sure that they are being charged accordingly.

Mr MILLAR: Is it true that there are people who have been paying \$500 and are now being charged \$5,000?

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: They will be charged \$5,000 against the new regulation—that is correct—but there are some that have been charged \$3,129 and, in fact, there is confirmation of at least one brewery that has been rated at the \$89,000 mark. Again, I go back to the point that it is not an 890 per cent increase or a 900 per cent increase. In actual fact, by capturing the entire industry we are looking at having a 94 per cent decrease in what they could have been charged. We are applying the rate that they should have been charged. We have caught this inequity within the levy groups and sought to address it.

Mr MILLAR: Minister, will you explain whether your office or QFES consulted or engaged with industry about this levy and what their response was? Was the increase considered or approved by cabinet?

CHAIR: Member for Gregory, you are asking double-barrelled questions. Can you ask one question at a time?

Mr MILLAR: I can do that for you, Chair.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am happy to answer the question, Mr Chair. The first point is that it is a regulation change. There is a process around that. That goes through various other departments, through a normal regulation change format. We would not consult with the industry about a regulation change. That is not normally the process. In relation to your reference to cabinet, obviously I cannot talk about matters that go before or are talked about at cabinet.

I want to reiterate that this is not a QFES levy increase. I want to be very clear about this. When the EML was introduced in 1985—and it has been through successive governments, yours and ours, all the way along the line—there was no craft brewery in existence. It is a new industry. We all need to be on the same page with that. The only breweries and distilleries out there were Bundaberg Rum, XXXX, CUB and a few others. The rate for a distillery and a brewery was what we call group 12. That is what CUB at Yatala will pay, what Bundy Rum will pay and what XXXX will pay.

Had the councils been applying the legislation as they should have been, all the way back to 1985, they should have billed every single craft brewery nearly \$90,000 every single year and there is no get-out clause, there is no waiver, there is no leniency. This was picked up, and I am glad it was picked up. The timing in which it was picked up has been really good, because QFES has been working with councils to make sure that people are being charged what they should pay for what they use their land for. Had it not been picked up, there would be a lot of craft brewers sitting at home with a \$90,000 bill and wondering how to pay it.

The acting deputy commissioner is correct that there is one craft brewery that we know of—at least one, so far—that has been paying \$90,000 a year. They have been paying it. We put them on group 7. Group 7 is the position within the one to 16 levels that you pay an EML for. Group 7 has been the position that most adequately reflects what their business is. I will tell you why. If we put them lower than group 7, they have a financial advantage over pubs, clubs and hotels. A tavern and many of the breweries essentially are doing the same thing. Often they have shopfronts, warehouses and things

like that. If we lower the EML for the microbreweries, we have to lower it for every pub and every club in Queensland. Then the restaurants will come to us and say, 'What about us?' It will be a cascading effect all the way to the bottom.

What we are talking about is what we believe is a reasonable amount for them to pay based on their risk. It is not about how many fires QFES goes to in breweries. If you did EMLs based on how many fires you went to, you would probably never charge an oil refinery a cent in EML, yet basically they pay the highest level there is because of their risk. It is all about risk. Group 7 has been deemed by the department to be the appropriate rate.

Mr MILLAR: Acting Commissioner, can you confirm whether or not there was any modelling completed by your department on increasing the EML on breweries and distilleries? Was any financial modelling done on the impact it will have on the industry and the impact it will have on the microbreweries?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: I defer to the acting deputy commissioner.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: As a term, there was not in terms of individual modelling against individual businesses. We work with councils. We do not know on a day-to-day basis what councils are charging individual businesses. We had to make the assumption that some of the businesses were being charged the very high levy that an industrial brewery would be charged. We suspected there would be definitely—and in consultation with some councils in very recent times—a spread of industries that are paying across those particular groups. However, there has been no modelling as such.

Mr MILLAR: There was no modelling done by QFES and this week we have had no modelling done by the government?

CHAIR: I think the question has been answered.

Mr MILLAR: Acting Commissioner, can you please provide me with a list of the local councils that approached QFES recommending that the levy on breweries and distilleries be increased? Is there a list of councils that approached QFES in that regard?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: No, there is not a list of any councils that have come to request an increase in their levy. The process of any levy change is quite well structured. In the case of the brewery arrangement there is a certain context to that. In the case of other levy changes the rate of those is a set rate. For 2019-20 the emergency management levy annual increase is 2.25 per cent. That is in line with Treasury's prescribed rate of indexation.

Mr MILLAR: With reference to page 3 of the SDS and the departmental overview it refers to QFES's provision of effective prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities. In the Queensland Audit Office report titled *Follow-up of bushfire prevention and preparedness—Report No. 5: 2018-19* which assessed your department's response to implementing the recommendations of the 2014 report, it states that more work is needed to ensure Queensland communities are not exposed to higher levels of risk. Can you explain why in the latest 2019 report none of the recommendations from the original 2014 report have been fully implemented despite the government agreeing to them in 2015? Where in the budget is the money to complete these?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: It is important to understand the context of the question and the follow-up audit of 2018 with respect to the 2014 audit. As you have indicated, the audit that was done in 2014 had a setting in the context of bushfire prevention and preparedness at that time, and in particular reference to the 2009 Victorian Black Saturday fires. As you would appreciate, the changes in terms of technology and research and advancement in prevention and preparedness programs for bushfires have continued to change very rapidly.

In some cases the initial recommendations in 2014 were no longer relevant and in fact we have quite deliberately taken an alternative approach. In other cases we have actually exceeded some of the recommendations in terms of where to from now. As recently as June I wrote to the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee indicating our progress since the 2018 review. We provided a comprehensive report with respect to that report.

As I have indicated, there are a number of the recommendations in the 2014 report that are no longer relevant in terms of contemporary bushfire arrangements. What is important to mention in the context of answering your question about where to from here is that some of those recommendations are ongoing pieces of work and you never really reach the end of them. In terms of some of the other bodies we will now make sure that they are wrapped up. Those include what the inspector general for

emergency management highlighted in terms of the bushfires of last year and also our internal operation synergy lessons learned. We want to be the best we can be in working with Queensland communities across our services and across our partners, particularly in terms of prevention and preparedness.

CHAIR: We are going to government questions now. I refer to page 4 of the SDS which refers to working in collaboration with local governments to operate an effective State Emergency Service. Could the minister please update the committee on plans for the State Emergency Service?

Mr CRAWFORD: As members of the committee may be aware, on 31 October 2018 at the Local Government Association of Queensland annual conference they passed what was called resolution 56 which stated—

The LGAQ lobby the Queensland government to wholly fund the State Emergency Service from existing funds received from the Emergency Management levy, with appropriate budget allocation and governance arrangements.

To put some background around that, currently, in a broad sense, the State Emergency Service is around a \$32 million a year organisation inside QFES. On rough numbers, it is half funded by local government and half funded from the department, although that does vary a bit.

Essentially what local government was saying at the LGAQ conference is that they want out of that arrangement and that they no longer contribute money at a local level. It is a very complex issue. Any of you who have State Emergency Services in your electorates would know that often they are in different places. Some are on council land. Some are in council sheds. Some are in old railway stations. They are all over the place. Some are in government buildings and some are not.

The department will now work with the LGAQ and local government on this. The first thing occurred in March this year. The then QFES commissioner, Acting Commissioner Wassing in his former role as deputy commissioner and I met with Mayor Jamieson, the president of the LGAQ, on the Sunshine Coast. We had a positive discussion where it was agreed that we would continue to explore how we might be able to achieve what it is that local government was wanting to do.

We are talking about a large organisation—somewhere up around 5,000 or 6,000 volunteers through every corner of Queensland from large groups here in the Brisbane City Council area to those in the most remote areas in Queensland. No two of them are the same. Since then there has been a further meeting in June with the then Acting Deputy Commissioner Kevin Walsh. He attended the LGAQ policy executive meeting and they had further discussions around the agreed planned approach. We are going to continue those conversations with local government as to the best way to progress this.

In the conversations with Mayor Jamieson it was basically agreed that this is not going to be something we can do overnight. This is probably a three- to five-year process mainly in terms of working out who actually owns what, where all the SES groups are, who paid for this, who owns this and things like that. As I said, no two of them are the same.

Our commitment to the State Emergency Service is very strong. We will be maintaining the State Emergency Service. Any rumours that there are going to be any changes there are certainly incorrect. This is a discussion we have to have with local governments—all 77 of them across the state one on one—around how we move forward in terms of the financial accountability process rather than the management side of things.

Ms McMILLAN: I refer to page 5 of the SDS which references the continued implementation of an accelerated Rural Fire Service fleet program. Can you please outline the investment being made in appliances for the Rural Fire Service and the benefit this will provide for the upcoming bushfire season?

Mr CRAWFORD: Obviously the Palaszczuk government and QFES remain committed to having a safe and effective appliance fleet out there to service the people of Queensland, whether that is through the Rural Fire Service, the SES or the fire and rescue fleet. As a commitment to frontline service delivery the government has provided \$30.09 million of capital injection to QFES to accelerate the replacement of 184 Rural Fire Service vehicles. This represented almost \$15 million in 2017-18 and \$15.3 million in 2018-19.

I am advised by QFES that since 2014-15 QFES has worked to replace and sustain the RFS fleet. Over this time it has contributed increased funding to its fleet and taken increased ownership of replacement. Purpose built firefighting appliances contribute to the mitigation of bushfire risk and will play a significant role in this year's upcoming fire season.

Historically, appliances were replaced on a like-for-like basis. However, appliances are now allocated according to identified community need and risk. Last year, in 2018-19, 119 Rural Fire Service appliances were built. Many of those ended up on operational duty as they were coming off the

production line before they even managed to get to their first brigade. Also we have either allocated new appliances to a number of brigades that did not have them before or complemented their fleet. In 2019-20, \$4.3 million has been budgeted for the Rural Fire Service fleet which will comprise 25 Rural Fire Service replacement appliances.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr LISTER: I will hand over to the member for Gregory.

Mr MILLAR: My question is to the acting commissioner in reference to page 5 of the SDS in relation to the 2019-20 service area highlights, specifically the parliament's role in providing input into and directing QFES activities surrounding combustible cladding and achieving safer buildings. The response to pre-estimates question on notice No. 17 refers to the number of combustible buildings in Queensland. Can you clarify the extra costs associated to QFES in upgrading their response to the 81 noncompliant buildings?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: I will start by indicating some of the activities that QFES has undertaken. Importantly, QFES is a member of the Non-Conforming Building Products Audit Taskforce. Our key fundamental role associated with that includes completing the operational risk assessments on unidentified buildings, implementing any interim operational response arrangements to any buildings that are identified as either medium or high risk, managing community inquiries and the delivery of referral advice for the approval process of the buildings undertaking rectification work. We have established a cladding support team of eight personnel with respect to that.

Mr CRAWFORD: Just to clarify, are you after the costs of the extra response to the 81 buildings?

Mr MILLAR: Yes, the costs.

CHAIR: Minister, do you wish to add something?

Mr CRAWFORD: I was clarifying the question so we can work out who is best to answer it. We might bring up Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche, if you are happy.

Mr MILLAR: Yes, always happy.

Deputy Commissioner Roche: It is good to get some of the background that the acting commissioner has provided in relation to the devastation of the fires at Grenfell in London, where there were 72 deaths, 20 injuries and 233 people escaped such a devastating fire. Part of our role at Queensland Fire and Emergency Services in relation to a response to the combustible cladding is that we do the operational risk assessments that the acting commissioner talked about. We also implement some maybe interim operational responses to those buildings. We have identified that there are some 81 buildings where there are additional operational responses. There is no additional cost to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. It is just a change of a response profile. That response profile is changed until either the cladding is removed or that risk is removed.

Mr MILLAR: Deputy Commissioner Roche, how many of these 81 buildings are residential and how many are commercial?

Deputy Commissioner Roche: At this stage I do not have the details of the numbers of commercial versus residential. As at 30 June 2019, there were 20,835 locations that were registered on the Safer Buildings website. The Safer Buildings website is where building owners, industry professionals or even fire engineers can go and register their buildings. We have had 20,835 registered through 5,791 users. I do not have the breakdown of numbers of residential versus commercial.

Mr MILLAR: You do not have it here or you do not have it at all?

Deputy Commissioner Roche: I do not have it with me.

CHAIR: Is that a question that is too hard to answer?

Deputy Commissioner Roche: I do not have those details with me. I am not sure if we have those details. If we do have them, I can provide it back through the acting commissioner.

CHAIR: Minister, can you take that on notice, please?

Mr CRAWFORD: We can take that on notice. Just to clarify, is it the breakdown between residential and commercial?

Mr MILLAR: Yes.

Mr CRAWFORD: We can take that on notice.

Mr MILLAR: You may have to take these other questions on notice as well. I will test them first. How many of these buildings are residential high-rise and how many people live in these residential buildings?

CHAIR: Again, is that a question that is too hard to answer or is it a question that you could—

Deputy Commissioner Roche: I will need to take it on notice.

Mr CRAWFORD: I can clarify. In fact, detailed questions about those buildings would need to go before the estimates committee for Housing and Public Works because QFES does not hold the kind of information about how many people are in a building or anything like that.

CHAIR: It is the wrong portfolio.

Mr CRAWFORD: In relation to the question about the costs of response to those extra 81 buildings, it is actually impossible to tell. What we are saying about heightened response is that maybe instead of sending two pumpers to an alarm at a building in Brisbane we might send three pumpers and an aerial appliance. Obviously there will be costs of diesel, there will be costs of a shift overrun if they are near the end of their shift and a few other things. It is actually very difficult to try to put a dollar figure on that.

Mr MILLAR: I have another question that is closer to home. You might be able to direct me in the right way, Minister. In relation to the compliant building approval for the Cairns Performing Arts Centre, what are the outstanding safety measures that still need to be completed by December 2019?

Mr CRAWFORD: I will refer that to DC Roche.

Deputy Commissioner Roche: The Cairns Performing Arts Centre opened on 15 December 2018. They have since lodged a change application to amend the original building approval. There are a couple of components. One is on smoke detection and the other is on vertical firebreaks. They are the two components that have been agreed to be completed by the end of this year.

Mr MILLAR: My next question is to the acting commissioner. In reference to page 4 of the SDS in relation to the management of QFES staffing, Acting Commissioner, can every QFES employee and volunteer currently access Nexus through their individual logins?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: The short answer is that the Nexus system is available to all volunteers and staff within the department. Having said that, though, not everyone has chosen to log in and establish a password and access for that. Everyone has the ability to access the Nexus system, but not all of our volunteers have chosen to take up that offer.

Mr MILLAR: Can you explain to me exactly what the continuous improvement approach to Nexus means?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: In terms of continuous improvement, fundamentally that means that we will continue to work with the provider in terms of any fixes to any issues that we identify, recognising that we will continue to roll out additional modules. Also, any user feedback, whether that be from our staff or from our volunteers in terms of their interface with the system, will continue to be incorporated into our lessons approach to any improvements associated with Nexus.

Mr MILLAR: Have there been any technical issues with Nexus that have impacted on the department's ability to properly fulfil its HR responsibilities?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: Yes, there have. Since going live we have experienced some problems with the learning management module. We continue to work very closely with the vendor, the human resource information systems program and the Department of Housing and Public Works to resolve those problems.

Mr MILLAR: How long have training certificates not been able to be printed from Nexus?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: The specific time I could not tell you, other than to say that we continue to work on that problem. We do not have a fix for that problem at this stage.

Mr MILLAR: Has this inability to print training certificates created issues with QFES in its role as a certified RTO?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: We continue to work with respect to the registered training organisation in terms of that. The issuing of certificates can be done in a range of different fashions, but at this stage there have been no specific issues associated with our registered training organisation status in relation to that matter.

Mr MILLAR: My next question is to the minister. In answer to pre-estimates question on notice No. 15 you admitted that Nexus is still being rolled out. Given that it was originally rolled out in July and August 2018, how long does it take to roll out Nexus and when will the issues finally be resolved?

Mr CRAWFORD: I think you have had the answer to the question already from the acting commissioner, but I will say this: it is a very large organisation across such a vast distance, and sometimes even just access to internet can be a challenge for some of our people, let alone being able to use computer systems. In relation to the rollout, I think that until you get to every final person, who knows? It is an impossible question to answer. I think the acting commissioner has answered the question.

Mr LISTER: My question is to the acting commissioner. I refer to page 3 of the SDS relating to the department's role in providing services and supporting the state's rural fire services and brigades. Has your department been made aware of issues with the latest version of maps, including incorrect property names, and in particular issues with PIC numbers not lining up with the maps?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: I am aware of a couple of circumstances that have been brought to our attention by a couple of local brigades where the property names on the maps that they use have not been consistent with local knowledge. It is important to put that into context in terms of our arrangements, because whilst those concerns have been raised and certainly acknowledged—and we have been working with the brigades in terms of any fixes for that—ultimately it is the requirement of the landowners themselves to advise the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy in terms of the updating of that data.

What is important from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' perspective, though, is that our operational call-taking and dispatch mechanisms with the brigades rely on address and GPS locations. I certainly understand that the local rural fire brigades often use property names in terms of that local knowledge, and they are well versed in that and often ahead of any data systems or mapping systems. But certainly with respect to the South End Rural Fire Brigade, which is one brigade of note that brought that to our attention, we have been working with that brigade locally to make sure there is a fix for them and any other brigades that identify similar issues.

Mr LISTER: Can I just check to see that I understand you correctly. It is up to the property owners themselves to identify that there is a mismatch and to initiate the process of having it updated; is that correct?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: It is not so much about the correction but in terms of the data layers, because the data layers are managed centrally. Our advice that it is the property owner's responsibility to notify the department of natural resources and environment of any changes to the property details, and that then allows the updates to the mapping layers. The important component for our department is to make sure that where brigades, in this case, have identified that correction or error, that we can work with the brigade so there is no impact on their dispatch and call-taking arrangements. As I have indicated, because of our arrangements it is highly unlikely that that would occur because there is other information in terms of street addresses and other details in terms of locations that allows them to get to the right location.

Mr LISTER: Minister, will you commit to conducting an audit of the latest maps provided to the rural fire brigades and provide a date when all of these will be fixed?

Mr CRAWFORD: I have to be careful what I am committing to, member for Southern Downs. What I will commit to is to work with DNRME, because we have to see how much of this sits in respective departments. What I can do is commit to continue to work with that department and that minister to see if we can get it sorted.

CHAIR: I understand the member for Mirani has some questions.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you to the commissioner and all the staff of the emergency services, the rural fire brigade and the volunteers that helped with the conflagration of destruction that raged through my seat of Mirani.

Minister, my first question is to do with the EML and the 1,300 people in the Rockhampton Regional Council area, some of whom are under extreme duress as far as the economic side of things are concerned. There are some small blocks of housing, developments or actual parcels of land that are being charged at higher rates. Pensioners and people in the area cannot afford it. Would you consider rescinding some of that or at least going back to the original state of how we charged the EML in those areas?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am going to ask Acting DC Stevenson to go into greater detail. You are basically referring to the Mount Morgan-Rockhampton area. I will be very, very clear. In relation to the last part of your question about rescinding, winding back, or whatever your words were, the legislation prohibits us from doing that. There is no way while staying within the law of changing any of that. I will ask Acting DC Stevenson to explain the background a bit more for you.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: The EML is the primary means, as you know, for funding Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to deliver emergency services to the community. QFES undertakes reviews from time to time of the application of the EML on a regular basis so they accurately reflect the services available to the local community. In relation to the region you are talking about, each local government must assess the properties in its area to apply the levy correctly and to each separately titled lot. The EML is applied to the relevant local government. In this case, the Rockhampton Regional Council, properties in Mount Morgan are located in the Mount Morgan C class levy district boundary.

An email audit was recently conducted by QFES in the Rockhampton levy files which required the council to renew the classification of each property. The council adjusted any records that were not in accordance with the QFES Act and the emergency services regulation. The act does not provide any ability to amend, as the minister has noted, waive or make any changes to either the statutory levy class or the statutory levy category. It is a binding formula created by law and local authorities, and QFES are bound by that law.

Mr ANDREW: Deputy Commissioner, will there be leniency given to people in Mount Morgan considering the historical background of the mining situation and how some of the actual land is cut up? Is this generated by us, or is it generated by computers and the actual cost is just thrown onto these people without consideration of that?

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: Again, we do not have the ability to waive levies at this point in time. In the case of multiple lots the act does not provide the exemption to the EML where the person owns the multiple lots other than for contiguous lots, whether it is used as bona fide farmland and by the same owner, which attracts a single levy.

Mr ANDREW: Individual cases will not be considered?

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: As I think the minister outlined earlier, the department is open to discussing levy issues with individual ratepayers, but we are bound by legislation that we cannot waive.

Mr ANDREW: During my involvement with the bushfires I found there was a little bit of an issue. Minister, earlier you spoke about GPS coordinates. We found there were a lot of rural road markers—and I think I wrote to you about this—that were missing due to the roads being upgraded or maintained. They were missing. We found that a lot of people were not hitting the target where there was no internet access or phone coverage because those markers were missing. I would just like to see if your department or whatever department relates to this—Minister Bailey—could reinstate that. It is a very important part of the way that you fight fires, particularly when access is urgent.

CHAIR: Do you have a question?

Mr ANDREW: I do. Would the minister please say whether we can reinstate the rural road markers to aid with emergency services and their way of fighting fires?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am happy to have the conversation with the relevant minister, but obviously it is not something that QFES has control or jurisdiction over. I definitely take your point. After working in emergency services for a large proportion of my life, there is nothing more frustrating than not being able to find the right driveway, particularly on country roads. That is certainly what the rural road numbering was introduced for. The reasons for numbering disappearing are probably vast and various, but I am happy to have those conversations with the relevant minister. I am happy for you to even have those conversations with various members of our department locally as well.

Mr ANDREW: The other issue that was brought to my attention was from the Eton Rural Fire Brigade and their trip to Townsville with volunteers and the coordination between departments. There was a little bit of conflict of where to go when they went to—

CHAIR: Member for Mirani, do you have a question?

Mr ANDREW: Can the minister please give an update on what we have learned from the Townsville flood disaster in relation to coordination between departments?

Mr CRAWFORD: You are referring to RFS crews that went to Townsville for the wash-out?

Mr ANDREW: I am.

Mr CRAWFORD: Okay. First can I say that this is a very rare event, if not the first event. All those people who were involved in the planning and execution of that task force and all those people in it did a fantastic job. However, what comes with that will definitely be learnings. Some of those people are probably in the room behind me now, and others are certainly out there in those respective regions.

QFES has to be able to adapt to unforeseen and unexpected emergencies that may appear. If 20 years ago someone had said you would be sending a whole heap of fire trucks into a large city to progressively hose mud out of houses, you would have said, 'No way, mate. That will never happen,' but it is 2018 and 2019 and it did. We have to learn from each of those. The philosophy is the same with how we engage and communicate with outbound and inbound strike teams—those coming into regions, coming into the state, going out of the state. They are all tied together. The best thing really is for those people involved in that command process to learn and build on it. All I can really do is take your comments and note them.

Mr ANDREW: I know that you hail from Victoria originally. Currently in Victoria they use Aboriginal people to assist with the rural fire brigade to do back-burning. Would you consider introducing that into Queensland?

Mr CRAWFORD: I can actually say that it is already here.

Mr ANDREW: Okay. Thank you. I have not seen that up there, that is all.

Mr CRAWFORD: To be very brief, the North Stradbroke Island QYAC arrangement between the traditional owners, QFES and Parks and Wildlife is a very strong arrangement. We are very keen to see it rolled out in other parts of the state where there are traditional owners.

Mr ANDREW: That is what I was after. Thank you.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS which provides that QFES will implement solutions to support interoperability and co-delivery of services across Queensland. Can the minister please advise of any plans to enhance the department's operational capability through world-leading aerial appliances which incorporate the latest innovation and technology?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you. Who doesn't love big trucks? QFES is very proud and very pleased that this financial year we will start to see the arrival of the first of the new aerial fleet coming into Queensland. These have been purpose built overseas in Germany by Rosenbauer, which is a company that makes these very large and high-tech fire appliances for the world. There will be seven combination aerial pumping appliances, or CAPAs, which will replace our existing telescopic aerial pumpers, which we call TAPs. There will be three new aerial ladder platforms, all at a cost of \$18 million. These are the flagships of our fleet.

To give you some simple examples, I can say that the current TAPs, the current telescopic aerial pumpers, have a 17-metre boom reach. The new CAPAs will have a 32-metre boom reach. Just think about how they can reach up into buildings and out into creeks and rivers to help swiftwater teams. I have seen the videos of the incredible work they can do.

In combination with that are our new 42-metre-reach aerial ladder platforms. We are talking about now being able to get up into 13 or so levels. We can do that at the moment with the ones we have, but they are ageing and it is time we upgraded them. We have been having some issues, obviously, around maintenance and keeping them going together, but it will be a very proud moment when these start rolling off the boats when they arrive next year. The intention is certainly to get them out and about through QFES. It is certainly something that I know our staff on those big stations that run these every day are very much looking forward to.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, I refer to page 8 of the SDS which highlights the investment being made in capital works. Can you please outline the outcomes of this investment for the communities in the south-eastern region?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. In 2019-20 there is \$6.4 million provided for Fire and Emergency Services facilities in the south-eastern region. I know this is obviously your backyard and you have quite an interest in what occurs in that part of the world. We are expecting 21 full-time jobs to be created as a result of our capital investment. Some of those key works will be: the complete replacement of the fire and rescue station at Esk; \$250,000 to start replacement of Loganlea; \$2 million to continue the new permanent fire and rescue station at Pimpama, which is a brand-new build of a brand-new facility not far from your electorate; \$1.7 million to complete Rathdowney; \$50,000 to start Rosewood; \$400,000 to upgrade the West Logan station; and \$300,000 to commence the new fire and rescue station at Yarrabilba.

Ms McMILLAN: Minister, I refer to page 8 of the SDS which highlights the investment being made in capital works. Can you please outline the outcomes of this investment for the communities in the Brisbane region?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you. Along with you, I want to commend our crews that dealt with that school fire in your electorate a couple of weeks ago. They did an outstanding job.

In 2019-20, \$6.5 million is provided for QFES facilities in the Brisbane region. That investment will generate 22 full-time-equivalent jobs. The main ones coming out of this will certainly be the replacement of the permanent fire and rescue station at Bracken Ridge, which is the replacement for the Sandgate fire station that is currently there, and \$1.5 million to commence the replacement of the QFES mechanical workshop at Pinkenba. PSBA, on behalf of QFES, provides for the delivery of our plant, property and equipment. Obviously, this enhances community safety by minimising the impact of fire and emergency events. I will briefly talk about the mechanical workshops at Pinkenba, if you like.

We have been having issues over the last few years with maintenance of the Brisbane fleet. Part of those issues have been the cramped nature of the Eagle Farm workshops where mechanics from PSBA have literally been having Tetris problems with fire trucks in terms of being able to manoeuvre some vehicles so they can get others in. We are going with a brand-new mechanical workshop at Pinkenba. It will get underway. We will get it moving and we will move the mechanics in there so they can have a whole lot more room to continue the incredible work they do to keep a very challenging fleet running 24/7.

CHAIR: We will move to opposition questions.

Mr McDONALD: Thanks, Minister, Acting Commissioner and your team of competent actors. My question is about the SES, and I would love to give a shout-out to my Lockyer Valley and Somerset SES groups. Importantly, there are now 19 fewer SES groups right across Queensland compared to 2015, including eight fewer SES groups in the Mackay area. What is the reason for the decline, and what strategy is in place to fix it?

Mr CRAWFORD: Sorry was that question to the—

Mr McDONALD: It was to the Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am happy to refer that to the acting commissioner because I know that in his normal role as deputy commissioner he has quite a bit of oversight of the SES.

Acting Commissioner Wassing: Thanks for the question. What we see in volunteer emergency services generally—and the SES is no different to that—is that their membership will ebb and flow with the community demographic. We work very closely with councils to make sure we are in tune with that. One of the strengths we have in the SES arrangements is the strength of the local council arrangements, and we are in tune with that.

The reasons for those closures are many and varied. There is not one particular reason for that. In some locations there is certainly fundamental, real decline. In other cases it is due to two SES groups amalgamating to become one stronger group. Again, it is partly to do with people and partly to do with them working with us and the like. Our focus is on ensuring that the frontline SES volunteers with the council are supported and have the appropriate equipment and the like.

Whilst we have seen the closures that you have described, we have also seen five newly established groups across the state: one of those in the far north and some in the south-east, Toowoomba and a range of different areas. The core component for us, though, is making sure that where those changes occur the service delivery for the local community does not change. We have arrangements with the nearby groups, and the units themselves have that coordination to ensure that services that the SES provide are maintained, albeit in different ways sometimes.

Mr McDONALD: I refer now specifically to the Mackay region. Given the nature of natural disasters in the area, what strategies are you putting in place to make sure there is capacity in that area to cope with those natural disasters?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: Specific to the Mackay area—and I could ask our assistant commissioner for the central region to localise that if you like. At one end of that spectrum, I will start by referring to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Volunteerism Strategy which was recently released. That points to a range of localised initiatives in terms of how we empower our volunteers and also how we seek different types of volunteering. Within the Mackay area specifically, I might ask Assistant Commissioner Barber to come forward please.

Assistant Commissioner Barber: Following on from the acting commissioner, I am also pleased to say that we have just taken on 51 new recruits for the State Emergency Service specifically in the Mackay area. We are also in the process of working with the Mackay council with regard to a strategic working party to ensure we have the right number of both units and groups in that area to ensure we have the capability and search capacity for any disasters in that particular area. We are also in the process of developing a training strategy to ensure that people have flexibility in achieving the

competencies and have the confidence to undertake their role within the SES in the Mackay area, given that people join our department who work away from their home in the mining industry and other remote locations. This is the first time we have trialled this and it is being done in that particular electorate.

Mr McDONALD: I will come back to the acting commissioner again. I appreciate the approaches that have been taken, and that is some great news. Between 2015-16 to 2018-19 there were a thousand fewer volunteers across the state. What is going on with that and what strategies are in place to see that corrected?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: With respect to the broader volunteer membership, there are a number of different strategies, and I come back to the volunteerism strategy in broad context. Whilst there are some specific aspects that localise some of that work, as Assistant Commissioner Barber has described in terms of the Mackay area, a similar approach has been held right across the state in terms of how we locally engage and how we use different methods of engaging and identifying different types of volunteering, recognising, as you indicated, the demographic changes and the membership changes associated with that.

We also have specific strategies around youth leadership programs. We have increased our funding and also our support for the Emergency Services PCYC Cadets. They have a particularly strong relationship with the SES based on their histories but also their futures. We are seeing that particular cadet program already grow from 15 in the projection to 25 in the targets.

We are also looking at some alternative models at a state level in what we call surge capability. Where we have lots of volunteers in the south-east, particularly in the Brisbane area—in fact, we have a waiting list for SES volunteers to sign up. Rather than having people who want to volunteer for us on a waiting list, we ask: how do we link those into a broader capability so that in times of need in terms of disasters that spill over and become of a significant nature, we can have this ready reserve that can supplement local support crews? That is something that Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is really good at in terms of predeploying and also having that surge capability. They are a couple of initiatives that sit on the back of the volunteerism strategy while working locally through the regions—local SES groups, local SES regional managers, the councils and the like.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am happy to add some commentary to that.

CHAIR: Does the minister wish to make further comment?

Mr CRAWFORD: I do. This is not an issue that QFES deals with alone. Every emergency organisation across the country and probably the world that runs heavily on volunteers knows that everyone today is very time poor. We compete against other organisations, we compete against communities that are declining in numbers, we compete against all the other issues, particularly in terms of people in their twenties who are trying to establish relationships, work et cetera.

What I have anecdotally noticed myself with the State Emergency Service which I find is different to fire and rescue and the Rural Fire Service is that SES seems to have a lot of young people; you will find a lot of young people in SES groups out there. There probably needs to be a bit more work done to see what happens to them. Are they leaving and, if so, for what reason?

Mr McDONALD: Minister, earlier you referred to what was known as motion 56 through the LGAQ conference, where the LGAQ and the councils quite clearly said that they wanted to see the state fund this completely. Is there a fundamental issue with councils and their support for the SES in partnership with you? Is there a problem that is seeing a decline in these volunteer numbers?

Mr CRAWFORD: As the member would know from his previous role, there is a variety of opinions among councils. There are those that are heavily invested and those that do not want to be as invested. Some Queensland mayors see emergency management as a badge of honour. They are really good at it and love running their LDMGs and being involved. Often, those councils heavily invest in the State Emergency Service. They have really good stations, a good fleet of equipment and so on. Then there are other councils that do not see it as their core business and do not see why they should have to fund that from their ratepayers. Often you can see the difference. Sometimes that difference can flow through to morale.

That is why in those early conversations we had with LGAQ we were very keen to progress that. I think there is an opportunity for State Emergency Service volunteers. As one volunteer once put it to me, put the 'state' back in the State Emergency Service. For some out there, they are looking for a bit of a shot in the arm. They see what is happening in other parts of QFES and feel as though it is not the same for them.

Mr MILLAR: I refer to page 3 of the SDS relating to the department's mandate to effectively manage staff and volunteers, according to pre-estimates question on notice No. 12 there were 115 sustained complaints within the department. Acting Commissioner, can you explain what CaPE category 1, 2 and 3 means?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: I will try to avoid definitions unless I have them specifically, but in broad terms it is a way of categorising from what is considered to be a low-level management action—type CaPE 1—to CaPE 3, which is at the higher end in terms of significance. A level 2 means that sometimes local management action is still appropriate. Certainly, we find that normally level 2 and 3 have some sort of formal investigation associated with them.

Mr MILLAR: Why were 106 of the 115 sustained complaints within these categories? The same answer to the question on notice states that the department could not quantify the numbers of hours taken off work, both with pay and without, as a result of these bullying and harassment actions. You could not quantify hours taken off work. Does this mean that your department is not tracking this and has no idea whether staff are off work for these reasons?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: We certainly know when staff are off work in terms of leave entitlements. Obviously, there are two aspects to that question. One is if someone is the victim, if you will, and they may take leave. There is the perpetrator side of that which may require suspension or other aspects. We certainly know when people are on leave. We are very conscious, though, when people take leave from a victim perspective. Sometimes that is undeclared in terms of why they are taking that leave—for all the right reasons in terms of it being in-confidence for themselves.

Mr Marsden: The systems that we use to capture time away from work do not have all categories about why people take that time off. We do that for privacy reasons as well. What we do report through dashboard reporting regularly is the nature of the range of either injuries or incidents. Whether they are through bullying, sexual harassment or harassment or whether they might be slips, trips or whatever, we report those regularly. That is where we monitor increases in those sorts of claims that might relate to bullying and harassment.

We also manage that through the Working for Queensland survey run by QFES—an annual survey that talks about workplace climate and workplace behaviour. We monitor the extent of it, because we ask the workforce if they have experienced bullying and harassment or if they have seen bullying and harassment in the workplace. We regularly monitor that. If we have concerns about that, we then take action on it.

Mrs McMAHON: Page 3 of the SDS refers to the designing and delivery of services according to local risk and community needs. Will the minister please update the committee on the new appliances being delivered to the fire and rescue service and the benefits they will bring to the Queensland community?

Mr CRAWFORD: In response to the last couple of questions I briefly outlined the new aerial fleet, but, in addition to the aerial fleet, this year we have already started to roll out the replacement type 3 pumpers. A number of the pumpers being replaced have run a 15-year life span. These are our frontline Scania's that you would see around Brisbane. Some have some very long kilometres on the clock. As with the aerials, our mechanics have been doing an incredible job in keeping them together. Obviously, maintenance of a truck that is 15 to 20 years old can be very challenging. Sometimes we cannot find parts. We have to source from all across the world. Already this financial year we have started to roll out the first of 34 new fire and rescue operational replacement appliances that will come online. Some of those are already online. I have seen one of them at Roma Street. I have seen one at Kemp Place as well. A lot of great work goes on behind the scenes in designing them, with the teams that put them together, to ensure they are ready to go before they go operational. Mr Chair, if you see new ones moving around the streets, that is what they are.

Mr ANDREW: Briefly, we spoke about Mackay and going forward what was planned. Is Finch Hatton airstrip part of that? You said earlier that water bombing was a major part of fighting fires.

Mr CRAWFORD: In answer to the questions on notice I think we addressed Finch Hatton fairly well. Essentially, the department does not believe that fixed-wing water bombing into that area is warranted. It has been done only once in 30 years. They have identified that it is covered with rotary bombing using helicopters. I remember when I was up there when I did speak with you and locals. Essentially, the issue with the Finch Hatton airstrip is that it is privately owned property. We cannot use state government funds to build private airstrips for people. It is just not an appropriate use.

Mr ANDREW: The minister mentioned in the Rockhampton *Bulletin* that he had a plan or a view for the EML for the people in the Rockhampton and Mount Morgan regions. Have you decided on your plan or action on that?

Mr CRAWFORD: I do not remember saying anything about a plan for an EML. What I said in the media in that area was that the first thing that people need to do if they receive a change to their EML—this even goes back to the conversations before with the breweries, and any organisation really—is go back to council and ensure they have been rated properly, that the levy applied to their property, business or whatever it is is just and fits within the regulations and the legislation. Following that, if they have significant concerns, if they truly think they have been unjustly treated, QFES has an EML team that they can contact for further information. That is what I was saying in the media in that area.

CHAIR: I refer to page 8 of the SDS which highlights the investment being made in capital works. Can the minister outline the outcomes for communities in the south-west region of this investment?

Mr McDONALD: Are we going to get a question?

CHAIR: You had your turn.

Mr CRAWFORD: I can be really quick on this one, Mr Chair, particularly seeing as the member for Southern Downs is from the south-west.

CHAIR: He would be interested to listen.

Mr CRAWFORD: He would be very interested. There is \$11.1 million for the south-west region. It will create 36 full-time jobs with the works. Essentially, mainly it is about building the new Charlton fire and rescue station as well as the headquarters that will go in there. This is a brand-new build at Toowoomba. As Toowoomba expands, it is about getting better service delivery, particularly out west of Toowoomba.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair.

Mr LISTER: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I defer to the member for Gregory.

Mr MILLAR: Back to our previous question, Minister, I want to clarify—

CHAIR: If it is a previous question, it would have been answered.

Mr MILLAR: I want to clarify that some of that information about days off is recorded because of category. What is not recorded? What is recorded when they are taking days off?

Mr CRAWFORD: Is that question to me?

Mr MILLAR: To the minister or, if you have to defer, to the commissioner.

Mr CRAWFORD: I would have to defer because I do not look into detail that far.

Acting Commissioner Wassing: Certainly days off are recorded. Any absence from the workplace is recorded. The category of that is the complexity as Kurt has described with respect to that. Some of those categories are well structured and well known. In other cases for privacy reasons or other reasons, they are not as well defined.

Mr MILLAR: With category 1, 2 and 3 and any days off because of being in category 1, 2 and 3, are they recorded as days off?

Acting Commissioner Wassing: The best way I could answer that is that it would be really difficult to use any categorisation of absence from the workplace directly related to the category of discipline processes of categories 1, 2 or 3. In saying that though, we have a range of different mechanisms to make sure that we have monitoring of the workplace associated with workplace behaviours or the impacts of that. Certainly absence from the workplace is one of those. The annual Working for Queensland surveys are a very important tool for us in terms of assessing the workplace conduct and how people are feeling with respect to other aspects. In terms of leave and absence, there is not a direct relationship that we can make to the three categories, albeit we can have some indication depending on the leave category that has been described.

Mr MILLAR: Minister, there are reports of an internal report currently being undertaken by PwC into the culture and appropriateness of complaints management within QFES. Minister, will you agree to releasing this report once it is finalised and provide a date when it will be released? That is the report from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thanks for the question. The only reason I paused was to find out more details about what report that is. We would have to look at that report when it comes out. Sometimes these reports have very private information in them. We would have to have a look at that to make sure that we were not breaching anything there. Does anyone else have any comment that they want to make on that one?

Acting Deputy Commissioner Stevenson: With regard to any release of that report, obviously there have been some interviews and things with particular staff. There are sensitive comments being made as well, so redaction of comments would have to be made.

Mr MILLAR: My next question is to the minister, and I have to ask this question. I asked you this last year. With reference to page 3 of the SDS relating to new capital works projects, in estimates last year, Minister, you committed that the new Longreach fire station would be completed by mid-2021. However, in the latest budget there is only \$100,000 for the project. Minister, what is the hold-up and will this be delivered on time?

Mr CRAWFORD: It would not be estimates without the question, would it?

Mr MILLAR: No. You had it ready, too.

Mr CRAWFORD: As I pointed out in the House a couple of months ago, I can confirm that your new Longreach station will be delivered as I said last year. There are no delays.

Mr MILLAR: Why \$100,000 this financial year?

Mr CRAWFORD: I will get PSBA's Doug Smith to explain the rollout of how that works. I said to you last year that it would be ready to go in June 2021, and that is still the current time line.

Mr Smith: Yes. The allocation of the \$100,000 is for the preliminary design and the conceptual works for the new Longreach fire station. Some of that significant work is to ensure that the site will not be affected by the significant flood risk associated unfortunately with the good town of Longreach. The actual funds for the construction will be in the following year when that \$3 million will then be applied to the construction of the facility. It is still currently on time and—

Mr MILLAR: So I will expect \$3 million in the next budget?

Mr Smith: Yes.

Mr MILLAR: So \$3.1 million, and that \$100,000 is out the door and \$3 million next budget.

Mr CRAWFORD: Start a campaign for it now. Off you go.

Mr MILLAR: Yes. I have just one more question and this—

Mr CRAWFORD: Are you still coming to the opening, because I think I asked you last year about that?

Mr MILLAR: Yes, absolutely; I will be there.

Mr Smith: That is a total of \$3.1 million for the station.

Mr MILLAR: Yes. I will be looking for \$3 million in the next budget and I will be jumping for joy. Minister, on 30 June 2019 the member for Keppel raised some concerns around the staffing levels at the Yeppoon Fire Station when she said—

I will be calling on the Government and ... Minister ... to allocate some of the remaining full-time equivalent positions that are still owing to regional fire stations across the state to Yeppoon, and I will be asking for the Yeppoon Fire Station to be considered for that upgrade ...

Minister, when will the Yeppoon Fire Station be manned for the full days?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thought you were going to ask me about Emerald.

Mr MILLAR: No, I am asking about Yeppoon. I am just sharing the love.

Mr CRAWFORD: There are a number of stations that fall into this category and then I will summarise in terms of what is happening. Currently we know that stations at Port Douglas, Yeppoon, Airlie Beach and Emerald are all at various levels of workload. They are all very busy stations. Some have a day work station officer; some of them have a day shift for five days. It varies between them, but in their own categories they are all very busy stations. That will be a conversation that I will be having with the new commissioner when he or she starts as to what is the forward plan for us to be taking some of the load off our busy stations, and I will use Port Douglas as a classic example. They are our busiest auxiliary station in the state. They do a huge amount of work. They have one station officer there and I am very mindful, after having done that role myself, of the toll that it takes when you have to leave home and you have to leave work.

Emerald in your area is another one that has a single station officer as well. You have a station ready to go basically for day crewing, but these are the conversations that I need to have with the new commissioner for QFES about what our one, two, three, four or five-year plan is to grow into those areas. I will make one comment at the end of it, and that is whenever you upgrade a station you change the EML. When you lift a station to the next level of crewing, you shift from D to C or C to B or up to A potentially and that will have an upwards shift in everyone's EML and obviously that causes some issues, and we have already been having conversations about that this evening.

Mr MILLAR: I look forward to that.

Mr LISTER: Minister, you will be aware that I had an online petition run recently regarding, among other things, fuel loads on Crown land such as national parks, state forests and so forth. When I go around talking to the rural fire brigade in my area, one of the things they talk about is those fuel loads and how fires like the one we had in the Girraween National Park would not have been as severe if there had been less there. I am sure you would get that sort of feedback from time to time. What dialogue do you have or does your department have with DNRME and Environment regarding fuel loads in their patches with a view to making the job of the firefighters on the ground easier?

CHAIR: This will be the last question.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you. We have quite good dialogue. I will highlight a couple of things to you, the main one being that in the last couple of years the amount of hectares burnt in Queensland national parks is staggering. I will give you some numbers. In 2015-16 they burnt 630,000 hectares. That increased in 2016-17 to 694,000 hectares. It went up the next year, to 942,000 hectares, and then it went up again to over a million hectares in 2018-19.

Mr LISTER: That is national parks?

Mr CRAWFORD: That is national parks. I am very happy that that department is taking the work seriously about reducing fuel load. We know—the IGEM report said it quite clearly—that the best way to mitigate fuel load is to burn. That is what we are currently seeing from them. We are also seeing very consistent and high numbers for hazard reduction burns that are being done by private landowners. Through the connection we have with the permit to burn process, we are seeing very strong numbers—26,000, 27,000 or 28,000—of those permit burns every single year.

I am quite confident that the intent is there and they are achieving the numbers, but it comes back to what you mentioned earlier about the good neighbour policy, I believe. I think that is a real point that we have to move on. I know that is why the environment minister has more money in her budget this year to increase staffing across QPWS, so that we can have landowners—and not just her department but all other state government departments—trying to have those decent conversations across the fence.

CHAIR: Thank you. The time allocated for consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio of fire and emergency services has expired. Minister, I note that there have been some questions taken on notice during the session. Are there any that you wish to answer now?

Mr CRAWFORD: No. We will have to do those later.

CHAIR: The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice—

Mr MILLAR: Point of order.

CHAIR: Yes?

Mr MILLAR: That cladding question is taken on notice?

CHAIR: Yes. Member for Gregory—

Mr CRAWFORD: That is about the 81?

Mr MILLAR: Yes.

Mr CRAWFORD: We do not have information. I will have to get that.

CHAIR: The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 3 pm on Tuesday, 30 July 2019. You can check the exact wording of any outstanding questions in the proof transcript of this session of the hearing, which will be available on the Hansard page of parliament's website in approximately two hours. Perhaps the member for Gregory could read it. Thank you, Minister, and departmental officers for your attendance. Minister, is there anyone you wish to thank? You may take a moment to do so.

Mr CRAWFORD: I would like to thank our teams from QFES, IGEM and PSBA; Acting Commissioner Mike Wassing and his predecessor, Commissioner Katarina Carroll; IGEM's Alistair Dawson, who is also acting; PSBA Chief Operating Officer, Doug Smith, also acting; and all other senior executives and their respective teams. I also thank my departmental staff: my chief of staff, Peter Clarke, and particularly I give a shout-out to departmental liaison officer Cathy Knapp, who I know has spent weeks and weeks going down many rabbit holes looking for answers for tonight.

In closing, and before we head into the weekend, I would like to give a shout-out to all QFES personnel—volunteers, staff, auxiliary, management, behind the scenes—who will help keep us safe tonight and across the weekend wherever we are and particularly the 340 staff members who are currently out there tonight in Queensland on a shift. Thank you.

CHAIR: I thank members of the committee and visiting members who attended the hearings. I thank Hansard and everyone else who assisted here today, including the ushers. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 8.34 pm.