

## **Legislative Council**

Thursday, 21 June 2007

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### **STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am.

#### **Division 50: Education and Training, \$2 994 278 000 -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Education and Training.

Ms S. O'Neill, Director General.

Mr P. McCaffrey, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration.

Mr M. Parr, Acting Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr K. Newton, Acting Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr R. Lindsay, Acting Executive Director, Human Resources.

Mr R. Player, Acting Deputy Director General, Training.

Ms C. Cook, Acting Executive Director, Curriculum Standards.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

For the information of members, these proceedings will be reported by Hansard. The daily *Hansard* will be available tomorrow morning. Hansard will distribute documents for correction, which must be returned on the A4 documents sent to members. The cut-off date for corrections will be indicated on the bottom of each page.

Members are asked to sit towards the front of the chamber on the opposition benches where practicable, so that witnesses will not have to turn their heads to the back of the chamber when answering questions. It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask for your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** The other information I wanted to convey is that some members have supplied questions that we now have answers to. For the Department of Education and Training, Hon Peter Collier and Hon Barbara Scott both asked questions. Those questions are now formally tabled and are therefore publicly available.

With no further ado, I ask if there are members who have questions they would like to ask.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** First of all, I welcome officers from the Department of Education and Training. It is good to have them here. I congratulate Ms O'Neill on her appointment. It is a formidable task, and I am sure she will do it well. I refer to "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 914 of the *Budget Statements*. The first dot point states -

Complete the development of Kindergarten to Year 10 syllabus by the end of 2007.

I refer to the Minister for Education and Training's media statement on 15 June 2007, which states -

Some of Australia's most respected academics in the fields of literacy, numeracy, science and history have been chosen to advise the Government on the development of new syllabuses for students in Kindergarten to Year 10.

Education and Training Minister Mark McGowan said the National Advisory Panel would meet for the first time in July to review proposed content and provide advice on the working versions.

Further on, the media release states -

The Minister said the panel would meet for the second and final time in November to endorse the final versions of new syllabuses.

Can the minister explain what is plan B if the national advisory panel does not approve the new syllabuses?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the member for that question. In respect of syllabus resources and development for K-10, I have to say that when I took over the portfolio, it became very apparent that when Colin Barnett was minister and moved the system to an outcomes-based system, one of the things that he did at the same time was get rid of the curriculum development department within the Department of Education and Training. He did so on account of the fact that he thought the teachers would go off and do their own curriculum work. There is no doubt that they do contribute in the area of curriculum development. However, to have abolished that department prior to the new system being fully implemented may not, in hindsight, have been the way to go. Anyway, it is important to recognise that an increased curriculum capacity has been re-established within the department through the development of syllabuses and practical classroom resources that will provide K-10 teachers with guidance on what content to teach to address the curriculum framework outcomes at each year of schooling. The government certainly places a high priority on reducing the work pressures for teachers. The provision of syllabuses and practical support resources will, of course, reduce the need for teachers to develop curriculum at the school level.

[10.10 am]

I am advised that 4 000 teachers have been consulted. If the panel finds issues, the department will certainly attend to them. There is no doubt that we recognise the importance of having good curriculum material and practical resources for teachers that will support the planning and assessment that is required and provide classroom-ready examples of teachers who have, I guess, not been as strong as historically they had been prior to the abolition of that curriculum branch in the department all those years ago. Four thousand teachers is a fairly good sample in that consultation process. The undertaking by the department that it will be happy to attend to any issues it finds is a good undertaking on their behalf so that we get the absolute best result possible.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Are the 4 000 teachers a broad cross-section of newly graduated, experienced, rural and metropolitan teachers?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will ask the director general to comment; she is an expert in this area.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** With respect to the syllabuses, the 4 000 teachers are a broad cross-section. In addition to that consultation, we have made available the resources on line, so all teachers have been invited to provide feedback to those on line. In addition, each syllabus area will have a panel specific to that area drawn from practitioners across the state. The consultation is heavily drawn from practitioners as they have raised issues and gaps perhaps. We have attended to them, so it is ongoing. We will not wait until the end to do that.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is good, but my question has not been answered. The syllabuses were promised to be completed by the end of this year. What will happen in November if the panel says that the syllabuses are inappropriate or inadequate? Will there be a delay?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The member is asking me to speculate on something. I am not in the business of speculating. Quite clearly, the department has set a time frame by which those documents will be available. The department will be doing everything in its capacity to meet that time frame. If there are issues and delays, we will cross that bridge when we get to it. Every endeavour will be made by the department to ensure that that timetable is met. I do not think it is very good for the member, as a member of the opposition, to be quietly wishing that perhaps the timetable will not be met so that he can then go out and stir a little pot of trouble somewhere. As someone who aspires to be a minister for education, which clearly he does - I do not have a problem with that - he should be wishing that these timetables will be met because that is in the best interests of the system and the students.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Thank you, minister; it almost sounds as though the minister is back in the classroom. However, she has not answered my question. I want the syllabuses completed by the end of the year, as does every teacher. However, the government must have a plan. We do not want a teacher crisis such as the one that occurred in January this year. What happens in November if the panel says the syllabuses are no good?

It is a very simple question that requires a very simple answer. Will the government say that it will delay? If the panel says, yes, there is a tick-off, that will be great. However, what if the panel says no, there are endemic problems with the syllabuses, will it be delayed? It is a simple question. I am not assuming there will be a problem; I do not want there to be a problem.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am here in the capacity as an acting minister. What the minister will do, if there is a problem, is an issue best directed to the minister. In my acting capacity in this place, I do not think it would be appropriate for me; indeed, I think it would be most inappropriate for me, to speculate on what the minister would do.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is code for the minister does not know. There is no plan.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The member might call it whatever he likes. I am giving him a response that I think is appropriate.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** The member might want to put that question on notice if he wants the minister to answer.

[*Supplementary Information No A1.*]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I refer to page 915 regarding teacher retention and services.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Which dot point?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is under the service and appropriation summary. One of the issues regarding the teacher shortage is, of course, remuneration and incentives for teachers, which is how we can retain teachers in the workforce. I am sure blind Freddy would acknowledge that. One of the ways the department has done it in the past has been to provide for a level 3 teacher, which provides in itself the status and the financial remuneration. I asked a question on notice of the minister, and I received an answer on 29 May 2007 that provides the following figures: in 2004-07, of the 227 primary school teachers who applied, 94 received level 3 status; in 2005, 124 applied, 64 received status; and in 2006, 111 applied, 44 received status. Of the 102 secondary teachers who applied in 2004, 59 received level 3 status; 2005, 89 applied, 47 received status; and in 2006, 92 applied and 41 received status. At the moment, a total of 323 primary school teachers and 201 secondary school teachers have level 3 status. My concern with those figures is that it is a very small number of teachers. Where is the incentive? I appreciate that standards for level 3 status must apply; that is not an issue. However, why is it so difficult for a teacher to achieve level 3 status?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the member for that question, which is detailed; nonetheless, we have a copy of it. The shortage of skilled workers is not unique to the education sector. In fact, in this very booming economy, which is the envy of not only the nation but also the world, there are shortages across a range of areas. There is no doubt that the government and the department are committed to addressing the skills shortages. One of the things that is complicating the shortage of teachers is the fact that we also have a very ageing demographic. This means that the vacancies created by retirements in the education sector within this booming economy are a challenge for us specifically to meet immediately. It is also something we need to keep in mind for the longer term so that we can better prepare, if we like, for that ageing demographic. The department has immediate mid-term and long-term strategies in place to ameliorate the issues of supply and demand for teachers and lecturers. Some short-term initiatives, agreed by the department and the State School Teachers' Union, are being implemented to alleviate some of the pressures being experienced in the workforce, particularly within rural schools that have been identified as schools at risk. To fill the current vacancies, the department has recruited overseas teachers. As a result of a recent expo held in Great Britain promoting the profession in Western Australia, the department has received 150 expressions of interest, and is currently negotiating employment with them. In relation to the member's very specific question about level 3 teacher status, I will ask the director general whether she can provide some additional information for the honourable member.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Great; we might get a response.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The level 3 process is a rigorous selection process that involves peers. It is framed around the teacher competency framework the department uses. It is not the only process we use to recognise teachers. Although we use the level 3 process to which the member referred, we also have senior teachers. We recognise teachers in three ways - on merit through the level 3 process, on experience through the gradation of the salary scale, and the remote teaching service and the difficult-to-staff schools. So there are a number of ways we go about it. It is rigorous and it is capped at this stage.

[10.20 am]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I appreciate that. Is there any intent on the part of the department to allocate more level 3 teacher positions?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** We will continue to look at it as part of the package. Obviously in response to the Gerard Daniels report, which points to attraction and retention, we will need to look at ways to recognise the work that

teachers are currently doing. We have a range of ways to do that in revising the workload. The minister has already made some announcements about revision of workload, curriculum etc. With respect to the broad number of level 3s, we will look at whether that is part of the strategy we want to use. We are looking at all those strategies now.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I hope so, because 323 out of about 12 000 primary and 201 out of 8 000 secondary teachers is not a good number.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** It is a high standard.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am well aware of the standards. However, it does not give much incentive to teachers. I get a lot of feedback on that.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** We are very keen to minimise any risk of not having all classrooms staffed. To that end, and to ensure that we meet the future needs of the education sector, the government has established a task force to review supply and demand issues of the Western Australian education workforce. The task force will develop a framework that will enable WA to meet the future need for the workforce, and that report will be completed in December 2007. I know that the member follows education trends very closely. I do not want him to think that the department does nothing about these issues. The department does do something about these issues. One thing it has done, among many, is provide differences in wage incentives to ensure that all schools are covered, irrespective of where they are located, so that there is parity and consistency to the extent that is possible. That will lead to uniformity in the supply of labour in the education system across the state.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I will give Hon Peter Collier the call but, before I do, I ask members to indicate if they have questions.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** My question is on the same issue.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** That is fine. I want to get an idea of who wishes to ask questions.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** The opposition will ask questions through its education spokesman.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I understand that Hon Murray Criddle has some questions to ask. I am just flagging that.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I can assure members that I do not want to hog the entire session. I presume the report was the Twomey task force.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** We were referring to the Gerard Daniels report.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The minister said that a report would be handed down in December.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, that is the one.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I have met with Professor Twomey and we had a fruitful discussion. As the minister mentioned, his report will not be handed down until the end of the year. That will be far too late to enable the strategies in that report to be implemented in 2008. What is the department doing to overcome the inevitable shortfall of teachers in 2008?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Professor Twomey will focus on the long-term projections and will deal with strategies. The department has a number of strategies in place. I defer to the director general.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** We had a very immediate package for 11 schools that were experiencing particular difficulty and we have since extended that to more schools. At the end of last year and this year we have had a number of national and international recruitment campaigns. There have been more than 150 expressions of interests from the United Kingdom, and there have also been some from interstate. In addition to that, we are negotiating a much earlier time frame for university graduates. We are visiting the universities earlier this year than we have in other years.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** When will that be?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** I understand that we are in universities this week. We are already making early offers to graduates. We are also giving schools additional timetabling assistance so that they can look at their timetable to ensure that they are maximising the set of resources available to them. We are looking through the Western Australian College of Teaching for registered teachers who are no longer teaching to see whether we can attract those people back into the workforce. We are also reviewing our scholarships and remote teaching service and difficult-to-staff packages. These are some of the undertakings we have implemented. Clearly, the Gerard Daniels report talked about reviewing our staffing models and structures. We have already undertaken some changes to our structure through staffing. At the moment we are looking at the staffing models. We need to give consideration, for example, to local selection, transfer and the like.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Will graduating teachers be offered positions earlier?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Yes, that is the intention.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The department is visiting the universities now, but how early will graduating teachers be offered positions?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will ask Rob Lindsay to provide additional information.

**Mr R. Lindsay:** We have called for expressions of interest in areas of need; that is, in rural locations. There is also a metropolitan option for graduates seeking employment with DET. They will make their nominations within the next couple of weeks; in fact, by 6 July. We will then confer with the State School Teachers' Union on the impact immediate appointments will have on those country teachers who have a right of return, and then we will make firm offers to those graduates. I expect that to happen during August and early September.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Therefore, some new graduates will be offered positions in August this year?

**Mr R. Lindsay:** August or early September, yes.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Does the department have any forward estimates for the potential teacher shortage for next year?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I have not seen any information in my notes on that matter.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** This year, a week before the start of the school year, we found out that we were 264 teachers short.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will ask Mr Rob Lindsay to answer that question. I understand the model has been done and the forecasting is being undertaken, but there is no certainty of the numbers.

**Mr R. Lindsay:** I cannot add any more to that comment. The Gerard Daniels report and its release indicated that there were deficiencies in planning and modelling within the department. In the process of addressing that and looking at the projections for next year, that work is being undertaken.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The department should have an idea of the number of resignations and retirements by term 3, and that is coming up.

**Mr R. Lindsay:** I hope to have that information very soon.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I would like to think that by the end of term 3 the department will have a rough idea. We can never anticipate those who will resign in term 4 or beyond. I thought that the department would have an idea by the end of the academic year to enable it to determine the number of teachers that will be needed next year.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The member obviously thinks that the department can create a model that has a 100 per cent certainty.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I said an estimate.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The decision by individuals to resign and retire can take place at any time.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is what I said.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** They could have every intention of not retiring, but because of an adverse event in the family they might retire over holidays. Many, many circumstances come into play. It needs to be recognised that it is not an exact science. Even when the modelling is done, I do not think it would be appropriate for people to jump up and down and say that it is terrible if there is a variation in the projections. That is the nature of this area of work.

[10.30 am]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The minister was obviously not engaged in my last comments, because that is exactly what I said. I am aware that there will be issues and that some teachers will resign at the last minute and that there will be some whom the department will have no idea about. All I am saying is that the department must have some understanding of those teachers who are going to resign or retire. I would like to think that it would have a fairly rough idea by the beginning of term 4. That was all I was asking.

**Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE:** I will touch on an issue concerning Geraldton Senior College and the teaching of English in year 10. This issue was brought to me by a parent. I have provided some information to the minister across the chamber that indicates the problem that a mother brought to me. Her comment was that the level of work her child was being taught simply amounted to dumbing down this year 10 student, who is trying to go through the process to get into university. I understand that the work that I have provided to the minister is at about level 1 and that the level for year 10 is level 4. The student is not a dumb person. The mother said that the level of work is dumbing down her child. I would like the minister to make sure that the quality and standard of education provided at year 10 will enable people to go through the process and have an opportunity to go to

university. Perhaps the minister could also outline the likelihood of getting teachers to teach children in classrooms at Geraldton Senior College rather than through Schools of Isolated and Distance Education.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the honourable member. Given the specific nature of this question and that we are dealing with a specific piece of work, which we have before us, I will ask the director general to make some comments before passing on the question to Ms Christine Cook, who is the acting executive director of curriculum.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Rather than talking about the individual whose work the member has provided, we will talk about the standards of year 10 overall at Geraldton Senior College. Clearly, some students in year 10 continue to struggle with their literacy and numeracy. That is the reality. Without making specific comments about this work, there would be some questions about the level that this student is ascertaining. In secondary schools, Getting it Right specialist teachers work specifically with teachers who have students who are not performing to the level to which they would aspire. We have Getting it Right, or literacy and numeracy, support in secondary schools. Alongside that we have learning support coordinators. An allocation will be provided across most schools by next year to provide individual support to teachers who have students who continue to struggle with their performance or the standard of their work. In general terms, there is support in schools to assist students and their teachers when students' performance is not up to scratch or they are struggling with their work.

On the second question, some schools are using SIDE. The number of schools using SIDE has increased because of the teacher shortage. SIDE provides a high-quality program. In fact, it is nationally renowned for the kind of work that it provides. I do not think that there is any question that students who are studying at least part of their load through SIDE - it is usually a subject rather than their total load - are well serviced. That would be fair to say. A number of schools are making use of subject-specific teachers through SIDE to support them. SIDE is also providing a considerable amount of support to schools that are having to use more relief teachers than normal to support teachers in that case.

**Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE:** The point I am making is that this student is way above that level, yet she is being taught at a level way below that at which she expects to be taught so that she can go on to university. She should be taught at a level way above that. How students can get into year 10 on level 1 when they should be on level 4 is way beyond me. They should be able to have the opportunity to make the next transition. If that is the level at which they are being taught in year 10, they will never make university. Kids in the country face enough hurdles anyway. Members have probably gathered from my attitude that I am parochial when it comes to country students. Some outstanding students have come from this area. I do not want the standard to be reduced, which would mean that we would not have the opportunity to push more students through to university. There is a new university campus up there, so we need to be able to utilise it.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** I certainly support the comment about standards. If the member's question goes to the heart of an individual student and her particular circumstances, we are happy to follow up this individual if there is a belief that the student is not being challenged to the level that the member has described.

**Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE:** That was the problem when the parent took up this matter with the school. She has been moved to another class. The problem I have is that I have been told that there are other students in that same class who need to be challenged, as the director general put it, to carry on and become far better students. There is a huge difference between level 1 and level 4 in education.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** If that is particular to a class or an area at that school, I am happy to be provided with details to follow up.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** For some years, I have taken a keen interest in the establishment of the Mt Barker Community College, a K-12 and technical and further education project being developed on the current Mt Barker Senior High School site. At the commencement of 2008, the college will officially take shape with the year 4 to 7 Mt Barker Primary School students moving permanently to that site. However, the K-3 cohort will stay put, with cost blowouts forcing a delay, I am told, of at least three or four years in the completion of the project. As the minister will appreciate, local educators and community members are concerned that the Mt Barker Community College may not eventuate for many years, particularly given that no funding has been set aside in the forward estimates. Firstly, can the minister confirm that the government's commitment to finalising the community college project still stands? Secondly, with the Mt Barker Primary School site occupying some 10 hectares of quality residential land, is it possible that funds received from a future land sale could be used to complete the community college project?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the member for that question. I am advised that there is nothing in the forward estimates for the second stage of the project. However, I know that Mr Mal Parr, who is the acting executive director of infrastructure, keeps a very close eye on all projects. The member can imagine what sort of job that is, given the number of existing schools and those proposed to be added to the education infrastructure. I ask Mr Mal Parr to make some general comments. What I do know is that there is no money in the forward

estimates for stage 2 at this stage, but that is not to suggest that there may not be in the longer term. However, that decision has clearly not been made; it has not gone through the seed process and there is no formal approval for that.

**Mr M. Parr:** The department remains committed to the One Community - One College concept. As has been indicated, funding is not available at the moment. On the member's second question, a preliminary valuation has been done of the existing primary school site. I do not have the precise figure with me, but it is not an extraordinarily high number. However, it would certainly represent an opportunity to contribute to the source of funds that might be required for the second stage of development at the high school site.

[10.40 am]

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** I refer to the 10 hectares of quality residential land because there is a proposal to develop a 700-lot subdivision on land on the northern outskirts of the town immediately opposite the site in question; that is, the senior high school site. Although many people are moving to the great southern, they cannot necessarily afford to live in Albany or Denmark, so places like Mount Barker are becoming more attractive. I dare say that that 700-lot site will be taken up fairly quickly. The site of the current primary school would no doubt appeal to developers. I would have thought that, given the price of land in towns like Mount Barker and other inland towns, residential lots cost about \$100 000. Therefore, 10 hectares in Mount Barker could be very valuable. I would like to follow up the issue of a possible valuation.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Would the member like to put that on notice or would he like to follow up that issue informally?

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** I certainly would not mind that information being conveyed at a future date.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Perhaps Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm can meet with Mr Parr to discuss this matter. Mr Parr can provide the information as it currently stands and in any expanded form, if indeed it exists.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** That is fine.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** My questions relate to early childhood programs. I refer to the first dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 914 of the *Budget Statements*. I want to expand on the issue of developing a syllabus for early childhood years. I am not sure whether any advisors present have any early childhood expertise. Who in the department with early childhood knowledge and experience was involved in developing the kindergarten and pre-primary syllabus? What is their early childhood experience and training? Will parents of kindergarten children be consulted throughout the year prior to the finalisation of the syllabus? Will parent peak bodies, such as community kindergarten associations, be consulted? Kindergarten and pre-primary years are non-compulsory years of education, so we must ensure that the programs are appropriate. Who in the department is responsible for the delivery of the kindergarten and pre-primary programs given that there is no early childhood director? Is that person trained in early childhood experience? Given the expanding knowledge on brain development and an increased understanding of the importance of learning through play, can the minister and the department provide an assurance that the importance of play and an indoor-outdoor program will be provided - and maintained - in the syllabus for the early years? For that to occur, there must be separate playgrounds for those years and children in the upper school programs should not be restricted from playing when the bell rings at 10.30 am. Learning through play is a critical area. Many issues emanate as a result of the frustration that small children feel when they are placed in care that is too formal. That is extremely important. Will parents be given an opportunity to provide input into the development of the syllabus? If so, at what stage will that occur? Will that be recorded in the development of the programs?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** That is one very long question, which comprises many components. I know that the issues raised by Hon Barbara Scott are important. Hon Barbara Scott has been passionate about the importance of play to children. In particular, she has been passionate about the opportunities that will prepare young children for learning so that they can maximise the benefits of their schooling. Certainly, Western Australia has led the nation. For example, all eligible Western Australian children have a place in a kindergarten, which they attend two years prior to compulsory schooling, at a school as near as possible to their home. The department has also recognised the importance of early childhood development. It established an early childhood education directorate in 2005 following a restructure of the curriculum directorate. I do not think the member was aware of that.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** After a bit of pressure from us.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** This is a good thing. The department is cognisant, as it should be, of the importance of ensuring that young children are given opportunities so that they can start their formal education having had the experiences and support they require.

In relation to the specific questions asked by Hon Barbara Scott, they were interlocked with comments. I will ask Chris Cook to answer those distinct questions.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Shall I simplify the questions for her?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** That would be helpful.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Who with early childhood experience developed the programs? Will parents be involved and will the importance of play be taken into consideration?

**Ms C. Cook:** I have some notes about those elements. In relation to the directorate that has been set up, there is an advisory group, which comprises the major stakeholders in early childhood education. That includes the early childhood education associations.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Parent associations?

**Ms C. Cook:** Not necessarily parent associations, but certainly teacher associations. The director will consult with parent associations per se let alone in the development of curriculum materials. Peak bodies will be consulted.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Parent peak bodies?

**Ms C. Cook:** Yes. The officers in charge have been working for the past 12 months on the development of syllabuses, which includes kindergarten and pre-primary syllabuses. They have early childhood education experience. I am not sure about the exact nature of their training. I would have to take this question on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No A2.*]

**Ms C. Cook:** As the minister and the director general have already indicated, every effort has been made to ensure that there is an inclusive process for consultation in the development of syllabuses to get them right.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** By parents?

**Ms C. Cook:** There will be as we go through the next period. There is a considerable amount of time to follow. With regard to the question about play, not only in the scope and sequence of what is to be taught, residing underneath that are practical resources that are illustrative to teachers about what to teach and how to teach. Within that description, research, and contemporary practice that makes a difference for learning will be incorporated. There will be descriptions of the importance of play and how that is a part of the learning context. I cannot answer the question about playgrounds. I will have to leave that to the capital works people or to whoever the minister wants to answer that question. Rather than labouring the point, I will very briefly say that there will be consultation with those parent bodies, there will be elements of play incorporated into the practical resources for teachers, and there will be an inclusive consultation process.

[10.50 am]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I refer to page 915 and the "Service and Appropriation Summary". I issued a media statement based upon responses from the Minister for Education and Training about staffing and funding at central office over the past three years, which identified the fact that staffing in central office had increased by 700 and funding expenditure had increased by \$53 million. As a result of the media statement, a GWN journalist phoned me and said that she had phoned an officer from the department and the officer had said that the figures were entirely incorrect. I said that I had the figures direct from the minister and that he had signed off on them. Are the figures correct? If they are correct, how can they be justified? I can provide the minister with the question numbers if she would like them.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the honourable member. It seems to me that the member is asking us to verify some very specific information. I do not know whether the member has put the question on notice.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am asking why there has been such an explosion in the number of employees and the amount of funding at head office.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I might refer these questions to Mr Peter McCaffrey and then to the acting director general. There is no doubt that the government has significantly increased its contribution to education. There are obviously many programs coming on stream. For example, the increase in the school leaving age and the return of the mandatory requirement for all students to complete the last two years of schooling has had an impact. Obviously we need teachers to man those classrooms. There is no doubt that offering new courses of study has had an impact. Taking into account courses such as media production and design, information technology, and the breadth of new educational opportunities -

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That would not have an impact on this funding.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** There are support staff associated with those changes. That would obviously be reflected in the increase. If the member is asking a specific question about central office, I will refer him to Mr Peter McCaffrey.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Firstly, are the figures correct? If they are not, the minister is wrong. Secondly, how can they be justified?

**Mr P. McCaffrey:** I recall the questions. I think the first one was in reference to what was at 151 Royal Street and what was at central office. I think the difference in the figures was mainly because there is a certain number of staff at 151 Royal Street. When we responded in the second instance, the answer included a number of associated operations that are generally referred to as “central”. Examples of those include agencies such as WestOne and the shared services centre that operates out of Bennett Street. I think that is where the discrepancy arose. I do not have the details of the figures with me, but I recall the question, “Why does it look like there are 700 employees?” There is only so much room in central office; it is actually physically impossible for any more staff to work at central office. Another thing I could mention about shared services is that the concept was to bring in a number of staff who had been fulfilling operations within TAFE colleges across the state. That was also a contributing factor to the growth in numbers, because they were previously in non-budget agencies. The figures are not anywhere near as large as they appear. The two questions came through with slightly different emphases, and an interpretation was made that probably should have been made a little differently.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Having looked at the figures, I will add something. The number of employees employed on a full-time basis at central office of the Department of Education and Training has gone from 1 212 in 2001 to 1 464 in 2006. There is no doubt that, apart from anything else, there has also been a significant increase in student numbers. It was necessary to implement a range of changes associated with the new syllabus. The government has had to employ syllabus writers. We have had to take them out of schools and bring them into the department so that they can perform the function that was actually removed by Colin Barnett when he got rid of some 400 curriculum writers way back during the previous government.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Good try.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The member seems to conveniently overlook the point as if it was no big deal. He criticises the system that has evolved as a result of the policy of his government. He criticises the area of syllabus development, despite the fact that his government abolished the unit. There are syllabus writers. A learning age directorate has been established. There are people there to support the implementation of new courses of study. Never mind the fact that the staff numbers for central office also include employees who are located at WestOne. The staff numbers also include the international education and training people. Quite frankly, this area has experienced considerable growth, which means that it requires more people to look after it. This is without taking into account the Professional Learning Institute and the Department of Education and Training shared services centre. Obviously, as the system grows, evolves and becomes more specialised in certain areas, there will be an increase in FTEs within the school system and at the central office level. I say to the member that the government is unashamed of the contribution it is making to education. In fact, education takes the biggest slice of the state budget - some 26 per cent - and there is a concerted commitment to make education and training a number one priority for the Carpenter government, as has been the case throughout our term in government.

[Hon Ken Travers took the chair.]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is a shame the figures did not include the figures for task forces; they would be doubled. There are 2 231 -

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Where are we?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** This is the same question. Based on the answer from the minister, there are 2 231 employees at central office. The minister may have to take this question on notice. How many of those employees are seconded from classrooms? Does the minister have any idea? Would she like to take the question on notice?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Mr Deputy Chairman, I ask that the question be put on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No A3.*]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** As a matter of interest, there were two successful tenders -

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Is this a line item? Which page?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** We are still on page 915 and the “Service and Appropriation Summary”. The description of the tender was “provision of services from an information technology officer for the corporate applications department”. There were two of them. Both successfully gained the tender on 8 June 2007. For three months’ work, they got \$52 800. That is good work if one can get it, but can the minister justify that?

[11.00 am]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will make a general comment about that. I do not know anything about this contract. It is an information technology contract. Any IT provider in the commercial marketplace would probably deem that to be quite reasonable for three months’ work.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** They are two separate contracts for two individuals. They get \$52 800 for eight months' work.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** At the end of the day, this would have gone through a tender process. If the member is alleging that the tender process -

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am not alleging anything; I am just asking a question

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** And I am just giving an answer.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am just pointing out that I am not alleging; I am asking a question, which is my right.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** What is the question?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am asking how it can be justified.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** It can be justified because it has gone through a proper tender process; and, if that was the best tender to meet the set requirements of the tender and it had gone through the appropriate process, that is the answer to the question.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the eighth dot point from the bottom of page 914, which states -

Develop a resources package to support the policy and standards for healthy food and drink sold in school canteens.

How many full-time equivalents are involved in the development of this project, and what is the time line for the completion of the package?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** A perfect question about the processes this morning, as I would expect from the Chair of the committee!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the member for the question. Mr Deputy Chair, do you think the honourable member might be getting a bit peckish at this time?

First, I commend the member for taking such an active interest in the health of children. There is no doubt that the development of a resource package to support the policy and standards for healthy food and drink sold in school canteens is a very good initiative indeed. In fact, a new policy to improve the standard of food provided in schools was introduced in December 2006. Certainly, there was variability in the healthiness of the food that was served by canteens at different sites around the state. However, over the next four years, from 2006 to 2010, the government has committed \$1 million to the new nutrition standards in Western Australian public schools as part of the Australian Better Health Initiative and a Council of Australian Governments' program to promote good health and reduce chronic disease. There is no doubt that diet is only one part of it; exercise is the other part. Of course, students are doing much -

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I do not want to interrupt, but I say this because I want to encourage members to ask similar questions to that asked by Hon Giz Watson in seeking detailed information about the budget. I encourage the minister to answer the question, and we may be able to get through a lot more questions. This session has been devoted to fairly long-winded and open-ended questions; therefore, the answers have been along those lines. However, the member asked a specific question about the number of FTEs and the time line. I would certainly appreciate it if the minister could focus her answer on that question.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am sad to have to shorten my answer, but I understand that there is no specific FTE devoted to the package. Certainly, we ensured that the Western Australian School Canteen Association was appropriately accommodated within the department. That occurred last year. The policy officers within the department generally interface with that part of the organisation. Although it is not a formal part of the organisation, having those officers there to help school canteens work through policy initiatives means that they can make some good progress in this area. However, no specific FTE allocation within the department has been made to it.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** And the time line?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will take that question on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No A44.*]

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to page 915 and the travel and training costs for apprentices. Can the minister explain why the travel cost budget is maintained despite the fact that the estimates for additional apprentices and trainees are projected to be reduced in future years?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am happy to provide that information, but first I will crow a little about the increase in apprentices since we took office. There has been an 81 per cent increase since 2001. This is an area of great success for the government and it is absolutely totally committed to it. I hate to shorten my answer, but

I will refer the question to Mr Rob Player because he knows everything there is to know about training, in his capacity as the acting deputy director general of training.

**Mr R. Player:** First, apprenticeships have increased dramatically over the past few years. The current level is about 34 700, which is a dramatic increase from 18 700 in 2001. The allocation for the travel and accommodation costs for apprentices is an increase in funding of \$700 000 over the four or five years of the budget, which will increase the pool for travel and accommodation for apprentices in regional areas and those who have to travel to attend their vocational training or off-the-job training.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to page 917 and the employer satisfaction rate. Why is the satisfaction rate not measured every year and why are benchmarks not developed on that basis?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will refer this question to Mr Robert Player.

**Mr R. Player:** The employer satisfaction survey is conducted nationally by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. It carried out the survey in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2005, so it determines the period when it undertakes the surveys. The latest figures are listed in the budget papers. On that basis, a survey should be due shortly, but it is a national survey.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to page 917 and the aim to offer primary education programs for students from non-English speaking backgrounds. What support programs are provided to kindergarten and preprimary schoolchildren and their families who speak a language other than English as their first language at home?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will refer that question to Ms Chris Cook.

**Ms C. Cook:** We have intensive language centres. Students who come from other countries and speak another language have opportunities to participate at those centres. We also have visiting teachers from the districts who can support teachers in working with those students. There are documents called English as a second language progress maps that support teachers. They are being trialled across various locations so that students can be mapped and their progress monitored in an incremental way. Minor improvements can be shown and added to, and the learning for those students can be added to by teachers so that there is close scrutiny of how they are performing, particularly in literacy obviously. Those opportunities are available for teachers and the students who are being taught by those teachers.

[11.10 am]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Obviously, an increasing number of subclass 457 visa holders are students who require English as a second language support. Clearly, as more people come into the country through a range of means, including 457 visas, there is increased pressure. One of the big issues we have had with the commonwealth government is that it is responsible for immigration policy. We get people from non-English speaking backgrounds from all over the world, and they make great citizens. However, the up-front cost and the investment by the system in schools are quite considerable. We have a grievance with the commonwealth government that it does not supply sufficient support services to assist young children, particularly in the preprimary years, with their English language studies. I was five and a half years old when I came to this country, and I can tell the member that it is not particularly easy, although things have improved out of sight for new migrants coming into the state. Certainly, there is more work to be done.

One of the big complications, of course, that is not understood is that children, and to some extent even Indigenous children, can be treated as migrant children from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and often it is just assumed that following whatever they learn, they go home and walk back into an English environment, whereas that is not the case. At the end of a school day, they go back to a non-English-speaking environment. Therefore, it is a case of one step forward, two steps back. This is indeed a very complex area. Certainly, if we could get the commonwealth government to provide us with the additional resources, we would be most grateful, but we do the best we can.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** My question relates to secondary education facilities in the greater Bunbury education area. On page 921 of the budget papers, there are items for Bunbury Senior High School, Newton Moore Senior High School, Dalyellup senior college and Manea college. I am aware that there have been several delays and some budget blow-outs, giving the sense that nothing much is happening on the ground at the moment. Can I have an update on that situation and, perhaps to complete the picture, on the current situation with Eaton middle school? There was always the assumption that it would go to year 12 to relieve the pressures on Australind Senior High School and cater for population increases in that area. I guess I am asking for an update on the whole greater Bunbury education area, combining all those facilities. Where are we going and what is the time line?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Hon Barry House is making members from the northern suburbs jealous!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes. I will ask Mr Mal Parr to provide an appropriate response.

**Mr M. Parr:** I will go through those projects individually. The Bunbury Senior High School project, which in large part is to provide a new library resource centre, has had some delays. They have revolved around a land swap with the City of Bunbury and land across the road from the school. My understanding is that that process has now been completed. The documentation is proceeding, and it should go to tender later this year. Dalyellup secondary college was originally announced to open in 2008. That has since been revised to open in 2009. There were delays in acquiring the site. The vendor was reluctant to sell. I am pleased to say that that has now been resolved. The site has been acquired, a contract has been let, the contractor is on site and completion of those facilities is scheduled for late 2008, with a 2009 opening. With Manea college, again there have been some delays. Similarly, it was originally announced to open in 2008 and is now scheduled to open in 2009. Part of that problem has been the location of the facilities. When it was first in the concept stage, it was envisaged that the college would be on the South West Regional College of TAFE site. That proved to have some difficulties. Subsequently, there were successful negotiations with Edith Cowan University, and the facility is to be located on its land. It is a challenging site and quite a complex design solution. That in large part explains the cost escalation. I am pleased to say that that project proceeded to tender yesterday. Cape Naturaliste college in Vasse is under construction. It is tracking on schedule and should be ready for the start of the 2008 school year. The allocation for the Newton Moore project was \$9.5 million. The pre-tender estimate was consistent with that allocation. Less than favourable tender results were received, and it was necessary to review the scope of works. That has been done in recent weeks, in consultation with the school community, and agreement has now been reached to reduce the scope by deleting the work associated with the eastern classroom block. That is considered to be the preferred reduction in scope, because the main components of the upgrade project are retained in the work. The reduction, or the elimination, of the eastern classroom block is not expected to cause any problems, particularly when one bears in mind that two secondary schools, Dalyellup secondary college and Manea college, will open in 2009 and provide some relief to Newton Moore Senior High School.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** What are the plans for Eaton middle school in the short to medium term?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will ask the director general to respond.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Eaton college needs to be considered in light of those schools around it. Australind is bursting. With Eaton, the plan originally was to look at years 11 and 12. We are looking at that whole region now to see what plans will work best for that population, for the demographic that is coming forward and the impacts on the surrounding schools. There is no decision yet, but it is on the board right now. We are looking at it as we speak.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I refer to page 915. My question encompasses the second dot point and also the "Service and Appropriation Summary", and is about government policy on behaviour mismanagement, and in particular the announcement last weekend of the trials of the three behaviour centres. What is the anticipated cost of those trial centres; is there a projected number of students who will be involved in those centres; and how will their success or otherwise be determined?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the member for that question. I will ask the director general to respond.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The recent announcement about the three behaviour centres really is in response to a very small number of students, so we are not talking about just naughty kids, but those students who probably are having multiple problems, sometimes including mental health issues. Therefore, it really is targeted at the very pointy end, I guess, as we describe it, of students in secondary schools. At the moment, in the vicinity of six full-time equivalents will be attributed to those centres, and we will look at some further support. It will really have to be on a case-by-case basis. Each area is unique. The shape of the centre in the goldfields will need to be different from the one in, for example, Canning or Fremantle. Therefore, the staffing make-up will be a bit different at each one. However, at this point, there will be in the vicinity of six FTEs. We are working with each location to see what the need might be.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I have a question associated with that. Pastoral care is a vital component of any school community, of course. In Department of Education and Training schools, what is the formula for the allocation of school psychologists? How many psychologists are there in total, and is there a policy on the allocation of school psychologists? I do not mind if that question is taken on notice.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The rule-of-thumb ratio is one school psychologist to 2 000 students. That is how the overall allocation is attributed. In districts, though, it is true to say that the school psychologists work in multidisciplinary teams, so that they get the best leverage out of the various disciplines that they come from in the psychology field. They work across disciplines across schools as a team and, obviously, individually with students in various schools.

[11.20 am]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Do any other counselling services exist in our schools for students and staff?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Certainly, in schools there are chaplains. We make use from time to time of PRIMEPSYCH and departmental funded services when that specific capacity is needed to support our schools. The range is generally through the school psychologists, but there are other means.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I refer to the twelfth dot point on page 914 regarding the community service program, of which I am totally supportive; it is a wonderful initiative. It is a very successful program at Scotch College. The boys got an enormous amount out of it. The government allocated \$1.9 million for this program over four years, which is effectively \$475 000 a year. It seems a meagre amount of money for such a broad-based program. What will the \$475 000 be used for in delivering services?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Thank you honourable member; this is an interesting question. I will ask the director general of the department to make some general comments, and on the financial specifics I will ask Mr Peter McCaffrey to respond.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** We had a pilot in 10 schools. An evaluation has been run on that. We received some clear advice on the kind of target resources that would be required. As the member is aware, year 10 students in all schools are required to undertake a community service of some 20 hours before they can graduate. The program is working fairly well. As the minister indicated, Peter McCaffrey can talk about the funding.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** With regard to the community service program, who actually implements it within the schools? Is it up to the existing school staff, such as deputies and year level coordinators etc?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** The school will make that decision. Some resources were provided to the schools because there is a coordination function. Obviously, if the schools are doing a range of community service options, some coordination is involved, particularly checking that working-with-children checks and other requirements are covered. Public schools received an allocation to undertake that coordination. It was left to the school to decide the best person to undertake that role. It could be a teacher; it could be a coordinator of another sort. It is a school decision.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Are schools receiving additional funding for implementing this program?

**Ms S. O'Neill:** Yes, they are.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Does the director general have any idea how much it will cost each school?

**Mr P. McCaffrey:** When the trial was first implemented, it was intended to find out the better ways that the program could be managed. As a result of the trial, it was necessary to find additional resources. We are currently putting in about \$1.9 million a year, rather than the allocation that we were originally given. The resources are provided based on the number of students who will go through the program at each school. Those resources are, as the director general pointed out, provided to the school in addition to their normal staffing entitlement. They make the decisions about how they manage it within their schools. Those additional resources go directly to the schools to help them manage the placements.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Do any other members here wish to ask questions who have not had the opportunity to ask a question?

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** I have one.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I wanted to check that there were no other members who wanted to ask questions. Hon Giz Watson has the next question.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the eighth dot point on page 913, which deals with fast-track apprenticeships. How do these apprenticeships differ from the usual apprenticeships?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Given the time, I will go straight to Mr Player so that he can give a succinct answer because you will probably argue that you did not get a succinct one from me!

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I never said that, minister!

**Mr R. Player:** These are specifically apprenticeships designed for people who have been in a vocation for a number of years as a trades assistant, a technical officer and so on, to take the steps to recognise their current skills, map the deficit against apprenticeship qualification and provide the training. It is for existing people who are working in unqualified positions. As at November last year, 639 people had commenced since 2005.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** Who makes the assessment of the capabilities of someone who has been working in a certain area?

**Mr R. Player:** It is undertaken by registered training organisations; it could be a TAFE college or a private organisation that does the assessment.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** I refer to science education. We know that a lot of the critical areas of teacher shortage are in science and mathematics. I believe that the percentage of secondary students taking science has fallen from something like 19 per cent to something like 15 per cent in about the past decade. What measures are being taken to encourage science education in schools, which seems to need a particularly positive injection at the moment?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** When you talk about science in that way, you are probably talking about the traditional science subjects.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** No; I am embracing the whole lot.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** We are introducing new courses of study for environmental science and computer science. There are many different fields of science. Certainly, some of the new courses that will be coming on stream will be available to students. If you do the tally on students' subject choices, you will probably find there is quite a significant improvement in the growth of interest in science and students choosing these areas. I think the director general wants to say a couple of words on this.

**Ms S. O'Neill:** In 2007, the department has made science one of the priority areas. To build on the kind of comments you are making, particularly given the economic situation, to ensure new students come through their schooling with a very strong understanding of science concept skills and knowledge, we are promoting very keenly the Primary Connections Science program. As you know, the course starts very early in developing concepts and skills. We are working particularly on that. We have an arrangement with the University of Western Australia and the SPICE program, in which teachers go the university and undertake study alongside university lecturers etc, as part of, I guess, their deeper professional learning in contemporary science. That builds on their skills and contributes to the growing body of scientific knowledge.

**Ms C. Cook:** In the SPICE program, teachers are invited to work with contemporary scientists and get the very latest in science research. They share that with their colleagues in school. The science teachers are invited to attend further professional learning about that sort of research. It is an expansive program. As the director general pointed out, we will have a secondary, primary and early childhood sequence for science and that will include the physical sciences. There will be, as I said earlier, practical resources. Those practical resources for both primary and secondary schools will be the sort that engage kids and motivate them to study science, which is absolutely imperative. In the primary schools, it will be articulated with the primary connections, as the director general pointed out. They also are very engaging materials for teachers to use with students. The secondary materials will also be articulated with the SPICE program and resources that are being developed at WestOne. They are practical resources that will engage students, and teachers can use them day by day, week by week. Every endeavour has been made to build on the systemic policy in directing schools from 2000 onward to focus on science, professional learning for primary and secondary teachers and also on providing comprehensive resources that are very classroom ready and, importantly, will engage students.

[11.30 am]

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** That concludes this session. I remind members that if they have further questions, to submit them in a written format and the department will provide a written response. I thank the witnesses for their contribution. On behalf of members, I congratulate you, Ms O'Neill, on your appointment. Your performance this morning demonstrated in a small way what a good decision it was. We look forward to seeing you at future hearings.

*Meeting suspended from 11.32 to 11.39 am*

**Division 52: Curriculum Council, \$24 398 000 -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Education and Training.

Mr D. Wood, Chief Executive Officer.

Ms Y. Seetoh, Manager, Financial Services.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

Members are asked to sit to my left where practicable so that witnesses will not have to turn their heads to the back of the chamber when answering questions. It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The

committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** We have not had any questions tabled for the Curriculum Council segment. I ask members whether they have questions.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Welcome to Mr Wood and Ms Seetoh. I refer to the fourth dot point at page 944, which reads -

Refinements made to outcomes and course standards for new senior secondary courses.

I also refer to the first and second dot points on page 946 under "Major Achievements For 2006-07", which read -

- Assessment, Review and Moderation panels have been re-established with refined terms of reference.
- New courses modified in response to teacher and community feedback, and a syllabus statement written for all units within each course and assessment tables with weightings incorporated.

I am very supportive of the changes, particularly the changes to the assessment procedures. I am sure the minister is aware that I have real concerns about the reasons for the changes to the year 12 English course. Something has come to my attention that is of grave concern. Former senior English students who are about to graduate have chosen 2A and 2B or 1C and 1D, but they must achieve a level 4 to graduate this year. After the first round of exams, it is apparent that a number of the students who would normally have a VET pathway have no hope of achieving a level 4; they are achieving level 3 or level 2. Therefore, they cannot graduate. They were almost guaranteed that they could graduate. A lot of these students are spitting the dummy halfway through the year because they can see that they will not be able to graduate. Is the minister aware of the problem, which is a major problem, and that some schools are fabricating the students' results to ensure that they graduate by achieving level 4? In other words, they are changing the students' results.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** In short, I do not know whether the Minister for Education and Training is aware of the problem, but he will certainly be advised of the issue raised by Hon Peter Collier. I will ask the chief executive officer of the Curriculum Council to make some general comments about the concerns that have been raised.

**Mr D. Wood:** This is a very important question and I have raised it initially with the minister. The council is looking at providing a set of work samples that will illustrate the required graduation level from next year onwards. We are working that through in conjunction with parent groups and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. From next year onwards, there will be a defined standard for graduation. A number of schools have expressed concern that the level 4 requirement is probably a little higher than students would formerly have been required to achieve to obtain a grade of C in senior English or vocational English. Once we have the samples together, we will work to circulate them to schools next term. We will ask the schools to look at cases of students who appear to be at risk of not graduating this year compared with what would have been the case in previous years. The council has established a special provisions committee to look at cases of students who might have been disadvantaged by the transition. We will ask schools, through the consensus meeting process, to look specifically at those students to see how their standards line up, so that we can hopefully address the issue in that manner.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That needs to be done as a matter of urgency, because a number of students are literally throwing in the towel at this stage because they cannot see the potential for graduation. As I said, schools are fabricating their results.

**Mr D. Wood:** I certainly hope that is not the case. We would need to look carefully at that.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I refer again to the same dot points. Given that there are serious concerns with the Andrich report and the inappropriate use of levels for fine-grained assessment, why was the decision made to maintain the assessment procedure for year 12 English for this year?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank Hon Peter Collier for that question and will refer it to Mr Wood.

**Mr D. Wood:** I thank the member. This was probably the most difficult question for the council when it met in late January to work out the transition arrangements. Once the decision had been made by the council to move

to a grading system, a decision then had to be made about whether students studying the four courses this year - English, media production and analysis, aviation and engineering - would be given reports in grades and with numerical assessments or whether we would persist with the levels. Given that that decision was made virtually only a few days before school started, it would have been very unfair on teachers who had done the right thing by planning their programs for the year to say that they would need to redo their assessment outlines for the year for year 12s. There were two considerations, and that was the first. The second was the fact that these students had been assessed and their results reported in levels last year. It was decided to run that system again this year so that there would be no inconsistency between the reporting of years 11 and 12 results in the statement of results that students get from the council at the end of this year. They were the two reasons.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** In retrospect, it might have been better to go with the different form. However, the decision was made. Having said that, can the minister guarantee that years 11 and 12 results for the 2007 cohort will provide an accurate indication of individual student achievement?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I cannot guarantee anything because I am not the Minister for Education and Training.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am sure that Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has a lot of influence.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Not any more. I would not say that that is the case. [11.50 am]

**Mr D. Wood:** I will explain what we have put in place to ensure the quality of the year 12 results for the four new courses. One of the major things is that the general achievement test is used. We undertake a statistical analysis of the results of that test. All the year 12 students who are doing at least one of the four new courses sat that test on 14 June. That all went very well. They will be marked during the holidays and the analysis will show the relative position of the students' scores compared with the results that have been submitted for the school for semester 1 results. Effectively, we do an analysis of the school versus state results for those four school results versus the general achievement result. That gives us one statistical way of getting a general feel of whether the schools' rank order of students is correct and also the relative separation. It also gives us a sense of whether one school is assessing at a more difficult or easier level relative to another school. That is one element to it. The second element is that we will run consensus meetings. They will happen in late August. The results will go back to the teachers and they will bring samples of work from semester 1. Through a consensus moderation process, they will validate their semester 1 results in light of the information they get about the general achievement test at the same time. At the end of the year, there will be other consensus meeting processes.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** With regard to the changes to the assessment procedures that were announced just before the start of the academic year, particularly with regard to the year 11 courses, what role will the levels now play in determining students' assessment?

**Mr D. Wood:** For the eight courses running in year 11 this year, the only role that levels have played is that until we can get grade descriptors together and make the grading information available - so that teachers have a basis upon which to award grades rather than levels - we asked teachers to continue to use the levels. That grading information is now available. I will qualify that. There are a couple of subjects in which there were technical issues in getting the grade descriptors absolutely right.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Physical education?

**Mr D. Wood:** Yes, there was a hold-up with that. Certainly by halfway through next term we hope that all the grade descriptors will be available for the eight new courses and that teachers will confidently use those at the end of the year to award grades.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is a shame, because the Minister for Education and Training said that the grade descriptors would be available in schools at the beginning of the second term.

**Mr D. Wood:** This is at the heart of a lot of the issues. When we made the decision early in the year to go with grades, I, along with a number of other people, thought that it would simply be a matter of writing grade descriptors similar to those we have currently in our tertiary entrance examination subjects. However, if we had done that, we would have ended up with statements that are no better than the level statements we have currently. We had to then look at a much more technical process that involved looking at student work samples. We had to gather student work samples in a systematic way and do a thorough statistical analysis using a complex technical process to get all the ratings of the tasks and groups of teachers together. If we had gone the first way, we would have ended up with a position that is not much better than where we are currently with the level statements. We now have a robust and defensible set of grade descriptors that will service us well over the long term.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Having said that, once the grade descriptors are fully operational, will the levels be redundant?

**Mr D. Wood:** For assessing student work?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes.

**Mr D. Wood:** Absolutely.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** What role will they play?

**Mr D. Wood:** In the long run, once we are into a stable pattern whereby we are running examinations and so on, we can do a thorough analysis using a similar standards setting exercises to the one that is used in New South Wales. It will involve panels of expert teachers - they would probably be the markers of the examinations - to work with what we currently call the course standards, which we hope will become what we call outcome descriptors. They may be given a more general name. They will then form the backbone of the development for the courses or units from 1A through to 3B. In a general sense, they would never be seen by the student. They would be provided back to the school for general school planning purposes.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Mention was made about the role of the general achievement test. It was stated that the general achievement test would be used as a tool to help assist with the accuracy of the English results. I turn to page 948 of the *Budget Statements*. The fifth dot point states -

- 17,000 students studying a new WACE course unit sat the General Achievement Test (GAT).  
The results of this test were analysed to provide comparability of school assessments.

The eleventh dot point states -

Evaluation of GAT undertaken and reported.

The twelfth dot points states -

Administer the GAT to Year 12 students enrolled in at least one new course and report results to schools.

I refer to a senior secondary education committee report on the English course, which was tabled by the minister earlier this year. It reads -

## 2.2 Teacher Confidence

Teachers are reporting a reduction in confidence. Some contributing factors include:

- The absence of consensus moderation meetings during Semester One.
- Changes to assessment with the introduction of direct and any indirect assessment.
- The lack of examples of student achievement at the higher levels i.e. level 6 to 8.

It further states under the heading "**Use of the General Achievement Test and Comparability of Assessments Between Schools**" -

The General Achievement Test results, whilst useful, should be interpreted cautiously. The age-appropriateness of the test has been raised. It was developed in Victoria for Year 12 students who are effectively 18 months to two years older than the WA cohort who sat the test. In addition, it was a 3 hour test. For many students, this would have been their first experience of a long test.

...

**Suggestion 2:** That the Curriculum Council undertake a detailed technical analysis of the General Achievement Test and its application to provide advice on the comparability of levels between and within schools.

Taking into consideration those dot points and the concerns raised in the report that was provided to the Curriculum Council and the concerns raised by Mr Wood's predecessor, David Axworthy, about the accuracy of the general achievement test, is the general achievement test an accurate indicator of comparability between schools?

[12 noon]

**Mr D. Wood:** I was in the council when that report was presented. The age-appropriateness of the test was applied last year. It was administered to year 11 students last year and was used in a much more exploratory manner. This year it is being administered to year 12s, so it is age appropriate this year. On the question of whether it is an appropriate measure, we commissioned a person from the University of Melbourne to analyse the more technical aspects of the GAT. It did appear to perform, in a technical sense, in the way it should have. However, this year we will get a similar analysis done based on the results for this year. My view is that it certainly is an excellent test that is used in Victoria on a much more robust basis. It is certainly as good as any of the general aptitude or achievement tests that are used anywhere. I am quite confident that it will give us one window into achievements. I think it is an excellent test for what we are using it for.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** And an evaluation will be undertaken -

**Mr D. Wood:** An evaluation will be undertaken this year.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I refer to the first and second dot points on page 947, which state -

Moderation strategies were implemented for Year 11 and 12 to ensure stakeholders' acceptance of school assessment and grading in accredited subjects.

Moderation policies and procedures were finalised for implementation in four new courses.

Again, moderation is obviously an issue when new courses and assessment procedures are implemented. A moment ago I read out some of the concerns of teachers about the fact that consensus moderation meetings were too late; they wanted to have them earlier. I raised this issue with the minister during the estimates hearing in September last year, and I am sure that Mr Wood would remember it. I was told that there would be more up-front moderation. We are now halfway through the year. Has there been any up-front moderation for the courses? Have there been any consensus meetings to this stage?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I understand that there has been. I think moderation is very, very important, but I also think that making judgements is almost instinctive to the profession of teaching.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** However, these are new courses -

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, certainly. I recognise the need as it applies to new courses. We have poured considerable resources into making consistent judgements in preparation for the new courses, and we are committed to ensuring that we get the best outcomes in moderation. We recognise the importance of it. However, there is also a bit of an issue with teachers' lack of confidence in their own judgements. In my experience, they are very good at making judgements. However, I think some individuals still feel uneasy about and lack confidence in the judgements they make. I will ask Mr Wood to comment on the specific question that the member has asked.

**Mr D. Wood:** In all the new courses - I will qualify that by saying in most of the new courses, and I will take it on notice and confirm the exact list - assessment seminars were conducted.

[*Supplementary Information No B1.*]

**Mr D. Wood:** Assessment seminars were held in almost all the new courses.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** They were not consensus meetings, were they?

**Mr D. Wood:** They were not consensus meetings, but they were certainly meetings that worked through with teachers their expectations for assessing for that year. Once the grade descriptors are produced - in fact, we are right in the middle of that now - we will hold what we call grading consensus meetings at which teachers will be provided with the new grade descriptors and we will work through the use of those in a workshop environment. Generally, teachers have received those very well. Thirdly, as I said in the previous answer, once the general achievement test results are back, we will hold semester 1 grading consensus meetings in all the new courses for year 12.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Was that term 3?

**Mr D. Wood:** Term 3, yes, in late August and then in November for all eight courses for year 11 and also the four in year 12.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I take it that the Robson task force recommendation on the external assessment of the courses no longer exists. There will no longer be any external assessment of the courses.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The new courses?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes; the minister tabled -

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** That is right. I do not know whether there has been a shift in policy. The member is saying that he understands that there will be no external assessment of the new courses of study.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** They will not be externally assessed.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Of course they are all externally assessed.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** By whom?

**Mr D. Wood:** This year the Western Australian Certificate of Education exams are being held in year 12 -

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Sorry; I have been misunderstood. Will the courses be assessed by an external provider? We had the assessment of the course by EasyMark Pty Ltd.

**Mr D. Wood:** The external evaluation?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Will there be external assessment of the new courses?

**Mr D. Wood:** We will not be using the EasyMark people as we have done previously. We will run teacher juries in the eight courses, and the teacher juries will be asked two fundamental questions. The first question

will be whether any adjustment needs to be made to the course to improve it, and the second question will be whether the support that is provided by the Curriculum Council and its school systems is appropriate. We will then use that as a basis to make adjustments. Because of the focus on English, we are convening a much larger jury. The planning is not absolutely final at the moment, but we are looking at a jury of about 50 using Dr Christina Gillgren, as we have done for all the other juries. That will be a whole-day exercise. Hopefully, through that process we will get a very good sense from English teachers of what they would like to address in the issues that have been raised.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I refer to the major achievements for 2006-07 listed on page 944. The first dot point states -

Integration of national statements of learning into State curriculum materials will be completed to meet national requirements for curriculum consistency by the end of 2007.

As this is obviously the first time we will look at national consistency in the early years, will there be community and parent consultation on this matter? I presume that there will be national consultation with the different sectors. Will that national consultation consider age-appropriate programs? Kindergarten children in Victoria and New South Wales, the main populated states in Australia, are almost a year different in age from those in Western Australia. Those states call their preprimary school kindergarten. This is of some concern if we are trying to reach by the end of 2007 a requirement for curriculum consistency. What community and parent input will be available? There is a lot of concern by parents in the community about the formalisation of the early years to the detriment of the learning outcomes for children.

[12.10 pm]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the honourable member. The short answer to her question is no, not at this stage; it is not planned that there will be community consultation on this matter. The second part of the question related to age appropriateness, I think. I do not know whether Mr Wood has any comment on that. Can we take the second part of the member's question on notice? It is a matter of policy. I am not across the detail of it. It is a very specific question. The answer to the first part of the question is no, and the second part we will take on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No B2.]*

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** We are looking at national consistency. I am just asking, very simply, whether there is going to be national consistency between our kindergarten children and the eastern states' kindergarten children.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The national statements aim to ensure consistency in what students are taught in years 5, 7 and 9. The member was talking about four-year-olds, I think.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** It states on page 942 that national curriculum consistency will cover K-10.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Minister, I am aware of the time. If the minister cannot find an answer fairly quickly, we might put that on notice so that we do not run into the time allocated for the next division.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes. Can I take that whole question on notice and get a clarification?

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Yes.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will be happy to provide answers to the first and second parts of the member's question on notice.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I thank the minister, Mr Wood and Ms Seetoh.

**Division 38: Housing and Works, \$195 997 000; Housing Authority -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Housing and Works.

Mr R. Mitchell, Director General.

Mrs K. Fijac, Deputy Director General.

Mr J. Coles, Deputy Director General, Works.

Mrs R. Bradley, General Manager, Business Services.

Mr M. Juliff, Manager, Financial Planning and Performance.

Mr G. Vlahos, Manager, Financial Planning and Budgeting.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If

for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

Members are asked to sit towards the front of the chamber on the opposition benches where practicable, so that witnesses will not have to turn their heads to the back of the chamber when answering questions. It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask for your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** No questions have been asked ahead of this session, so there are no answers to be tabled. I will give the call to Hon Ray Halligan.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I refer to the third dot point under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 681, which is about rents. There are percentages, but no dollar figures. The percentages are increasing dramatically. Can the minister provide the dollar figures, and what will be done to reduce these increases in rents being paid?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the honourable member. Obviously, rents, by and large, are determined by supply and demand. The availability drives the price in the payment of rents. Due to the very low vacancy rates in the Perth central business district and the ongoing demand for office accommodation, we find that market rents for secondary office accommodation typically utilised by government have increased substantially. They are predicted to continue to do so until new office supply opportunities become available in 2009 through to 2010. Excluding the CBD, rent increases have not been as substantial in metropolitan and regional areas. Rent increases are incurred when leases commence or when rent reviews apply under existing lease agreements. I am not sure whether we can provide a dollar figure. However, we can give the member some additional information from Mr John Coles. However, before I hand over to Mr Coles, I will just say that the government cannot regulate the price of rents. That is driven by economic considerations and needs to be considered within that context.

**Mr J. Coles:** The rates at the moment range from \$320 a square metre to \$400 a square metre. At the moment, mining companies, as members probably read in *The West Australian* just a while ago, are paying up to \$400 a square metre.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I understand that. However, there is an option. It is rent or buy. My understanding is that the government has been renting properties for some considerable time, and continues to rent. My question is: as one reads about the enormous increases in rents that have to be paid, has consideration been given to buying or building, rather than renting?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** That is a fairly interesting question to ask. Obviously, the purchase of major accommodation in the CBD would be quite a substantial outlay for the government. I would hate to think what the Governor Stirling Tower is worth, and I would hate to think what Dumas House is worth. Therefore, when we talk about the purchase of such properties that are usually used to accommodate agencies or whatever the purpose might be, we are talking about very substantial sums of money and about managing all the outgoings etc that are associated with that. I do not know whether this has been an issue within the Department of Housing and Works that has had an airing in recent times. I think we can get some information from Mr John Coles.

[12.20 pm]

**Mr J. Coles:** A strategy has been developed for future accommodation scenarios to look at purchasing as well as leasing. In the growing current economic climate, there is a strategy in place to look at ownership of buildings. It obviously depends on the cost to capital. As the minister has indicated, we are running scenarios over a 20-year period to see what is the best return for government.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** Thank you. It is a matter of what is best for the people of Western Australia over a long time, not just a term of government. I would like to know that a cost-benefit analysis is being continually

undertaken rather than continuing to see in budget papers that rentals have increased by 53 per cent, a further 31 per cent and a further 15 per cent, with the explanation that we just have to accept it. I am afraid that is not acceptable.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The recent escalation of real estate values has been largely driven by the unprecedented economic conditions we are experiencing. In the last September quarter there was a growth rate of 14.8 per cent. That is unprecedented by world standards. Who would have projected that in Western Australia the price of land and accommodation, in a sense, flowed through to rents?

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I do not think we can go down that path; that is another argument.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Hang on. The point I am making is that there had been pretty stable rents for a period and fairly stable house prices over a couple of decades probably. In probably the last year or two there have been unprecedented increases in land, house and rent values. The point the member makes about whether, in view of what has happened, there should be a closer look at the cost-benefit analysis in the short term and over a much longer period is a very good idea to determine whether, over the next 20 or 30 years, government can come out better by renting or purchasing. I am heartened to hear from Mr Coles that, in fact, that work is on the drawing board. It demonstrates that the Department of Housing and Works is one step ahead, and being one step ahead of Hon Ray Halligan is not an easy thing to achieve.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I suggest it is about five years behind, not one step ahead. I refer to the third dot point on page 684 under "Major Achievements For 2006-07" about major redevelopment of the old Treasury building. Can we have some more information about what that redevelopment might be?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** As we know, the old Treasury building has been around for a long time. The initial project scope was to convert the old Treasury building, through its adaptive re-use and redevelopment, to provide up to around 15 000 square metres of space to accommodate major government tenancies. The initial design did cause some considerable debate. As a result of that, government decided, in part, to revise the proposal to be more in keeping with those of Perth city council and other significant planning bodies. This will result in a much improved heritage precinct complex. There are people who think this is a really good initiative. As minister representing the minister in the other place, I am very pleased that this old heritage building will receive substantial redevelopment and some upgrading in due course. I am wondering whether there is anything more to add to that. Mr Bob Mitchell, the director general, might make additional comment.

**Mr R. Mitchell:** The original concept of the office block, as part of the refurbishment, was formed before the boom. Over the past 12 to 18 months, there has been a significant amount of inquiry from commercial industry, particularly from the hotel industry, about the redevelopment of the site. That has assisted us to make the decision to look at alternatives for that site.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I understand that some years ago the hotel industry was looking at that site but there were problems associated with the heritage structure and whether those interested could put together a viable business in that building. In view of the rents and the increase in rentals being paid by the government for accommodation for government agencies, has the government contemplated placing some of those agencies within the old Treasury building?

[12.30 pm]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** In determining the purpose of buildings, I guess we need a measure of the opportunity cost of going down one path compared with going down another path. Obviously, an analysis would need to be undertaken of the net benefit to the community. Firstly, it would be great if the old Treasury building was sustainable and could look after itself. It is a major heritage building. A distinguishing feature of that building is its architecture. A range of issues need to be considered about its future use. I do not know whether Mr Mitchell has anything to add.

**Mr R. Mitchell:** In the future, when we get to the point of going out to industry, there is a possibility of a combined outcome on that site.

**Hon SHEILA MILLS:** The first dot point under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 681 of the *Budget Statements* refers to the Carpenter government's unprecedented capital works program. Can the minister provide further details on the 2007-08 initiatives?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** This item refers to the capital works program. It is a very good story because the Carpenter government has a very strong commitment to building infrastructure and supporting community programs. This is reflected in the increased level of annual expenditure on the capital works building program, which has grown over the past four years. We have seen a significant growth, nearly a doubling, in expenditure in this area. In 2002-03 the value of this program was \$220 million and it increased in 2005-06 to \$324 million. In 2007-08 the annual expenditure is estimated to increase to \$550 million, which is more than double the 2002-03 figure. Members might think this should be usual in a period of economic prosperity and a boom, but it

is a reflection of the Carpenter government's priority; that is, looking beyond the horizon to try to position the state for the future by ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure and the capital expenditure on building programs is such that it can cater for demand. It is pleasing to look at the growth of building projects in the key areas in which the government has major strengths; for example, the projects within the Department of Education and Training, Department of Health, WA Police and so on. I thank the member for the question. It is a very good question and I could spend an inordinate amount of time on the answer. Of course, I will not because I know members opposite would like to ask some questions so they can hear the answer from me.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I refer to full-time equivalent staff at page 684 of the *Budget Statements*. The government budgeted for 251 FTEs, but the number increased to 304. That figure is estimated to be 319 in the 2007-08 financial year. Can the minister explain the reason for that dramatic increase?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I assume it is a reflection of the increase in the amount of building work that is currently occurring. In fact, I have some information on the major building projects. For example, 64 projects are valued at over \$10 million and higher. The amount allocated to stage 1 of the Fiona Stanley southern tertiary hospital is \$710.1 million. We have the new Swan Health Campus and stage 2 of the Hedland Regional Resource Centre replacement. In the area of culture and the arts a new performing arts venue is proposed. In the area of training there is the redevelopment of Central TAFE. In the Attorney General's area there is the central business district courts project, which is the Central Law Courts refurbishment. I could go on, but the point I make is that there are 64 major projects. We cannot have that level of investment in capital projects without an impact on the number of people required in the central agency to plan, manage, cost, revise, review and make payments to contractors. All those functions have to be carried out. The fantastic achievement in the growth in the number of projects and the investment in this state's capital infrastructure require all these things to occur and this is reflected in the increase in the number of full-time equivalents, as the member rightly pointed out at page 684 of the *Budget Statements*.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I am sorry; I do not accept the answer. The minister is telling me that for each project the department needs to put on one additional FTE. That does not make sense.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I think the member misheard me.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** That is what it amounts to and the argument the minister put forward is the 64 new projects.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** There is no formula that indicates we put on one additional FTE per additional project. It depends on the project size, value and complexity and a range of initiatives. Anybody who has had experience with building - the Chair has had that experience - will know that the size, function and complexity of what needs to be performed within the building to make the system flow are considerations.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I used to work for a construction company. Do not go down that path with me. The minister is believing her own rhetoric.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I think Mr Mitchell will respond.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** If the member does not believe me, he might believe Mr Mitchell.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** There is no doubt about that.

**Mr R. Mitchell:** It is in actual fact a reflection of the huge works program and we are staffing to meet that program. We are staffing it in a way that can be downsized as the program downsizes in the future. The industry is as busy as it has ever been and the capacity of the industry is just about at maximum. Our staffing levels equate to a really busy time. If the amount of work falls off into the future, the numbers will fall.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** It is something that was not anticipated because the budgeted figure was only 251 and it went up to 304. One expects, and the minister can confirm or deny it, that it would be in the initial phases of these projects that a greater number is required.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The member might be confusing himself with the mining industry. In that industry the construction phase requires huge numbers of workers and the operational phase requires fewer workers.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** These jobs are tendered out. The government is not building these buildings

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The member is trying to make an argument that at the beginning of a construction project more workers will be required. I do not know whether there is any difference in the number of workers required to pour a concrete slab from the number required to undertake the final fit-out and finish. There may be some sort of a formula or indicator that shows there is a differential, but it is the first time that I have heard of it.

[12.40 pm]

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I refer to the second last dot point on page 684 of the *Budget Statements*, which states -

The Government has committed to occupy 22,000m<sup>2</sup> of office accommodation . . .

Is the minister able to indicate the cost of that accommodation to government?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The site at 140 William Street will ensure the revitalisation of an important part of the central business district. It is to be developed to stimulate the revitalisation of that precinct, with due attention to design, sustainability and integration with the heritage fabric of the area. The building will be constructed to a 4.5-star Australian Building Greenhouse Rating and a 5-star Green Star sustainability standard. Obviously, those factors will have an impact on cost. I do not seem to have any information on the total cost of the project and I am not sure that we can provide that information at this point in any event. Mr Bob Mitchell has just advised me that we could provide that information, provided that we take the question on notice. I ask the member to place that question on notice and we will be happy to provide that information.

[*Supplementary Information No C1.*]

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I refer to page 696 under the Housing Authority. Details on land acquisition, development and so forth for 2007-08 are listed at the top of the page. I note that the figures for each of the four subheadings of acquisition, development, holding costs and redevelopment are well down on those of the current year. What is the explanation for that?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The land acquisition budget for 2007-08 has returned to previous funding levels. The budget for 2006-07 included the strategic purchase of en globo land lots; that is, \$34 million for land in Caversham. These purchases added to the authority's land bank for future social housing planning. The decrease in development costs for 2007-08 reflects the decision to bring forward lots for development in 2006-07. Large expenditure items such as bulk earthworks and civil engineering works were brought forward into the 2006-07 budget for Dalyellup, Clarkson and Butler. This was done to address the demand for land purchases by home buyers. There was obviously a need to do that. That is what occurred.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I think the minister said that the figures were returning to normal levels, if that is the correct term. However, I note that the actual spending for 2005-06 was just over \$958 million in total and the estimated actual amount spent this year was \$952 million. What was the normal year? Was it some time prior to 2005-06?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am not sure that I understand Hon Ray Halligan's question. I am really very keen to assist him, but I am not sure that I have quite got his point. I ask the member to explain his question again.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I asked why the amount of money proposed to be expended for land acquisition, development, holding costs and redevelopment -

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will just explain where I am. I refer to the top of page 696, which lists under "Land" the acquisition 2007-08 program, the development 2007-08 program and the holding costs 2007-08 program. The estimated cost of these programs is provided in the first column and the estimated expenditure for 2007-08 is provided in the last column. The response I have just given concerned that chart and those line items. I am assuming that Hon Ray Halligan has now moved to the capital contribution table and is referring to one of the line items in that.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I will just explain. That was my initial question. I was comparing the figures that the minister just spelled out at the top of page 696 with the figures on page 695 for the current year. I will refer to the individual estimated costs for acquisition, development, holding costs and redevelopment. For the current year, the estimated total cost for the acquisition program was just over \$83 million, and for next year it is \$30 million. The estimated total cost for the development program was nearly \$112 million this year and for next year it is only \$76 million.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The only explanation I can give - somebody from the agency might do better than I will - is that there is an up-front cost involved in acquiring land and it then goes back to the normal costing model.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** The department should be acquiring land all the time.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** It does, but sometimes it acquires more land than it would normally acquire because of projected growth or the need for a development or whatever. The department does not acquire the same amount of land every year over a 20-year period; it acquires land based on supply and demand for the stock of housing and, indeed, any other purpose in accordance with future requirements or to meet a backlog for a certain category of housing.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I understand that. I asked the question so that the minister could explain that. All I am saying, now that the minister has said what she has said, is that the demand still exists. The demand still exists but the department is acquiring less! The minister rightly said that it depends on the demand. The demand still exists but the department is acquiring less. I cannot understand that.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will put it simply: there is not an unlimited supply of money with which to buy an unlimited amount of land.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** Oh dear, dear, dear.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am sure that what I say is correct even though -

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** It is what the minister believes to be correct.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The point I am making is that the spending patterns of the department for the purchase of land take many things into consideration. One of those things is supply and demand for future housing. The department has limited funding; I assume that it does not go out with an open chequebook. I will get Mr Bob Mitchell to correct me if I am wrong. A number of considerations are taken into account. There are peaks and troughs or a levelling out of that activity. I do not think that that is unusual. Mrs Kerry Fijac is from housing services. She is an expert and will provide the appropriate supplementary information.

**Mrs K. Fijac:** There are peaks and troughs in asset acquisition. If we identify a strategic acquisition -

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** The peaks and troughs are the department's creation; they are influenced by whether the department decides to buy.

**Mrs K. Fijac:** True; it is whether or not we decide to buy.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** The department might say that it depends on how much money it is given.

**Mrs K. Fijac:** It also depends on what becomes available to the department. In the case of Caversham, that land became available through the commonwealth government. That was an excellent strategic purchase that was made last year. There are peaks and troughs in land development costs as well. The development costs will be higher in some years, reflecting higher costs for site works and headworks. That extra cost may be concentrated in one year for development but sales may not materialise until following years. There are peaks and troughs for both acquisition and development. That is expected and happens year by year within the department.

[12.50 pm]

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** That is a timing issue, which I accept. There will be some of that.

**Hon SHEILA MILLS:** I refer to page 684 of the *Budget Statements* and to the apprenticeship initiative. Will the minister outline what the Department of Housing and Works is doing to address trade skill shortages in the Western Australian building and construction industry?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The department's pilot apprenticeship scheme commenced in 2006. The aim of the scheme is to address the skill shortages in the building and construction industry. It involves the direct recruitment, retention and trade completion of apprentices. It is fair to say that the apprenticeship training issue was such that many industry participants were saying that the government was not doing a lot in that regard and that it wanted the private sector to train apprentices. That issue, together with the fact that the government's involvement in the training of apprentices would have major economic benefits, meant that the department was able to form partnerships with group training organisations and directly engage apprentices and deploy them across the department's maintenance and construction programs, including housing. The department now has three metropolitan group training partners in Skill Hire, the Western Australian Group Training Scheme and MPA Skills. Between us we have managed to get 63 apprentices employed in the metropolitan area in the painting and decorating, carpentry and joinery, refrigeration and airconditioning, glazing and bevelling, plumbing, gasfitting and electrical trades. This is a great news story. It demonstrates a commitment by the government to trade training and it shows how government agencies can be active in trade training. It is a demonstration of the achievement of government in the training area. There has been an 81 per cent increase in apprenticeships and traineeships since we came to office in 2001. I am very proud to be a part of a government - I am sure that Hon Sheila Mills is, too - that delivers so much in this very important area, particularly to our youth.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I refer to page 696 of the *Budget Statements* and to the lines that read "Loans to Homebuyers" and "Keystart Scheme - 2007-08 Program". In 2006-07 nearly \$447 million was expended. However, the budget estimate for 2007-08 is \$420 million. Can the minister explain why that figure has been reduced?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I ask Mr Bob Mitchell to provide a response.

**Mr R. Mitchell:** Keystart has been phenomenally successful over the years, particularly in its early years. The number of loans it is issuing these days is decreasing, because banks and financial institutions have moved into Keystart's business. That is a good thing, because the market has become very competitive. Banks now loan on zero deposit. Banks have adopted the philosophies on which Keystart was established and are now in the marketplace filling a void.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to service 1, "Delivery, Management and Maintenance of Government Buildings, Projects and Office Accommodation" on page 683 of the *Budget Statements*. This question may need to be taken on notice because it relates to a specific site. Can someone help me with the Pyrton site in Eden Hill?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** What would the member like to know?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Has demolition of the vacated buildings been completed? What is the current status of the negotiation between the Indigenous Land Corporation and the department about the potential acquisition of that site?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** We do not need to take that question on notice. I will ask Mr Coles to respond.

**Mr J. Coles:** The contract has been let for demolition. The contract has commenced. Negotiations with the ILC are taking place on an ongoing basis.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Will there be a point at which a decision is made about whether ILC will take it on? Is the department working on a time frame in which a decision is made, because this matter has been ongoing?

**Mr J. Coles:** It is our intention to get a decision from that group within three months. It prepared an initial business case and we are keen to finalise that and move forward. The time frame would be three months.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** If it does not proceed, is it still the intention of the department to go back to plan B, or will it go back out for public comment?

**Mr J. Coles:** At this stage it may be necessary to revisit public consultation because, as I understand it, the option to which the member referred came out of the public consultation process. It would be appropriate, I think, to revisit some public consultation.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I refer to the first dot point on page 684 of the *Budget Statements*. The Department of Housing and Works is building two houses in the street in which I live. I suppose I should declare a bit of an interest. Last weekend I looked at those houses. They are of very poor quality. Why is the department not using bricks and mortar and cement? These houses have been built on stilts. They are made of clad boarding and the flooring is made from chipboard. Although the department is saying that it is building a certain quantity of homes, I believe that the quality of those homes is very poor.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** First of all, I ask for the member to advise us where she lives.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** It does not really matter. I have seen similarly constructed houses in other areas.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Are they Department of Housing and Works houses?

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** Yes, they are. They are in Bridgetown. The department is building seven, but I have been through the two in my street.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Has Hon Robyn McSweeney entered a property that she is not permitted to enter?

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** Minister, really!

**Mr J. Coles:** Firstly, about 90 per cent of the properties we build are built with bricks and tiles. That is the majority of stock. If a site is unlevelled, if we want to trial prefabricated arrangements in building, or if it is a community-based house and people are asking for other alternative materials, we will look at that. However, I do not know the specific property the member is talking about.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Perhaps the member can put that question on notice.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I will.

[*Supplementary Information No C2.*]

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** I refer to the maintenance of government buildings on page 683 of the *Budget Statements*. Has the department received any complaints about the quality of work performed or the provision of services by the facilities manager Spotless? If so, what is the nature of those complaints? What procedures are in place to ensure that Spotless carries out its contractual obligations in a competent manner, on time and within

budget? Can the minister give me some approximation of the value of works and services that are provided by Spotless on an annual basis?

[1.00 pm]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Obviously, I do not know that detail. I will refer the question to Mr John Coles.

**Mr J. Coles:** My recollection is that there have been four complaints about Spotless that I am aware of. Those complaints have been investigated, and part of it is due to insufficient supervision on jobs at times. The process we have in place is that, as an arranger of providing maintenance, we have officers in the agency who bring their principals in and advise them of those concerns. Its performance, like any arranger, is monitored. If it reaches a situation that we feel is unsatisfactory on an ongoing basis, we will take the option to suspend it from that panel. The exact amount of its contract value, if the minister agrees, I would have to take on notice to provide.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Would the member like that on notice?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

[*Supplementary Information No C3.*]

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** I am surprised that there have been only four complaints. I am surprised that there have not been more than that from the education department alone, and that is based on my talking to various school principals and other senior people in the North Metropolitan Region about work that is being conducted on their premises. However, I raise the issue with the minister. If that figure should change, or when the officers read the question exactly, and they wanted to provide some additional information, that would be helpful.

**Hon SHEILA MILLS:** I have a question pertaining to my electorate. At page 686 of the budget papers reference is made to the Fremantle Prison heritage precinct. Can the minister please advise how the long-term sustainability of the Fremantle Prison heritage precinct is being promoted?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the member for this question. I think everybody knows that Fremantle Prison is an important state tourism asset and therefore needs to be promoted as part of the Fremantle Prison heritage precinct. In conjunction with a fresh program of themed tours and the successful launch of the Fremantle Prison tunnel tours in 2005, it is anticipated that almost 165 000 people will visit the site in 2007. That is about a 58 per cent increase on visitor levels over the past five years. I must also say that I am amazed at the number of people who want to go down a tunnel! Each to their own. I think it has water in it.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** There were many days when people did not want to go there!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** No. Have times not changed, Hon George Cash? Anyway, people want to go down a tunnel that has water in it and paddle their way through it. It is fantastic. This demonstrates the innovation of Western Australians. It is absolutely fantastic that somebody has come across the idea of making this a tourism proposal. It lines up with the Wine and Truffle Company in innovation and the promotion of thinking outside the square, which Western Australians are very good at.

Certainly, as a result of all this promotion and the tours, the prison now retains revenue that has increased from \$2.9 million in 2005-06 to an estimated \$3.5 million in 2007-08. That is a fantastic improvement. It just goes to show how wonderful these prison tunnel tours are. The site has also been recognised at a national level, leading to its inscription on the National Heritage List in August 2005. It is the only Western Australian-built heritage property on the list, which is also wonderful. In 2007-08 there will be a continued focus on how to do even more for the site and the infrastructure. I understand that within the Gatehouse there will be new infrastructure for visitor services, including a cafe, toilet, gallery and interpretation facilities. The whole idea is to continue to value-add to what is already a very important state asset. It is certainly absolutely integral to the tourism opportunities in Western Australia. I could be tempted to become the next person to go on one of these tunnel tours.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** How many?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** There have been 165 000, so that would make me the 165 001<sup>st</sup> person. However, somebody else might have hopped the queue, so I will have to take whatever number I am given.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I refer to page 695 and to homeownership. Three thousand new loans are expected to be provided through Keystart in 2007-08. I know that a question has previously been asked about Keystart. How many potential homebuyers have expressed an interest in taking up such a loan? What percentage of the waiting list for loans is the department hoping it will satisfy with those 3 000 new loans?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank you, Madam Chair, for that question. As at 15 June 2007 there were 4 362 expressions of interest and 1 475 loan applications; and 382 applications were returned to the agency, of which 93 were approved, 160 were pre-approved and 129 were being assessed. Keystart currently has a loan

portfolio of \$1.2 billion, which represents assistance to approximately 13 000 loan clients. It will continue to offer homeownership and shared equity schemes, which will represent more than 3 000 new loans in 2007-08.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I refer to the First Start Shared Equity scheme that was announced in February 2007.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Where are you referring to, Madam Chair?

**The CHAIRPERSON:** That is a good question! It is somewhere in the budget.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I have just answered that. I gave the First Start statistics earlier.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** How many of the 1 000 possible agreements have been taken up; and, if all 1 000 have been taken up, when was the last one signed?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Loan applications?

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Yes.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I have already answered that question, but Bob Mitchell can also give the answer because -

**The CHAIRPERSON:** That was a bit of a tricky question at the end of the session!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** - it might sound better coming from someone else!

**Mr R. Mitchell:** To date, of the more than 4 000 expressions of interest from people, 382 applications have been returned, 93 have been approved, 160 have been pre-approved and 129 are being assessed. In the assessment process, the biggest issue that we are finding is the level of debt that this range of people have. That is really a problem. We have people who have significant credit card debts and significant car loan debts, but they still have to service a home loan debt. We are encouraging people to consider their debt levels. If they want to own a home, they have to get their debt levels under control.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I realise that the minister provided those figures earlier. I appreciate that.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to the third dot point on page 699 of the *Budget Statements* and the redevelopment program that provides land for the construction of dwellings for new public rental housing. I refer specifically to the suburb of Ashfield. I want to get an update about whether the department is still seeking to reduce the number of Homeswest properties within the suburb? As I recall, it is some 10 per cent higher than the average number expected across suburbs.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I will get Kerry Fijac to respond to that question.

**Mrs K. Fijac:** My understanding is that in the suburb of Ashfield, we have a presence of approximately 16 per cent at the moment. It is probably about five or six per cent higher than what people would normally expect us to have in the suburb. We are actively looking at a redevelopment program in Ashfield to make strategic sales and also to redevelop our sites where possible. I think the answer for us in Ashfield would be to get some planning concessions and improve the R codes in the area to attract some private investment. Attracting private owners and investment in the area would dilute our rental presence; therefore, rather than taking houses away from needy public housing people, we would reduce our presence by increasing the private presence in the area. However, we are still actively pursuing our redevelopment program, but that is somewhat stymied by the demand for public housing. There are a lot of needy people waiting, so if we start selling off properties, we have to buy or build replacement properties elsewhere.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I thank members, the minister and ladies and gentlemen. That session has now ended.

*Meeting suspended from 1.11 to 2.00 pm*

**Division 19: Local Government and Regional Development, \$45 686 000 -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, Minister for Local Government.

Hon Jon Ford, Minister for Regional Development.

Ms C.M. Gwilliam, Director General.

Mr Q. Harrington, Director, Governance and Statutory Support.

Mr T. Fowler, Director, Capacity Building.

Mr L. Nagy, Principal Finance Officer.

Mrs S. Walsh, Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Regional Development.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Estimates and Financial Operations Committee, I welcome people to today's hearings. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available

to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the witnesses' request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

It would greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members would give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of questions. An example of the required Hansard style for documents has been provided to your advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a distinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

For the benefit of members and Hansard I ask the minister to introduce her advisers to the committee, and for each adviser to please state his or her full name, contact address and the capacity in which he or she appears before the committee.

I would like to ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all the witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of the document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** We have an hour for this session. I inform members that there was one set of questions from Hon Bruce Donaldson that related to local government. They have been answered and are now tabled for the information of members. I give the call to Hon Bruce Donaldson.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** There will be some crossover in this division. I refer to page 347 of the *Budget Statements* and the full-time equivalents under service 1. The numbers there are 26, 27, 27 and 27. They are to ensure that the minister and the government are provided with quality information and support. Is that support for the minister singular or plural, because it is still under the Local Government and Regional Development division?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** It is for both because there are three service delivery areas. Service 1 is the service dealing with the implementation of government policy, and that is a responsibility of mine. Service 2 deals with improved access to services and capacity for development and regional communities. That service is the responsibility of the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Jon Ford. Service 3, "Better Local Government", once again is mine as Minister for Local Government. Of course we have only one Department of Local Government and Regional Development.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** That is the question I am asking. I am looking at 27 ministerial advisers in one shape or another, but then we turn to the actual workload. The minister has mentioned services 2 and 3. The numbers for service 2 are 44, 40, 40 and 40 over the coming years. That is on page 349 of the *Budget Statements*. On page 350, under service 3, we see 39 FTEs in 2005-06 actuals; and 52 for each of the 2006-07 budget, the 2006-07 estimated and the 2007-08 target. It is only one department but I would like to know the job description. There are 92 FTEs in the department plus the 27 to whom I have referred. I am more interested in the 92 and to know what time is apportioned to either local government or regional development.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Hon Jon Ford has put it very succinctly to me: he advises me that I have all the people and he has all the money!

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** I know who to approach in the future!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Absolutely! I will ask the director general to give a bit of an overview as to how the department is structured across those three service delivery areas.

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** In terms of the agency's FTE level, the majority of the resources, probably 75 to 80 per cent, is on local government and the remaining 20 to 25 per cent is on regional development. It is not so easy to break down because when one is dealing with local governments in regional Western Australia, I have classified that as a local government service. The regional FTEs are principally associated with statewide regional initiatives. Statewide regional initiatives are located in service 2. Initiatives that support local government broadly are located in services 1 and 3.

[2.10 pm]

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** I support local government and regional development being located within the one department, because I have always believed local government is the best place for regional development to

be located. However, it is a bit confusing to know where the human resources, which is the important part, are allocated.

I refer to page 351. The third dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" states -

Assist the Local Government Advisory Board in completing its report on local government boundary changes for the City of Nedlands and the City of Belmont, preparing reports on amalgamation of local governments and undertaking ward reviews of local government.

How is that initiative progressing, and what financial assistance is made available to councils that want to amalgamate?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. That is a very good question indeed. Early in the new financial year, the Local Government Advisory Board will finalise three boundary inquiries that were commenced in 2006-07. Two of those inquiries are from the City of Nedlands, and one is from the City of Belmont. Having regard to past practice, it can be assumed that the number of ward reviews will be reduced in 2007-08, given that local government elections will be held in October 2007 and demand for change will not be as pressing. Certainly, the demand can be expected to increase again in the second half of 2008, as local governments prepare for the 2009 election. A sum of \$3 million has been allocated to encourage local governments to enter into arrangements that would lead to either full amalgamation, or part thereof. Part thereof in this case applies to, for example, the establishment of regional councils, the establishment of resource-sharing arrangements, and the like. Local governments have been able to apply for funding to assist them in pursuing their aspirations in this regard. The information I have been getting as Minister for Local Government - I do not think times have changed that much - is that in Western Australia, half the councils want to amalgamate and the other half do not want to amalgamate. We have adopted a policy position that we will not be forcing amalgamations. However, we very much want to encourage local governments to address the issues of sustainability and economies of scale, and how they might be able to deliver better services and amenities to their ratepayers. There are a number of models that they are being encouraged to take up to achieve those outcomes.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** Can the minister repeat the amount of money that will be made available this financial year?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** It was \$3 million in total, but that is not all new moneys. I will ask the director general to clarify that, because I want to get it right.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** That is what I want to find out.

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** For 2006-07, \$1 million has been allocated. For 2007-08, an additional \$2 million has been allocated. To date, we have expended \$600 000, and we have committed \$1.4 million, which leaves for 2007-08 an additional \$1 million to be allocated. The government has supported the amalgamation of the Shire of Greenough and the City of Geraldton by \$1.3 million. The government has assisted the Shire of Northam and the Town of Northam by \$725 000. An amalgamation request has been received by the advisory board regarding Broomehill-Tambellup, and also one from Katanning regarding Woodanilling. Those matters are still before the advisory board. If the board recommends amalgamation, and if the minister accepts that recommendation, I anticipate that we will use some of those moneys to support further amalgamations.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** Has the minister received any request for amalgamation from the Shire of Narrogin and the Town of Narrogin?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Certainly my office, from memory, has not. I do not know whether the department has received anything.

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** No; we have not received a formal request from the shire or the town. However, there have been general discussions by members of the community as to whether we would be interested in working with the shire and the town, and of course we would be, if they had an interest in amalgamating.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** In fact, the member's question is timely, because tomorrow we will be heading to Northam to swear in the new commissioner, and to make the official announcement about an amalgamation of the Shire and the Town of Northam. I guess some people might argue that the processes as they stand currently are a bit lengthy. It really depends on which side of the issue people sit. There is an underlying view around the place that small councils are, by their very nature, inefficient; therefore, they should be forced to amalgamate with other small councils. My view on that matter is that three councils that are in financial difficulties will not necessarily, by combining into one council, become financial, because other considerations need to be taken into account. Some of the people who say that bigger is better, and that will automatically guarantee success, may be a bit simplistic in the view that they hold, because it is much more complicated than that.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** I refer again to page 351. The sixth dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" states -

Continue monitoring the financial health of local governments.

Some reports have been done on that matter. It is obviously proposed that that monitoring will be continued in 2007-08. What is done with the results of that monitoring?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** There is no doubt that more work needs to be done on the financial viability, or financial health, of local governments. Apart from anything else, local governments have a variable rating base. There are 142 local government authorities in Western Australia. However, 88 of those local government authorities have a population of fewer than 5 000. Therefore, their rate base is very limited. Also, some local government authorities are not doing very well in understanding what their cost drivers are. When that is combined with elected members not wanting to put up rates and charges, that leads to a situation in which some local governments are limping along a bit in the financial area. There is no doubt in my mind that we need to do more work with local government authorities in helping them with financial benchmarking, and in playing an active role in better monitoring their financial performance. If local governments can perform better in their financial management, they will be able to deliver more in real terms to their communities. The department will continue to provide a comprehensive monitoring program to ensure sustainable local governments. Departmental officers will continue to actively pursue new programs to improve monitoring capacity, and the work will focus on collecting and analysing financial reports produced by local governments. The measures need to be consistent right across the board. The information will be used to identify any adverse trends in a local government's financial position, and then appropriate action will be taken to provide support and advice to assist local governments in addressing issues that are identified. I will refer the second part of the question, or any part that I have not answered, to the director general.

[2.20 pm]

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** As the minister has indicated, we actively monitor the financial health of each local government. We monitor eight main ratios, and when we have all the financial information we enter into discussions with the local governments with which we have concerns. The member will be aware of the action we took in the previous financial year in relation to the Shire of Cunderdin, to ensure that there was a financial recovery plan in place, and the action the government took to provide a refundable loan to the local government. We are always actively monitoring roughly 10 local governments - two or three closely, the other three to seven with more active monitoring. Probably 75 per cent of local governments do not need monitoring, and others may need just a watching brief.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** I have been a great believer in the Department of Local Government and Regional Development doing the financial audits of councils in Western Australia. It was very successful in the past because the department was able to point out to the administrative staff in local governments some of the possible changes they should make to their financial reporting procedures to ensure a true and complete picture of a council. It could also ensure that the councils were meeting the requirements of the Local Government Act. Given that there has been such a turnover in the senior administrative staff in local government, I feel that a more consistent approach to auditing is necessary. Instead of using a number of private enterprise auditors, the Department of Local Government and Regional Development would be able to carry out the work far more professionally and at the same time assist councils. As auditor, the department would be able to advise local governments when they get into financial difficulties that they should be doing something about. I am just throwing that idea in, because I have always been a great believer in it. I think it was a mistake that we all acceded to the idea of putting it out to private enterprise.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I had not realised that the member was a centralist. I am pleased to note that, because I am a bit of a centralist myself. However, one of the things one must guard oneself against as minister is taking personal decisions and imposing them when there is a wealth of knowledge and experience to indicate that the opposite is possibly the way to go. Although I believe we should be doing more in working with councils on their financial management, having a centralised financial auditing function within the department indicates first of all that some difficulty or problem exists with external auditing. I understand that the Public Accounts Committee in the other place inquired into local government accountability in Western Australia. Its report 4 was presented in the other place by the member for Mindarie on Thursday, 28 September 2006. Auditing was one of the issues canvassed in the inquiry. I am advised that the report recommended against going back to a centralised auditing function by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. That was ceased in the 1980s. I am not sure what the arguments were at that time that led to the shift in policy, but evidence has been presented and research has been done indicating that there are a variety of opinions on this matter. I am not proposing at this point that we mandate that financial audits of councils be conducted internally by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, and I would need some convincing of the necessity for that. Would the director general like to add to that?

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** The only thing I would add is that the government has increased the resourcing in the department to do financial monitoring. It is certainly not an audit role, but we are active in reviewing the audit reports provided to each local government and to the department. Further to the honourable member's earlier question, the department released a financial ratios guideline in May this year to provide clarity to local governments about the meaning and importance of these ratios and the benchmarks to be attributed to them. We are providing that feedback directly to local governments.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** On the subject of auditing, I put it to the minister that local government is a creature of the state, and the state is responsible for it through the Local Government Act. I believe that the accountability and financial wellbeing of local government is the responsibility of the government. It would be more prudent to have a good centralised local government audit system in place that could alert ministers and departments far more quickly about some of the issues that could be arising in local government without going to the council to find out. The department was also a great mentor to local shire clerks and others. This may be something well worth pursuing with local government, and some sweeteners could be added. I know that private enterprise might not like it, but there is a very real need in this day and age for a more centralised arrangement with auditing practices.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I understand that the Western Australian Local Government Association was not supportive of the measure proposed by the member and, being an ex-president of WALGA, the member would know that ministers could never possibly do anything that would make WALGA unhappy, and that is a point to be considered. The other point I would make is that all the evidence considered by the Public Accounts Committee indicated that there were no major problems with the use of external auditors. I take on board that that is the member's view. He is entitled to his view and I would not say that it is wrong, nor would I say that it is right.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** Maybe they are out of step and I am in step.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Who knows, maybe the member has done the full circle!

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I will pursue two quite different lines of inquiry. I refer first of all to local government elections. I refer to service 1, "Implementation of Government Policy", on page 347. I assume that there will be some increases in costs to local governments as a result of the new election system. What is the department doing to minimise those costs?

[2.30 pm]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Which dot point is it?

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I am looking at service 1, "Implementation of Government Policy", and the line item "Appropriation for delivery of Service" on page 347. Straight across the bottom line, under "Total Cost of Service", I notice the 2006-07 budget allocation was \$2.603 million.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes. The member is basically asking a specific question about a line item.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I am asking about what appears to be a \$200 000 increase in the budget estimate for 2007-08. I am now referring to the change in local government election procedures. What are the costs likely to be, how does the government intend supporting local governments to service those increased costs as a result of the change in the election process, and how is that reflected in this budget?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** First of all, some additional costs will be incurred by the department for the work it has had to do to prepare local government for the changes to the voting system. The director general has been working with local governments and Warwick Gately of the WA Electoral Commission. We have been given an assurance that in respect of the counting of proportional and preferential voting, as opposed to first-past-the-post voting, there will be no differential in pricing. In other words, the Electoral Commission will not be charging any more than it has charged in the past. That is therefore how it will impact on local governments. In respect of the impact on the department, obviously, the department has incurred a number of costs along the way, including the costs associated with the creation of a computing package that will basically crunch the numbers after the votes have been cast.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The question I am asking is: how is the increase in costs reflected in the budget allocation?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I thought the member also asked -

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** How much the costs would be.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, but I thought the member also asked what the department was doing to prepare local councils for it, and I am trying to explain that one of the things the department is doing is putting together a computing package that will assist local governments to undertake the count. The department will also provide support services to local government authorities and undertake a trip around the state to assist local

governments to understand the new electoral system. The department will also undertake a variety of other support functions. I will hand over to the director general and she can explain it specifically. However, if the member is asking whether the \$2.603 million is directly associated with an appropriation for the shift in the voting system, the answer is no.

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** The department has expended \$200 000 this financial year, and we anticipate spending up to \$300 000 in 2007-08 to support the 2007 local government elections. We have put extra money into working with the WA Electoral Commission on the free software that the minister referred to, which we will provide to each local government to enable the counting of the votes. We have already expended money on awareness advertising on the change of date from May to October for local government elections. Those ads have already run in community newspapers. We have also provided posters to each local government to use to promote the change of date in their communities. We will be doing further advertising with the WA Electoral Commission on the voting system and how members of the community should fill in the ballot papers, and we will be providing information to candidates on enrolling and information to voters to ensure that they vote on election day. We will be conducting a statewide awareness-raising campaign, which the minister referred to, in about 13 to 15 locations whereby we will provide information to returning officers and also assistance and training on the software package on the election day. An extensive campaign, therefore, has been implemented with the WA Electoral Commission.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I have another short question. Will this be cost neutral to local governments and will the Department of Local Government or the government pick up any increase in costs? That is the question in simple terms, but I have another question that is more compelling.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** They just get better!

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** The same will apply for the 2007 elections as applied in 2005 for a local government running a postal vote using the WA Electoral Commission. There will be no additional cost to local government through the change in the voting system. If we assume the local government conducted an in-person count in 2005 but in 2007 retains the services of the WA Electoral Commission, that local government will have to pay for that service, as it would anyway. However, if we are talking about postal-to-postal votes, there will be no additional cost through the change to the voting system.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** That is clear. I have a further question. I refer to page 348, service 2, "Improved Access to Services and Capacity for Development in Regional Communities". I am now looking at the line item "Appropriation for delivery of Service". I note that there is a fairly significant difference in the actual cost and the estimated cost and so on; similarly with the total cost of service. Why is there such a big discrepancy between the budget amount and the actuals and what services have been underspent? I now see that it is part of the regional investment fund in the headworks grants program. Could the minister please give us an indication of how that underspending came about?

**Hon JON FORD:** This is tied up with the lead and lag in regard to RIF1 and RIF2. Currently it is a four-year program, but our experience with RIF1 is that instead of taking four years to expend that money, it will in fact take eight years by the end of it. This refers to a carry-on of expenditure so that there is actually a rise in the budget. It is a difficult thing to explain.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I can understand it if the minister just tells me.

**Hon JON FORD:** I have a few notes with me. It is a realignment of the cash flows, which is the result of delays in significant lead times required to establish financial assistance agreements with successful grant applicants prior to the grants being paid; delays caused by escalating costs in regional areas; time lags in obtaining funds from other sources; and time lags obtaining the services of contractors in the regions. There will therefore be a tapering off with RIF1 and then a bow-wave effect with RIF2. We have also found in a recent analysis of the grants that although there is a large percentage now, we are coming to the end of the grants program in the last year and a large percentage of funds are allocated. A relatively small percentage of funds have actually been expended; I think just under 32 per cent. We are currently carrying out a review of that, and there are two reasons for the review. One is to look at the sort of assistance we may or may not be able to give in regard to assisting these projects to move ahead. We also need to ensure that people are not profiteering from management fees, structures or extra charges when they ask for extensions of their grants, because the net result of any delays in the current heated economy is that there is inevitably an escalation of costs associated with the delays, depending on the projects.

[2.40 pm]

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** We know that community groups and enterprises are looking for money to undertake projects in regional areas. Can the minister give us a specific example of a project that has applied for money and has not been able to spend the money on time? Presumably, that is what has happened. Communities are crying out for money. There is a bucket of money available in the regional investment fund

and the regional headworks program, yet the minister is saying that they are unable to spend it or meet the obligations to spend it. Can the minister give us an example of an actual project that has failed to spend its money?

**Hon JON FORD:** I could give an example. We gave a grant as a result of an application from the Roebourne shire that was specifically looking at hiring a consultant to write a report on developing an enhancement scheme, which would then lead to seeking more government and private sector assistance. That has been delayed for some time because it simply cannot get a consultant to write the report. It had somebody for a short period and that person disappeared into the resource sector. That is one example. The other example that I can think of off the top of my head relates to the Pilbara fund and the recent - it is nearing completion - Port Hedland enhancement scheme. I understand that the issues surrounding that project have been to do with contracts and negotiations. Also in that regard - it is causing a delay - there are concerns from the public about the initial approved lighting. There are now concerns over turtles. It ended up with requests for a re-scope and a request for extra funding. All sorts of variables come into this. Small grants tend to be spent pretty quickly. Large grants or those that require specialist consultants tend to be delayed. I can take that specific question asking for examples on notice and we can give the member quite good solid examples in writing. We have that information quite readily because we are doing that review.

[*Supplementary Information No D1.*]

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** I refer to the details of controlled grants and subsidies on page 328 of volume 1. Could the minister please explain why it is anticipated that the commission's share of the regional investment fund will drop by \$100 000 from \$600 000 in 2006-07 to an estimated \$500 000 in 2009-10?

**Hon JON FORD:** That does not come under me. We do not have any information from that particular development commission. I am happy to take questions on specific development commissions on notice.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** What about the Pilbara? Can the minister answer questions about that?

**Hon JON FORD:** Yes, I am happy to.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** I refer to page 1046 of volume 3. The Roebourne enhancement scheme was budgeted in 2006-07 to have \$961 000 expended. The estimated actual figure for 2006-07 is nil. The budget for 2007-08 is \$961 000, to be spent in a year. Will this project be completed in 2007-08 after the delay in the project?

**Hon JON FORD:** The short answer is that I do not expect it to be completed this year. It is one of the projects that I am currently reviewing and have been asked to give an extension. I do not have the details for that but I am quite happy to supply that detail on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No D2.*]

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** On the same page, the total spending on the Pilbara priority partnership fund in the region is \$5 million each year. That money has certainly assisted the Pilbara region but there are no budget details on how that money has been spent. Given that the administrator does not account to the commissioner, is there any public accountability of that fund and how it was spent in 2005, 2006 and 2007?

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Because this question does not relate to either local government or regional development, it is slightly stretching the minister to answer.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** It is his portfolio.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** But they are not the divisions called in for this hearing. If the minister is willing to answer, he should go for it.

**Hon JON FORD:** The funds were actually subject to audits by the Auditor General. This particular structure is currently being audited. I am happy to get the responses from that. I can give the member an update. This particular funding structure goes through a committee. It makes recommendations. Those recommendations are then sent to me. I either approve or reject them. Although I am authorised to sign projects up to \$150 000, any projects over that have to go to the cabinet subcommittee on regional development for approval and then recommendations are put to cabinet. I make it a habit to take it to the cabinet subcommittee for approval regardless. That is the accountability of it. Ultimately, it is accountable through the normal audit systems.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** Does that go on to the public account? Do we have access to see where that \$5 million is spent?

**Hon JON FORD:** Yes. I am advised that that particular line item is within the annual report.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** I refer to the details of controlled grants and subsidies on page 1055. Unlike the other development commissions, the Gascoyne Development Commission is providing more detail on its spending in the regional investment fund. In 2006-07, it made payments of \$230 000 to government agencies.

In 2007-08, the budget was increased to \$400 000. What are the other agencies and what is the money being used for?

[2.50 pm]

**Hon JON FORD:** I am sorry because I did not brief myself for these divisions. We are referring to page 1055?

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** For 2006-07 there were grants of \$230 000 to government agencies. In 2007-08 it is increasing to \$400 000.

**Hon JON FORD:** I suspect I know the answer but there is a chance that I might inadvertently mislead the committee. I will take the question on notice and get back to the member.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** I do not think the minister would mislead us!

**Hon JON FORD:** Not intentionally. There are a number of complexities, including the cultural centre and the fact that certain funds are held by the commission. I will get that detail for the member.

[*Supplementary Information No D3.*]

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** I refer to the major initiatives for 2007-08 at page 351. The second dot point refers to the completion of a memorandum of understanding with the Corruption and Crime Commission in relation to identifying systemic issues in local governments. This is really serious stuff. I wonder whether the minister can explain to me the memorandum of understanding and what were the major concerns that led to a memorandum of understanding with the CCC?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Obviously, the Corruption and Crime Commission is a very important and powerful organisation that has been funded to do a very important job. The Corruption and Crime Commission prepared a report on the department's procedures for the handling of complaints, which was tabled in Parliament on 11 April 2006. The CCC was looking at complaints handling mechanisms across all public sector agencies last year. I have very strong recollections of the complaints handling investigation into the Department of Education and Training. This was happening right across the board. Every government agency was expected to have a complaints management system that would meet Australian standards. This was the first in a series of reviews that was to be conducted by the CCC with a view to streamlining the misconduct notification procedures in place in Western Australian public sector agencies.

The report found that the department had a methodical and comprehensive complaints management system in place. The department is presently contributing to an exchange of information with the CCC and will continue discussions to finalise an MOU to increase the effectiveness of the process. The CCC is quite within its rights to look into those areas in which there may be systemic issues that may negatively impact on the efficiency of service delivery or the extent to which the delivery is dealt with in an appropriate manner in accordance with the legal requirements. I will see whether the director general wants to add anything to that.

**Ms C.M. Gwilliam:** The only thing I would add is that this recommendation to have an MOU between the respective agencies came from the CCC and was one we are happy to embrace. It reflects that the CCC, under its legislation, will give referrals to the department to undertake investigations on its behalf. As the member would be aware, under the Local Government Act we have powers to investigate local government. The CCC makes referrals to us to do investigations for it. Under the act I also make referrals to the CCC of any issues of improper conduct that may involve public officers within local government. This arrangement is about both agencies working together in a way that is understood. I will treat their investigations on their behalf as a priority. I will ensure that they are handled professionally in the arrangements they have cited. It is about both of us achieving better outcomes for the community and local government.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I do not think this is unique to the Department of Local Government and Regional Development or that the department has been singled out. In view of the fact that the CCC has to work across all agencies in government, there is no doubt the agencies would have some reciprocal obligations. I do not know what they would be but it would be to ensure efficient procedures and processes so that everyone is clear about what they are and how things are to be handled. There is a requirement for such a memorandum of understanding. This is not as though local government has, for some reason, been singled out and that this is a bad thing.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** I was not thinking that at all. I was just making sure that a process and procedure that one would expect to be undertaken is carried out. I am pleased to know that the procedure is going as it should be.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** As it nearly three o'clock we need to change to the next division. I remind members who have further questions to please pass them to the table and we will ensure that they are answered. I thank the ministers and their advisers for their attendance and assistance.

[3.00 pm]

**Division 68: Child Protection, \$265 389 000 -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Sue Ellery, Minister for Child Protection.

Ms J. Hogben, Acting Director General.

Mr M. Intini, Executive Director, Corporate and Business Services.

Ms P. Bagdonavicius, Acting Executive Director, Policy and Planning.

Dr D. Vicary, Acting Executive Director, Statewide Accommodation Services.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I would ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Hon Robyn McSweeney and Hon Barbara Scott asked some questions on this division that have now been tabled and are therefore publicly available.

**Hon ROBYN MCSWEENEY:** I refer to the third dot point on page 1176 of the *Budget Statements* of the significant issues and trends -

It is estimated that new protection order applications will increase by an estimated 55 per cent compared to the previous year.

I noticed that during the budget estimates hearings held in the Legislative Assembly a question was asked about why there was such a huge increase. The answer given was that in 2005-06 there were 542 applications for care and protection orders compared with 631 in the first nine months of 2006-07 and that we could expect up to 840, which would make up to 55 per cent. What is the reason for the increase of care and protection orders? How will the department ensure that each of those cases receives the attention that they will need?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The member would be aware of the new act, which took a much more strongly interventionist approach. It is probably a combination of factors. The act requires a much greater degree of intervention, and therefore we are seeking more orders than we have ever sought before. Also, there is a general increase in the community of the factors that are leading to the department having to act; for example, alcohol abuse, substance abuse and mental health issues. Sometimes those factors are combined. Many more complex issues are resulting in families not being able to provide the care and protection that the community once expected families would provide. The increase of care and protection orders is the result of those social factors combined with the greater interventionist legislation.

I am happy to give a broad answer to the member's second question about what the department is doing to ensure that it is providing the best care and to then talk about specifics. The member would be well aware of the government's announcement about its response to the Ford review. A range of stakeholders held the view that the Department for Community Development was trying to be all things to all people and had not been focused on its prime objective of providing protection for Western Australian children. The Ford review recommended that structural changes be made to the department, one of which was to create a department that was focused primarily on child protection. A commitment was given to do that. In addition, funding has been provided for a

range of measures to ensure that the department is capable of carrying that out to the best of its ability. That includes increasing the number of staff who deal directly with children. The member would be aware of some of the issues that were raised during the select committee inquiry concerning the training provided to staff. The new department has significantly addressed that issue and money is available in the budget to provide that training. In addition, the Ford review identified placements as a big issue and indicated that we need to have a broader range of placements for the children who are taken into care. Money has been allocated for first, second and tertiary level placements. The Ford report also recognised that we needed to provide better support for foster carers. Therefore, the budget includes a significant increase in the subsidies that are available to foster carers. I suspect that the additional respite for foster carers is the more important aspect to foster carers. The department has provided greater support to foster carers in their role as carers. They are just some of the measures which Ford has recommended and which the government has accepted. The government has provided funding for those measures in the budget before us now.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I refer to the table of outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 1178 of the *Budget Statements*, and in particular to “Outcome: Children and young people in the CEO’s care receive quality care”, which states -

The proportion of children in CEO’s care who are safe from abuse by caregivers -

It was 99.8 per cent in 2005-06 and was expected to be 100 per cent in 2006-07. Will the minister explain why these figures do not reflect the number of children who, I believe, are abused in care?

[3.10 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Because they are a measurement tool. They are the actual measurement targets.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** They are wrong.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, they are the targets that are set to measure performance. They are the performance indicators. That does not reflect the number of children who have, for example, made allegations of abuse. It does not reflect the number of cases where child abuse has been substantiated. That is a measure of abuse by caregivers only. It is a target that we aim for to indicate whether we are successfully achieving what we set out to achieve.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I believe what the minister is saying but I suggest somebody looking at that would obviously think that there were very low rates of abuse, notwithstanding it is very good targeting to look at. I do not think it picks up what has been happening in the department.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Frankly, that is not what it is intended to reflect; it is intended to reflect a target.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** What about the actuals? That is not reflected anywhere.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am happy to talk about that if the member would like me to do so. With regard to allegations of abuse in care, the figures for the year 2006-07 up to 18 June - we are not quite to the end of the financial year yet - compared with the figures for allegations of abuse in 2005-06 show that we have done better this year than we did in 2005-06. I will give the member a description of placement type and the kind of abuse. The placement types we are talking about are residential facilities run by the department; external foster care; external residential; departmental foster; whether they are in hospital, or with a non-carer who is a friend; or if there is a placement type that does not neatly fit one of those descriptions. The number of allegations of either emotional or psychological neglect, or physical or sexual abuse in 2005-06 was 144; to 18 June 2007, the number of allegations is 129. If we then turn to the number of those allegations that have been substantiated, in the same measurement period - these are the same placement types and the same types of abuse - in 2005-06 the number was 36 and in 2006-07, to 18 June, the number was 16. The member can see that those numbers are certainly looking better for this year than for the previous year. Having said that, none of those allegations is to be taken lightly, and certainly where they are substantiated it is a matter of concern. The department constantly needs to be striving to ensure that does not happen.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** Many of those allegations will turn out to be substantiated.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I have just given the member the facts on what has been substantiated.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I know. I thank the minister for that. I had not finished what I was going to say.

I refer to page 1179, under “Key Efficiency Indicators”. The 2006-07 budget target was for 75 per cent of care plan reviews to be completed on time. However, indications are that this rate of completion was only 45 per cent. This suggests there will be an increased backlog of reviews to be completed this financial year. How will the department ensure that these reviews are completed in a timely manner and that the tardiness in their completion will not put any children at risk?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can make a general comment about how the information is collected and recorded on the system. The data shows what is recorded on the department's information system, which I am advised significantly underestimates the actual number of care plan reviews that have been completed but not recorded on the system. The priority is to get the care plan completed, not necessarily for the workers to follow up and record it on the system. An audit of the care plans that are listed as outstanding is currently occurring. I will ask the acting director general if she would like to add to that.

**Ms J. Hogben:** I have contacted all the district directors and stated that, as a matter of priority, these plans need to be entered if they have not been put on the system. If they have not been commenced, they need to be commenced. I did this in April and I am aware of a number of improvements that have occurred in relation to this. My information is that approximately one-third of those that were missing had been completed and had not been entered onto the system. The system is not user-friendly and that is why the department is getting its new system, called "Assist", which will help with that. I am not saying it is a valid reason, but the workers have not been putting the effort into putting it on the system, which makes it difficult for all. However, I have contacted all the district directors with a list of outstanding matters so that can be completed.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I would add that as the additional staffing positions are filled it takes some of the pressure off that task as well.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I refer to page 1184 and the eleventh dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2006-07" that refers to the fact that the department has established an action plan to address the recommendations of the Corruption and Crime Commission workplace review of the department.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Intini to address that, but I know the department has been working closely with the CCC to ensure that our systems are up to scratch.

**Mr M. Intini:** The plan has been put together with the assistance of the CCC. The CCC has been working alongside the department for some 18 months now. We have started to implement the plan. We believe the majority of the plan will be implemented by about July this year, including structures and a lot of procedures and policies that will be put in by that time.

**Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD:** I have a question about recruitment and retention. I refer to the second dot point on page 1182 and also the last dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08". There are also a number of other references throughout. Essentially, I am interested to know whether the minister can advise the committee on the progress of the recruitment of those additional positions. What can the minister tell us about the retention of staff?

[3.20 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I thank the member for the question. The member will be aware there have been very significant developments in staff recruitment. I was pleased to announce one today in respect of retention, which I will talk about in a minute. Members will be aware that in last year's budget there was a significant injection of funds for additional staffing positions. They included 76.5 care for children positions. There was a further injection of funds for care for children workers in September, when 133 positions were funded. In respect of filling those positions, I am advised that of the 2006-07 budget allocation of 76 positions, 67 have been filled.

In respect of the September positions last year, 105 FTE and 81 FTE have been filled, which is about 77 per cent of the care for children positions. If we combine the two injections of funds and the new positions that were created, 194 positions were created, and 149 positions have been filled. It is still the case, though, that the level of vacancies in the department is greater than I am comfortable with. The previous minister authorised, and I launched soon after I became the minister, quite an innovative recruitment campaign to attract staff to the department. Significant interest is being expressed as a result of that campaign - in fact, far more than existed for those same sorts of positions last year. In response to that recruitment campaign, which we launched in March and which is still running - it is not complete yet - 233 applications were received, of which 101 have been found suitable and have been short-listed for positions. We expect those people to be employed at the end of the recruitment process. By comparison, in December 2006, the department received 98 applications for the field worker pool, from which about 35 have been employed. There is a much greater interest and a much greater qualification rate for the people who are applying under that particular recruitment campaign.

However, the issue is still that we need to not only recruit staff, but also retain staff. That is one of the matters that was canvassed in the Prudence Ford report. Prudence Ford recommended in her report that the department fast-track - I think "accelerate" was the actual expression that she used - an attraction and retention benefit for people who are working directly with children, not only to attract and retain those staff, but also to address in the short term the wage parity issue between people with similar types of qualifications in the Department of Health. Therefore, today I have announced an attraction and retention allowance that will be awarded to 689 child protection workers in this state. Those workers include field workers, education officers, team leaders and clinical psychologists. That is the single largest increase for that category of workers in the history of Western

Australia. That comes on top of the largest increases across-the-board to the number of workers in the child protection area.

The attraction and retention benefit is targeted specifically at people who are working directly with children. I do not resile from that. The kind of work that these people have to do, and the kinds of decisions that these people have to make, I think most people in Western Australia would not want to think about, let alone do. The attraction and retention allowance that we have announced today will generate an additional \$108 to \$149 a week, or an increase of between eight per cent and 13 per cent, for these workers, depending on where they are placed in the classification structure. If a specified callings claim is made for these workers and similar types of employees in other departments, and if that claim is successful and results in an increase for these workers, this allowance will be absorbed into that increase. Nevertheless, I hope that this allowance will send a significant message to existing staff that we recognise and value their work and the difficult issues that they are faced with, and that we recognise also that there is a discrepancy between what those staff can earn in the Department for Child Protection and what similar staff can earn in the Department of Health. I hope also that it will send a signal to people who are contemplating coming back to work for the department that things have changed in how we value our workers.

**Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD:** I refer to page 1185. The first dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" states -

Progressively implement the Responsible Parenting Initiative to enable more families at risk or in crisis to be assisted, and undertake an evaluation of the initiative.

I note that initiative commenced on 1 July in the south east metropolitan area, and it has now been extended to the east metropolitan area. Will that initiative be extended by increasing the number of geographical zones in which that initiative will be implemented, or by increasing the resourcing in the south east and east metropolitan areas? What sort of evaluation will be conducted? The evaluation in the early months of that program was extremely positive, from what I understand. I am keen to hear what is planned for that program.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is a very important program. The member would be aware of recent debates in the house about extending that program from a voluntary component to the potential for responsible parenting orders. We know that the program works really well for those families who engage. Unfortunately, we know also that 47 per cent of the families who need that help do not engage, and that is why the government was keen to pursue the issue of parenting orders. I ask the acting director general to talk about the rollout and the evaluation.

**Ms J. Hogben:** It has been quite a targeted program in terms of where it sits. It started off in the south east metropolitan area, and that commenced in April 2005. It then moved to the east metropolitan area in 2006. A program has also been announced for the Kimberley as part of the Halls Creek response. It will then be moved to Peel in approximately August to take up the catchment in that area. This program is one of the most important elements of the department's role to work with families and parents who are in difficulties, and to augment the legislative role that we play. Other programs are planned in the north west metropolitan area, which is anticipated to commence in January 2009, and north metropolitan later than that. These have all been put into the budget and prepared for the rollout, which, as I have said, is graduated and is intended to take up all those areas.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** I refer to page 1176. The second dot point on that page, under "Significant Issues and Trends", states -

There has been an increase of 31 per cent in the number of people receiving accommodation assistance from 2004-05 to 2005-06, a further increase is expected in 2006-07 of 13 per cent.

If we add those two years together, there has been an increase of 44 per cent in the number of people receiving accommodation assistance. At the same time, the supported accommodation assistance program is at full capacity, with an increased length of stay. Has any analysis been done of government policies on housing affordability, and what is the department doing about that matter? It is a real concern in the community that people are receiving accommodation assistance at a time when unemployment is at absolute all-time low.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I thank the member for the question. It is the case that the department's services are targeted as last-resort services; that is, they are used when other services are unable to provide a response. I will ask Pauline Bagdonavicius to talk in a moment about some of the work that the department is doing in a program called HomeLink to address that matter. It is also the case that the housing boom is clearly placing pressure on affordable housing. The demand for housing is outstripping the supply, so people who are at the bottom end of the financial structure are being squeezed out of the housing market. People who do not necessarily have a need for support other than housing are also requesting housing assistance. That is a new phenomenon. I am sure the member would have people come to her electorate office on this matter, as I have people come to my electorate office on this matter. Many of the people who come to my office never thought they would ever be in a position

to require this type of assistance. That is why the housing assistance program that was announced by the government just prior to the budget is so important. However, I am not in a position to answer questions about that program; the member would need to direct that to the relevant minister. It is also the case that the non-government agencies that are funded are noticing that families with resources previously available for housing are now experiencing difficulties. One of the important things that the department has identified is that, if we can quickly get families and individuals into sustainable and affordable housing through the new program that I will ask Pauline to talk about in a moment, that will assist people through the current housing difficulties. I will ask Ms Bagdonavicius to talk about that program.

[3.30 pm]

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** We are funding the HomeLink program in collaboration with Lotterywest. We wanted to expand UnitingCare West's HomeLink program to something that the government funded through the state homelessness strategy. This is the new time-limited HomeConnect program to assist people through the current rental housing shortage. The department will provide \$480 000 and Lotterywest \$1.92 million over three years. It will be a very systematic approach to the provision of timely and sustainable support to people who are either homeless or are about to become homeless. HomeConnect will source properties, provide short-term financial support and oversee social support for people currently experiencing urgent housing needs. Properties will be identified using real estate agents, and churches and other community networks to form a database to link people to homes through available properties. It will provide another important tool in working with people in crisis.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Part of the question I asked was whether there had been an analysis of government policies that have in some way contributed to the housing affordability crisis in the state.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The member is talking to the Minister for Child Protection, and such a survey has not been done by the Department for Child Protection. It would be better for the member to direct her question to the relevant minister. Work has been done on how we can address this, and announcements were made. I am sure further work is being done. One of the recommendations of the Ford review, for example, was that, in the functional review that is to be conducted or perhaps is already being conducted on the Department of Housing and Works, an examination be done of the policies that the Department of Housing and Works might have that lead to someone evicted by one government agency turning up on the doorstep of another government agency, in this case the Department for Child Protection, or possibly the Department for Communities. That is one of the Ford recommendations and I intend to pursue it.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I have some questions in the same area. They slightly overlap, but I will try not to duplicate. I refer to the second dot point on page 1176, which refers to accommodation assistance. How many people on the waiting list for accommodation support are there as a result of child protection matters? Is it possible to differentiate in that way?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am not sure whether those statistics are collected, but perhaps Ms Bagdonavicius can explain how the supported accommodation assistance program collects its statistics.

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** SAAP collects statistics through unmet demand data twice a year. The collection produces a snapshot at one point in time. From memory, in Western Australia we are turning away 47 people a day from SAAP services. That pattern has been there for some time. We know that, with the current rental shortage, the problem we face is exit points for people leaving SAAP. Any innovative programs, such as the one we are putting in place with HomeLink, that prevents people from coming into SAAP simply because they cannot find rental properties, will be really important.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I think the rest of my questions in this area have been answered through previous questions. In regard to an item on page 1176 under "Major Policy Decisions", could the minister provide details of the expenditure to date on the Halls Creek response, and what expenditure was budgeted for the Halls Creek response in 2007-08?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will begin the response, and then ask David Vicary to add further to what I have said. Significant work has been done around Halls Creek. The announcement was made in February this year about providing safe accommodation for children at risk in Halls Creek. Funding was provided for two separate residential care buildings - one for children aged zero to six and at the other for the six to 15 age group. Once fully implemented, the Halls Creek hostel will be able to support up to 18 children. It is envisaged that the zero to six facility be operated and managed by the department, and the six to 15 facility would be initially operated by the department, but then managed by the non-government sector. The total funding package over the out years is \$11.856 million. The package includes expanding foster care services and the responsible parenting programs, which have been touched on already. I ask David Vicary to add further to that.

**Dr D. Vicary:** As the minister has indicated, the hostel is one part of the package. We are also looking at expanding the foster care capacity within Halls Creek. We are also linking the responsible parenting program into Halls Creek and, more importantly, having a school truancy program as part of the package that wraps

around the hostel as well. One of the interesting components of this program is that the community is intensively involved in the development of the hostel, and is actually helping to design a hostel that suits its needs. As the minister has described, the age group split represents what the community sees as best for the children in Halls Creek.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** The table on page 1176 also refers to the Ford review report recommendations allocating \$65.4 million over four years, to be released subject to business cases being provided. The review also recommended the establishment of an Aboriginal reference group. Has the reference group been established, and what is the budget implication of that reference group?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The actual budget allocation is \$400 000 over four years, so it is \$100 000 a year. I will ask the acting director general to respond about the present status of the project.

**Ms J. Hogben:** In fact, earlier this afternoon I signed a briefing note to the minister on this very subject, and it is on the way to her in-tray. It puts forward the process for establishing the reference group, the process for payment and the considerations for selecting the members of the reference group. That is the status of the project; it is being worked on fairly quickly with the intention of having it up and running as soon as possible.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I want to ask a question in relation to working with children. I refer to the fourth dot point on page 1176. I thank the minister's office for providing the extensive answer to the question that I asked in preparation for estimates, and I now seek some further clarification. In relation to the budget of the working with children program and its ongoing costs, we have been continually told that the annual cost will be \$2.5 million. The first phasing-in cost is almost \$4 million, the second is \$3.5 million, and the cost for 2008 is apparently dependent on a review. Is the minister able to give an indication of the ongoing predicted cost at this time for 2008? Will it come within the predicted budget of \$2.5 million? I now refer to the second part of my question: currently, the department has staff from the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health coming together to be co-located in a group.

[3.40 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Will that plan continue? Will all those people be transferred to the office of the children's commissioner; and, if so, when will that planned transfer happen? If it is to happen, which minister will the commissioner come under? I presume it will be the Department of the Attorney General, like the plan for people working with children. Will the minister clarify those three points in relation to the budget separately from the question on people working with children? Will the department still draw on staff from those two or three departments, and when is the move planned for the group of people working with children?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The second part of the question was about staff from the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health and whether they will stay together as a central unit. That matter, in fact, is before me right at this moment. I will ask Mr Intini to address the other questions about the 2008 budget and the prospects in respect of the children's commissioner.

**Mr M. Intini:** It has always been predicted in the future budget that we need that review. The review will look at the historical data, of course, in terms of what applications and numbers we have processed to date. Unfortunately, predicting numbers is not an easy matter. Before we even commenced the scheme, we did a lot of research worldwide and across Australia to try to understand how to predict numbers. Every scheme is different so using data from other jurisdictions was not the way to go. We do want to do that review and we want to try to estimate as best we can on the basis of that review the resources that we will need in the out years.

The unit for the children's commissioner is being set up to go across to the Department of the Attorney General. It is in its early stages and we have only just started to commence discussions with the Department of the Attorney General. However, I think the member would appreciate that the appointment of the commissioner should really be undertaken in the first instance and that we will work through some of the detail with the commissioner.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Indeed. That leads me to a leading question: where do you expect the commissioner's office to be set up?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Bearing in mind that the Premier is responsible for the appointment and that the commissioner will report to the Attorney General and I will not be directly consulted on the process, I understand that after the panel is formed it is anticipated that the position will be short-listed in late July. I ask the honourable member not to hold me to that date precisely because the question is probably best directed at the Premier, whose office is actually conducting the appointment process. However, that was the last information that was available to me.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** My interest in this area at this dot point really is whether the Department for Communities budget will continue, as the minister indicated, to fund the office of people working with children.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Does the member mean the Department for Child Protection? We are talking about child protection.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I am sorry - it is under the dot point on the Department for Child Protection.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** For the member's interest, there will be questions on the Department for Communities. Closer to four o'clock I will ask whether members want to continue this section for a bit longer. Depending on whether there is an even number of questions, we will split the two hours at four o'clock; if not, we may be able to go a bit longer in this area. Around four o'clock, depending on the questions, we will go to the Department for Communities. However, I give the call back to Hon Barbara Scott.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Is that question clear?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think so. While the program remains with us, it will be funded by the Department for Child Protection. The funding arrangements that need to be entered into once the program is run by the Department of the Attorney General remain to be seen. The program will continue and we certainly have the money and are committed to funding it while it remains part of the Department for Child Protection.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I thank the minister for that.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I refer to the eighth dot point on page 1180 that refers to the Adoptions Act. I do not strictly want to talk about the Adoptions Act but my question is about adoptions. I therefore hope that someone can answer me. Referring to applicants who want to adopt, the departmental screed states -

After the screening process is done applicants participate in a very intensive assessment. An assessment report is written and then presented to a committee of experts who decide if the applicants are suitable to adopt a child. This committee is called the Adoption Applications Committee.

Who are these experts and what qualifications do they have?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Dave Vicary to respond to the question about the membership of the Adoption Applications Committee. I did sign off on a question on notice, which I thought was from Hon Robyn McSweeney.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** No, it was not from me.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It was from somebody today about that matter. I will ask Dave Vicary to answer that question.

**Dr D. Vicary:** As at 30 June 2006, Colin Keogh was deputy chair; Leena Bakshi from the department was on the committee; Hans-Willem van Hall was the principal clinical psychologist; Margaret van Keppel was a clinical psychologist as an independent member; Deborah Foster-Gaitskell was an independent member; and Annette Maloney was also an independent member.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I ask further: there are two clinical psychologists on the committee, but what are the qualifications for the other people that Mr Vicary read out? Are they social workers?

**Dr D. Vicary:** Some are social workers, yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If the member wants us to be more precise, we can probably take that question on notice.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Does the member want to put that question on notice?

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** Yes, thanks.

[*Supplementary Information No E1.*]

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I also notice in the adoption process that a relinquishing mother is given only three or four profiles to view. I think the minister told me that there were 43 couples on the adoptions waiting list. Why, with such a small number, is a relinquishing mother not given all the profiles?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The member will recall the answer that I gave to that question. The profiles given are the best match to the criteria that the relinquishing mother herself has identified as to who she is looking for as potential parents to adopt her child. I am not sure whether Dave Vicary can add to that.

**Dr D. Vicary:** Yes. The adoptions committee does a lot of work with the relinquishing mother and they have quite a profile of the criteria the mother wants for the best-case scenario for the child. Based on that profile, that list of people is then presented to the mother to make a decision.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** To me, it is still a third party's view of what the mother is looking for.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If that is not acceptable to her, she could ask to see more or different profiles.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I just wondered whether a relinquishing mother was told that she can look at the profiles of all the people who want to adopt. All the literature I have seen says that she is given access to only

three or four profiles. I wondered why, with such a small number of applicants, a relinquishing mother was not given access to all the profiles. That would make more sense to me.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If the information that is presented to the relinquishing mother does not satisfy the criteria she is looking for, the officers of the department refine the particular characteristics that she is looking for and present her with further information about other couples who may be suitable for adopting.

[3.50 pm]

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I still think it is wrong.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I thank the member for her opinion.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** I knew that the minister would thank me for my opinion. I thank the minister for the answers that were provided to me. I asked what the department is doing in the short term to ensure that the need for increased education and training of staff is being met. I was under the impression that new staff were given an eight-week training course. I see that it is now a 12-week training course. That is a move in the right direction. However, I thought that staff were not allowed to undertake work until they had completed their 12-week training course. The answer says that new, inexperienced caseworkers cannot undertake casework until they have completed the first four weeks of the entry level training program.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Does the member think that she has been given the wrong information?

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** Yes, I do. All the literature that has come out of departmental questions that I have asked has said that new trainees cannot undertake field work training until they have completed their entry level training. I guess that this is something new.

**Ms J. Hogben:** We have refined it because a number of components in the training were best done in the field and were not requirements for doing casework. The duration of the training has been extended. Some training is now done whilst staff are back in the field and under supervision. This has been done to make the training more relevant and also to make it more efficient for workers, bearing in mind that they come from all parts of the state and they have to fly in to do the training. They have to leave families and often young children. It was considered that the training was best done in groups spread over longer periods. The competencies required for casework and tasks have also been looked at. These have been grouped into the earlier components - hence the change. The member was not given incorrect information; it has changed to improve the training and help people stay through the training because it was not such a big period during which they had to be dislocated.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** The seventh dot point under the major initiatives for 2007-08 on page 1180 reads -

Undertake a review of a sample of cases which involve Indigenous children in care under six years old who have experienced multiple placements, and identify ways of improving the care process for such children.

I have a number of questions about that initiative. How many cases will be reviewed? What percentage is that sample of the total number of children in that category? How many children under six years old have had multiple placements in the past financial year? I appreciate that the minister may have to take some of these questions on notice. In the past financial year how many children have been taken away from their birth mother within the first few days after birth? How will Aboriginal people be involved in this case review?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We will have to take those questions on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No E2.]*

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the first table on page 1181. Could the minister please provide details of available intensive support services? At the top of that page there is an introduction to the table under the heading "Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse".

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The easiest thing is to take that question on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No E3.]*

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the third last dot point on page 1181, which refers to interagency child safety teams in Geraldton and Joondalup. How are Aboriginal people involved in the evaluation of this service?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The pilot implementation of those teams was established in Joondalup and Geraldton. It has been in place for a year. Working with other agencies, they aim to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in families and clarify each of the different agencies' roles. The teams are made up of major government stakeholders - police, corrections, education and health - but also Aboriginal community representatives and adult mental health. An evaluation of the first six months of that program has been completed and a number of suggestions have been made about how it can be done better. The teams themselves comprise Aboriginal community representatives.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** Could the minister give some indication of whether things can be done better? Could she expand on that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can read something out but I am not sure that that will be a valuable answer. I will ask the acting director general to respond.

**Ms J. Hogben:** The major area for improvement was clarity around the focus and objective of the teams and to make sure that all the departments and interagencies involved had the same understanding of the guidelines. That is always an issue when lots of agencies are brought together. Focusing on that was the main theme that would make it better for the future. That is what we are looking at doing - bringing people together to explain it again, to make sure that they have a common view and then to work well together. The teams are working really well. That is what came out of the review. There are other geographic areas that have the same sorts of groups to do interagency work.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** I refer again to the issues of people receiving accommodation and the 44 per cent over two years. I refer to the service and appropriation summary on page 1177 of the *Budget Statements*. Service 3 indicates that that budget was underspent by nearly \$1 million. We have a significant number of families in crisis, the supported accommodation assistance program is at full capacity, we have a 44 per cent increase in people needing accommodation support, yet we have \$1 million underspent in that budget. Could the minister explain why that is underspent by nearly \$1 million?

[4.00 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** As an example, I understand that there is an underspend for the responsible parenting initiative. The money is still allocated and we are not going to take the money from the program and put it somewhere else. There are issues about rolling it out as quickly as was anticipated. The money has been allocated to the responsible parenting program but has not been spent on time. I cannot give the member a greater reason than that now.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Could not the money have been provided to some of the families that were looking for some other forms of assistance?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is the point I am trying to make: it has been allocated for a very specific program and I do not want to take money off that program just because it has not yet been spent and put it somewhere else.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** But it is the end of the financial year.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I know that!

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** A new allocation commences at the beginning of the new financial year. That is a one-off windfall of funding.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I would not describe it as a windfall at all because the money was allocated for the programs to do very specific things. If they have not been able to do them yet, it does not mean that I will stop them from being able to do them in the future.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Has the money just been given back to consolidated revenue?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No. The money is allocated for specific programs. They have underspent in the rollout of those programs. We still want those programs to go ahead.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** I understand what the minister is saying about what the money is for. Where is the money right now? Where is it being warehoused waiting for the department to roll it out? It is not in the department, because it cannot keep it there.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is in the bank.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Surely it is not in a trust account. The department would not do that, would it?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think the point the member is trying to make is that, because there has been an underspend, the money should be used for another cause, such as other families in crisis under different programs.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Has it gone back to consolidated revenue?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No. It would be a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul if we were to take it out of one program that we intend to continue the good work with and put it into something else.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Where is the nearly \$1 million of underspend now?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is in the department's bank account.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** In a trust account being rolled over from one financial year to the next?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is not in a trust account; it is in the department's bank account.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** How do you allow money to roll over from one year to the next when it has to be acquitted fully at the end of the financial year?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It can be carried over.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Maybe the committee can think about getting Treasury officials to come in and go through the intricacies of accrual accounting for future hearings.

I note that the time has gone four o'clock. The minister is here until five o'clock to deal with the divisions for the Department for Child Protection and the Department for Communities. Do members wish to continue with this division for another 15 minutes or do they have a lot of questions for the Department for Communities? I am looking for some guidance. It seems that members are happy to change divisions. As such, we will conclude this division. I thank the minister and the advisers. I remind members that if they have questions they wish to place on notice, they should leave them with the committee staff.

*Meeting suspended from 4.03 to 4.10 pm*

**Division 69: Communities, \$30 065 000 -**

Hon Ken Travers, Deputy Chairman.

Hon Sue Ellery, Minister for Communities.

Mr W. Salvage, Acting Director General, Department for Communities.

Ms F. Lander, Acting Executive Director, Office for Children and Youth.

Ms J. Hogben, Acting Director General, Department for Child Protection.

Ms P. Bagdonavicius, Acting Executive Director, Policy and Planning.

Mr M. Glasson, Executive Director, Family and Domestic Violence Unit.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

Members are asked to sit towards the front of the chamber on the opposition benches where practicable so that witnesses will not have to turn their heads to the back of the chamber when answering questions. It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Two sets of questions on notice from Hon Donna Faragher and Hon Barbara Scott were tabled and are now publicly available to members who would like a copy.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The Department for Communities will come into being on 1 July this year, which is why some officers from the Department for Child Protection are here.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** The first dot point under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 1193 of the *Budget Statements* states -

The Government announced the creation of the new Department for Communities in March 2007.

Will the minister explain in detail how the split will work, particularly regarding the regions? Sometimes a child protection officer in the regions must be multifaceted when dealing with issues because there is no-one else to deal with them. How will that work on a macro basis and then filter down?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The budget papers reflect that the main groups that are going into the new Department for Communities are the Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering, the family and domestic violence unit, the Office for Women's Policy, the Office for Children and Youth, the Office of Multicultural Interests, the childcare regulatory group, children's services officers, and the parent services coordinators. Some decisions must be made about precisely which programs and which staff will transfer to the new department. The budget papers reflect that those negotiations are ongoing. The section 25 transfers will continue for some time while we decide who will go where. For example, there are significant non-government organisation programs that sat in the Department for Community Development, and we are still working out which ones will neatly fit into which department. It might be that a neat fit cannot be provided for some of them and we will just have to make a decision on the basis of a set of criteria that might not be as neat as we would like. I ask the acting director general to address the issues of country areas in particular regarding some of the community development services and funding officers' positions.

**Mr W. Salvage:** The main regionally based services that will amalgamate into the department are the children's services officers and the parent services coordinators who are located throughout the state. When talking to those staff about their transition to the new department, I have been very aware that they feel they are being taken out of a management structure that will essentially remain in place. I am very alive to the issue of needing to provide them with ongoing support. The Acting Director General of the Department for Child Protection and I have signalled to all the staff concerned and to the district managers that it will be business as usual from 1 July. The expectation is that all the resources that are required for those staff to do their jobs will continue to be provided through the district offices, and that will be backed up by a very strong memorandum of understanding. With regard to the work we are doing to structure the new Department for Communities, we will be providing management support for those services locally. I note also that the staff are making very innovative suggestions about how they might operate through regional hubs, for example, which we will be very happy to look at as part of the implementation process.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** Currently, there are two acting directors general. When will directors general be appointed for each department? I note that four positions have been advertised.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The member is aware that I am not directly involved in that process, but I am kept informed of it because they are director general positions in the departments for which I am responsible. I understand that the applications have closed and it may be that the panels have been formed by now. I was last consulted on the formation of the panel last Friday and I assume that that has now been finalised. The panel will conduct the interviewing process from now on. I anticipate that I will receive the panel's recommendations within the next six or so weeks, assuming that there are no delays in the process. Those appointments are very important. I sought approval to appoint an Acting Director General for the Department for Communities before the 1 July start date so that work could be done on the machinery of government and mechanical structure business so that when the new and permanent director general was appointed, that person would not start behind the eight ball. Work has been done already on that structure in the Department for Child Protection so that the director general will not have to begin without any of the preliminary work having been done. The new director general will be in a position to start the budget round for the next budget without having to work out some of the mechanical business that Wayne Salvage has been doing very ably.

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY:** That certainly was not a criticism of the acting director general.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the second dot point under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 1193 of the *Budget Statements*. Which part of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has been transferred into the Department for Communities?

[4.20 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Multicultural interests.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** That is it?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** With regard to the third dot point on that page, what funding has been allocated to broader community consultation and what key stakeholders will be included in the consultation? What is the time line for that consultation?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There is not a precise funding line item for that. That will be part of the normal operations of the department. They will have to consult widely, because of the nature of the work that the department will do, on what the strategic direction of the department ought to be. For example, one of the key things the department will do is work around the early years strategy and refresh and build on the great work that has been done in that area. It will be an ongoing part of its work.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** So no specific consultation is envisaged there? There is no specific structure?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If the question is whether there is a specific line item and this is the specific amount of money that will be spent on consultation, the answer is no, there is not. That is a very important task, though, for the director general to undertake. It is a key part of the work of the Department for Communities.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the sixth dot point on page 1194, which refers to the time line for the review of the Acts Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence) Act 2004. Could the minister give us more information about the time line?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The review is actually being conducted by the Attorney General. It is expected to occur within the next few months. Perhaps Mr Glasson has some more information.

**Mr M. Glasson:** The report is actually overdue; it was due to be presented by now. The last correspondence we had with the Department of the Attorney General indicated that a draft report would be available within the next two months. The process has been extensive but it has been delayed by things such as law time up north - the wet season delayed that - so there are a number of practical reasons that the project was delayed. We are anticipating there will be an outcome probably in the next two months.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** I refer to the appropriation and forward estimates on page 1193. The indication is that the estimated actual for this year is a reduction on the budget figure, but it is not that significant - about \$250 000. What concerns me is that the forward estimates from 2008-09 out are reductions of some significance, especially when one takes into account some of the development and growth that might occur in this area. Can the minister indicate why from 2008 onwards there will be a budget reduction and, if so, what services will be reduced?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** When we talk about growth in this area we are not talking about taking children into care in the Department for Communities. I will ask the acting director general to address that and then perhaps Ms Lander can contribute as well.

**Mr W. Salvage:** One of the tasks I have been given during the implementation phase is to review the decisions that have been taken to this point in relation to the functional splits of the two departments. There was quite a pragmatic exercise undertaken in order to inform what went into the *Budget Statements*, and I have picked up on some of that work. There will be adjustments to the department's budget as a result of the further work that has been done.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** In respect of what?

**Mr W. Salvage:** Issues to do with, for example, the shared service dividend that has been apportioned between the two departments. Those decisions have been reviewed. I can also identify that some of the funding streams that are within that appropriation item reflect timing differences in the expenditure of amounts of money. For example, there was a \$918 000 adjustment across years in expenditure by the Office of Multicultural Interests, and that impacts on the pattern of expenditure one can see going forward.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** I refer to "Significant Issues and Trends" and the dot point relating to suicide among young people being concerning. That statement is a little too open for me. Can the minister indicate what is the rate of suicide among young people, what is the trend in the figures, and what is the department doing about it?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will get Fiona Lander to address that in a minute, but it is not just the Department for Communities through the Office for Children and Youth that is acting on this. There is, for example, really great work being done by Sven Silburn and others through the Ministerial Council on Suicide Prevention who report to the Minister for Health. The Office of Mental Health in the Department of Health, the Department of Education and Training and others are involved in cross-agency work to try to address what is an awful statistic. I will get Fiona Lander to talk about some of the work that the Office for Children and Youth has done. I think she probably also has some presents for people!

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Just before she does, can she tell us what the trend is and what are the numbers?

**Ms F. Lander:** In WA, the rate of mental health issues among young people is one in five, or 20 per cent. In terms of suicide statistics, I am always reluctant to talk about statistics without putting it into context because it depends on the population group one is talking about. I will table this resource, which has some specific statistics in the back. I am happy to refer to those if the member would like me to do that. I think it is important to say that no one agency can look at this issue in isolation, so we work with a number of partners. Some of the specific work we do is with the Office of Mental Health within the health department. It has recently formed a youth mental health advisory group and it is looking at developing a much more comprehensive suite of services for young people in the metropolitan and regional areas. We also work with Sven Silburn at the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention and develop resources that target the messages that are most appropriate. We have come out with a booklet for parents and carers - someone who is concerned about a person who is distressed or suicidal - and Indigenous-specific resources as well. This *Feeling Winyarn?* publication was developed by Nyoongah young people for Nyoongah young people and we have had tremendous feedback on

the success of getting information to young people about this issue. Our broad role is around community education and suicide prevention, and mental health promotion is a key priority for us. I am happy to table these documents. We also work with counselling services. We work with and provide funding to the Kids Helpline. A number of the calls that come in through that service are about young people who are experiencing mental health issues or concerns about their welfare. Through Kids Helpline we work with young people on an individual basis. We do not provide counselling services, but the promotion of these services and other services that we fund, such as Youth Focus, are critical to making sure that young people know where to go when they need help the most.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Can you clarify whether the trend of suicide in young people is increasing?

**Ms F. Lander:** Again, it is in different population groups. Young men continue to be a high priority and a concern.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Increasing?

**Ms F. Lander:** Increasing, particularly in a slightly higher age group, from 25 to 29, in regional areas. We can assume that is because of difficulties and economic pressures in regional areas. It applies to Indigenous groups, too. There are a very small number of younger children who suicide.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Is that an increasing trend?

**Ms F. Lander:** I would not say it is an increasing trend, no. There have been a few isolated cases, but again it is very difficult to talk about trends when one is talking about a total number of individuals that is less than 10.

[4.30 pm]

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I want to go back to the new Department for Communities. Where is the Office for Children and Youth located at the moment? Is it still operating as a separate office, or will it soon be transferred to the new department?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The new department will not come into being until 1 July, so everything is where it was, with the possible exception of the new acting director general. The actual functional transfer will take place on 1 July. No physical transfer of staff is envisaged in the short to medium term. Work is being done now on how best to bring those functions - which are disparate in some senses, but in other senses actually have some commonalities - together. That is some of the machinery of government mechanical and structural work that I referred to earlier. That work is taking place now; it has not been finalised. Consultations are taking place now with staff about what is the best structure to bring those functions together. The intention is that whatever structure is put in place, there will continue to be a discrete policy provision for children and young people.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** So, for example, there will still be a specific website for children and youth, even though that website may not be a specific Office for Children and Youth website? Many people in the general community know about the Office for Children and Youth. A concern has been raised with me that that office may no longer exist.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There is no intention to get rid of that office or change the branding of that office. As to any change to the website, I cannot comment on that. There is no intention to change the visibility of this office or any of the other policy functions that exist within the department. The intention is that the visibility of that office will continue to be as discrete as it is now.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Under these proposed changes, will all the policy and funding decisions, as well as the programs that are currently administered by that office, fall within the responsibility of the Minister for Youth or the Minister for Communities?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The policy and programs will be within the Department for Communities, but there will be a separate Minister for Youth and a separate minister for multicultural interests, for example.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** So, if someone came to that office seeking funding assistance, and that office made a recommendation for that funding assistance, that decision would still go to the Minister for Youth?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is correct.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to page 1199, and the statement under "Key Efficiency Indicators" -

The Office for Children and Youth has committed to undertaking larger and longer term projects beginning in 2007-08.

What are those longer term projects, or are they just the programs that are referred to on page 1203?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Ms Lander to answer that.

**Ms F. Lander:** They are primarily those major initiatives that are outlined on page 1203. I will give an example of that. Something like a suicide prevention resource is more short term in nature, so it might be a project that

we work on with a body like the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention for a period of three to six months. What we are embarking upon next year is a broader scope of programs, within a smaller number of projects. The nutrition program is a good example of that. We are looking at developing a nutrition program that will dovetail with, and complement, what the Department of Education and Training is doing in its review of nutritional values in school canteens. We are looking at what other people are doing, and are really filling in the gaps, because there is a huge problem, not just in schools but with children generally, with nutrition and the increasing prevalence of obesity. That project will take at least 12 months to show any significant achievements.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I note also that the number of staff is estimated to decrease by six as a result of these longer term projects. Will those staff be redeployed?

**Ms F. Lander:** The numbers indicate that there will be a reduction. However, we have been operating with a vacancy rate for the past 12 months. We have had some difficulties in recruiting, particularly in regional areas, where we are not terribly competitive against the mining sector. No-one will be redeployed, and no-one will be out of a job. We have enough positions for the staff who are currently on our permanent books.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** How many staff are working in regional areas?

**Ms F. Lander:** There are five full-time equivalent positions in the regions. A number of those positions are part time.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Are all those positions filled at the moment?

**Ms F. Lander:** No, they are not. We have had some difficulties in recruiting in those areas.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** How many staff are actually operating in the regions at the moment?

**Ms F. Lander:** Bunbury is a full-time position, Kununurra is a part-time position, Geraldton is a part-time position, Albany is a part-time position, and Manjimup is a part-time position, although it is full time at the moment, because we have some flexibility in how we use our salaries. So, four of the FTE positions are filled and one is still vacant.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I would like to follow up on the question on notice that I put in on child care. I thank the office for the answer. The department has indicated that it will need 32 full-time staff to perform the function of undertaking the annual regulatory visit and inspection of all childcare centres. When does the department expect to achieve that level of staff?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Pauline Bagdonavicius to answer that question.

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** We are in the process of recruiting staff to bring it up to that number. We hope to do that as soon as we can in the new financial year, because certainly our aim for the next financial year is for every centre to be visited at least once.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I refer to page 1198. The third dot under "Major Achievements For 2007-08" states -

Amended child care regulations . . . to simplify licensing processes, provide greater flexibility in caring for small groups of children in centre-based care and address a number of specific issues raised by the child care sector.

One of the issues that was raised during the review and amendment of the regulations was the shortage of qualified childcare staff. What initiatives has the department undertaken to address that major issue in the childcare sector?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Before I ask Pauline Bagdonavicius to address that question, I point out that the member would know that the childcare regulations review committee is currently undertaking a review of the regulations. That is certainly one of the issues on the agenda. Workforce training is a very hot topic in that committee's considerations, and a discussion paper on that matter will be released in the near future.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I also asked about the staff.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** One of the issues that the discussion paper is canvassing is qualifications. I will ask Pauline to address the question about what has been done already to address that issue.

[4.40 pm]

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** The discussion paper will also canvass whether we should be expanding the range of qualifications considered suitable for working in the industry. A range of people are not presently covered by the regulations, so there is potential to expand the market for that area. There has been a lot of concern at a national level in the past five or six years about the issue of retention of workers in child care. It has been a big problem, and it remains a problem across Australia, not just for Western Australia. Work has been done through the community services ministers' conference on this very issue. A report has just been published that was

agreed to by the ministers when they met in July 2006. It gives a picture of the profile of the current workforce and a forecast of the expected supply and demand of staffing in the children's services sector, and it identifies workforce shortages. That survey covered all the childcare centres and outside school hours care, if my memory is correct, but it did not pick up on family day care. It has highlighted a number of issues, and further work is being done at the national level through the children's services working group, which will report back to the ministers at their July 2007 meeting. It looks at a range of issues, particularly professional development and training, which are not necessarily under the auspices of this ministers' conference but are issues that need to be raised in education and training arenas as well. I am also aware that we have been doing work at a local level on workforce issues, including education and recruitment from overseas.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I refer to the fourth dot point on page 1198, about the amended childcare regulations to require unlicensed creche services to prominently display their licensing status. I found that a curious statement. If they are unlicensed, what do they put on the front door?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The member obviously has not seen the posters that have been produced indicating to parents that the centre is not a licensed childcare centre. I will ask Pauline Bagdonavicius to respond to that in a bit more detail.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** If I could just expand on that and say that I would like to know about any move to regulate those creches. Has there been any progress in moving towards that to safeguard children?

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** As the minister has noted, we have developed a poster that was circulated widely and made available to people to use as a template for display so that parents are aware that a creche is not licensed. We have dealt with a couple of organisations to determine how we work with them to ensure safe child care, and whether an exemption is required through ministerial intervention in order to maintain a flexible arrangement for these creches. We have not seen a huge number of services being licensed. I do not have with me the number of creches for which we have required licensing because of the greater flexibility that was brought in with the revised distance factor that was originally contained in the regulations. That has given a lot more flexibility. We have highlighted to creches the sorts of things they need to have in place. There are still a range of requirements they need to meet under the regulations for providing a creche service that were not required previously. There are greater assurances for parents, even though their children are still attending unlicensed places, with safety issues having been addressed.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I refer to "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 1193. I note the statement that there has been a threefold increase in the prevalence of overweight seven to 15-year-olds between 1985 and 2003. What, if any, funds have been allocated under this budget to overcome and prevent childhood obesity? I cannot see any. Are any funds coming to the department from the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Fiona Lander to address that. She referred earlier, in responding to Hon Donna Faragher, to the nutrition program that is planned for 2007-08. I will ask her to expand on that work.

**Ms F. Lander:** We have a fairly significant budget attached to the development of the nutrition program, but that is just one example. We administer three grant programs through which we are able to prioritise different areas from time to time. I sit on the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce, which is about keeping kids active and making them aware that their nutrition now affects them forever; that if they become obese or overweight now, there will be problems for them later in life. We are working with the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce. Funding has been allocated through the task force to various community projects. I do not know whether any of them specifically include obesity in their titles, but when we are encouraging young people and parents to take a far more active role in the community, that must be one of the outcomes of that work. Getting back to our own grant programs, we have special project grants that we advertise once every year. They are for projects costing up to \$35 000, with a 12-month duration. In the next funding round we will be looking at how we can target some of that funding towards communities that are putting a greater emphasis on keeping their people active and promoting good nutrition. There are loads of examples of this kind of activity across government. The Department of Local Government and Regional Development has a grants program that targets seniors to keep them active, and part of that is in intergenerational components. They look at keeping children connected to older people by being active and talking about things such as nutrition and healthy cooking. There is also the review of canteen food through the Department of Education and Training. A lot of Healthway funding goes to obesity and nutrition-based programs. A good deal of effort is being put into this issue.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I am aware of that, but I was wondering what this department is doing.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to "Key Efficiency Indicators" on page 1204. I note that a footnote on that page states that the Office of Citizens and Civics ceased on 31 December 2006. What agency, if any, has continued the work of that office? I am not sure whether the minister can answer this one. What are the reasons for its closure?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am not in a position to answer that question. It is part of multicultural interests, which was excluded from this division.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** I refer to the last line item on the table on page 1204, under "Key Efficiency Indicators", which has to do with grants. The amount budgeted for grants has been reduced from an estimated \$710 000 in 2006-07 to a budgeted \$522 000 for 2007-08. Can the minister provide reasons for the reduction?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** This whole page relates to service 4.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** Does the whole page relate to multicultural interests?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** That section relates only to multicultural interests.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is part of multicultural interests. I received a letter from the Chair excluding this.

**Hon GIZ WATSON:** My apologies - I think I did this last year as well. I refer to page 1198, where it is stated that the number of licensed services is anticipated to increase in 2007-08. Recently, another two family daycare services were reported to have closed. How will the department ensure that the mix of available childcare services will include family daycare services?

[4.50 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** This is a real issue for the changes that are happening in child care. I receive over my desk notifications of services that are unable to continue. It is a concern, but I will ask Pauline Bagdonavicius to talk about what the sector is seeing.

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** There is certainly an issue of retention of family daycare services, not only in WA but also across Australia. Again, it is an emerging trend. In our annual report last year, just to give the member some feel for it, the statistics showed that we had 773 family day carers. As at 11 June this year, we have 647. There has therefore certainly been a decrease. That is a trend that has continued in more recent years. For outside-school-hours care we have a very small number of family day carers, but that has been maintained at four since we introduced licensing to that category.

One initiative that we have introduced in recent times has been an important step, and that is testing, of not only family day carers but also supervising officers of childcare services, to ensure that people actually understand the regulations. One of the issues that emerged in conjunction with the family daycare sector was that we needed to re-look at the testing we had implemented, as many family day carers do not come with a good educational background but nevertheless have very good skills for working with children. We have reviewed that test and are in the process of putting in place a revised test, which should make it better in that it will be less onerous and people will feel more confident about undergoing the test. That has certainly been a factor that came to our attention anecdotally through the family daycare network of providers. They let us know that it was something we needed to look at. We have done that and we hope that will actually help. Other than that, I think it comes back to some of the issues for family day care. It is also about the requirements at both the commonwealth and state levels. As I said, we have looked at streamlining the testing to make it better for family day care. I think we need to do further work as we move forward in maintaining flexibility for that group.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Can I ask a follow-up question on that before I get to my question?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Yes, I will give the member two questions.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** I am really asking for clarification about family day care. I think I know about it, but I am unsure whether what I am thinking is right. There are daycare centres where people take children to. There is family day care that people operate in their own homes to which people take their children.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** And there is a third category -

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Out-of-school care.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** No, the category of people who want their children minded in their own home by a nanny. Are those people who want their own children cared for by a nanny in their own home able to access the full suite of services, support, subsidies or whatever that the other two categories can access?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Childcare subsidies are a matter for the commonwealth government, not the state government. The state government runs the regulatory regime.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** But does the minister know the answer? If the minister does know the answer, I am really interested in whether the commonwealth subsidy is applicable to that circumstance.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, I do not think so.

**Ms P. Bagdonavicius:** It is in some instances with the in-home care program that the commonwealth government has introduced. That certainly does provide childcare benefits to people whom the commonwealth government has accredited for in-home care. However, it is not regarded as the same as the provision of a nanny

service, as the commonwealth government is very specific in the criteria around the sorts of activities that in-home carers can provide in a person's own home. For instance, they will not do general household duties while they are looking after children in a person's own home. If they are doing that, they would be regarded as performing a nanny service and they would not qualify for the childcare benefit.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** My real question is about the issue at the very bottom dot point on page 1193 under "Significant Issues and Trends". It is about the trend regarding the proportion of young people with debt. Can the minister tell me both about the percentage of young people in debt and what the trend is in terms of the amount of disposable income and young people's debt? What is causing the increase and is the department doing something to help address that situation?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Fiona Lander to address that in a minute. The answer to the second question is yes. I suspect we will get more presents to demonstrate to us exactly what the Office for Children and Youth has been doing on this issue, and I will ask Ms Lander to address the specifics of the question.

**Ms F. Lander:** The issue of debt is very concerning. We need to look at the causes of debt, regardless of income level, because in many cases young people do not have disposable income to speak of. Young people are generally targeted very aggressively by marketing campaigns, whether they be for particular stores, for banks or for credit cards. Credit cards are easier than ever to get hold of and young people are getting access to credit that they cannot pay back. We are therefore working with a range of different service providers. Again, our broad role as a small policy office is to provide community education and resources to young people to make them aware of the possible traps concerning credit and debt. We issue press statements through the Minister for Youth, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, at key points throughout the year. For example, at the end of the financial year we target young people, who are working and possibly receiving money back from their tax return, with information about why they need to be careful and why they should not take that money and enter into a contract that they cannot pay later. The key areas in which young people acquire debt are credit cards, store cards, vehicles and contracts for mobile telephones. In the first place there is a much bigger issue with young people under 18 years of age signing mobile phone contracts. Also, often young people who get a driving licence want a big, red V8 car and they cannot really afford that.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Boy young people!

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I do not know about that!

**Ms F. Lander:** They need to think about the running costs of those cars, such as insurance and petrol costs. Again, we have a publication that we developed in partnership with the Youth Legal Service Western Australia, which sees a large number of young people every year about debt-related problems. Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia is another commonwealth agency that we work with, which deals with young people when they get to the terrible point of bankruptcy. We have worked with that service to try to ensure that there are other avenues, because once somebody is registered as a bankrupt, it goes on that person's credit rating for life. It is therefore the absolute last resort as far as we are concerned. The publication "Managing and Avoiding Debt: A Young Person's Guide" has been sent out very widely in the community. Every year we send out 10 000 copies by request. We also get media coverage. Channel Seven regularly runs stories about young people in debt on *Today Tonight*. We try to work with people at Channel Seven to profile a young person who has encountered debt and who has then gone to a service such as the Youth Legal Service WA and worked through a budget plan to get that person out of the situation and who can then become an advocate for other young people. Community education, therefore, is the key to getting the message out there about not incurring debt.

**Hon HELEN MORTON:** Can I suggest to the minister that it be posted out to every family?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The member can make that suggestion.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** With a picture of the minister!

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Of me, yes; that is a good idea!

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Members, noting the time, I will have to call an end to this session. I again remind members that if they have other questions they want to place on notice, please hand them in to the staff and they will be forwarded. I once again thank the staff of the department for their assistance this afternoon. I also should note that the last document tabled was "Managing and Avoiding Debt: A Young Person's Guide". I thank very much the staff for their presence this afternoon.

[5.00 pm]

#### **Department of Water -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Kim Chance, Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Water Resources.

Mr P. Frewer, Acting Director General.

Mr R. Hammond, Director, Water Resource Use.

Mr B. O'Neil, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr P. Parolo, Manager, Finance and Administration.

Mr J. Ruprecht, Director, Water Resource Management.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I would ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I call Hon Norman Moore.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to the significant issues and trends on page 438 of the *Budget Statements*. I link that to page 442, which refers to water resources legislation, and page 443, which relates to future legislation. In view of the fact that under "Significant Issues and Trends", much of the reform agenda will require comprehensive legislative reform and new systems and processes, how does the minister relate that to the fact that the Water Resources Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 still languishes in the Parliament and has not been passed, although a lot of what is provided for in that legislation has been put in place? In the context of the water resources bill and the water services bill yet to be introduced into Parliament, what is the government doing in terms of water legislation? Why would it proceed with the water resources legislation, which is currently in the house, when two other major pieces of legislation are foreshadowed? Is there any intention to consolidate all the water legislation into one act?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The Water Resources Amendment Bill 2006, the bill that is in Parliament at the moment, is a machinery of government bill. It had its genesis in the machinery of government review, which was an across-government process. To the extent that it affects the water resources industry, that matter has been processed, in an administrative sense, separately. The other two pieces of legislation that the Leader of the Opposition referred to are still in preparation. One of the effects of those two pieces of legislation will be the abolition of 14 other acts of Parliament. To that extent, there are similarities between those two pieces of legislation and the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Bill currently before this house, which abolishes 17 acts of Parliament. There is some significant aggregation of legislative instruments in the two pieces of legislation that are still in preparation.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Bearing in mind that the legislation sitting in the Parliament at the moment seeking to abolish the Water and Rivers Commission has not been passed, in reality the Water and Rivers Commission still exists. Is the government acting lawfully by effectively abolishing the Water and Rivers Commission without parliamentary approval? That is the first part of my question. Secondly, are there still members of the Water and Rivers Commission Board; and, if so, who are they? Thirdly, is there a chief executive officer of the Water and Rivers Commission; and, if so, who is it?

[5.10 pm]

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The Water and Rivers Commission still has its own section in the appropriations. The appropriation at page 438 of the *Budget Statements* is listed under the Water and Rivers Commission. Yes, the commission still has commissioners. The CEO of the Water and Rivers Commission is Mr Paul Frewer.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** And the board?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The Leader of the Opposition would like the names of the members of the board?

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** If it exists, who are they?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I will ask the CEO to answer.

**Mr P. Frewer:** The current board consists of Verity Allan, who is the chairperson, Jos Chatfield, Tony Allen, Peter Eggleston, Rodney Willox and me.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** It sounds like an excellent board.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** The next question is: do they meet; and, if so, what do they do? Are they being paid?

**Mr P. Frewer:** Yes, they still meet monthly. They still have broad functions to undertake under the Water and Rivers Commission Act. They oversee broad budget directions and they still approve water resource management planning. They still receive remuneration according to government policy.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** In effect, we have a Water and Rivers Commission that, for all intents and purposes, is the Department of Water - because if a person goes to the website, that is what he gets - operating in conjunction with the Water and Rivers Commission, which, effectively, does not have any role other than what has been explained to us.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The Water and Rivers Commission still carries out its statutory role. That has not changed all that much since I was a member of the board of the old Water Authority of Western Australia. We sat alongside the then Water Resources Council, which was in the appropriations and effectively a function of the then Water Authority. It had a separate function, which was the identification and management of our water resources. The function of the Water and Rivers Commission is somewhat parallel to that.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I will not ask why the government is getting rid of it if it is performing a useful function because we will argue that when the bill comes before the house - if ever.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** Of course we will.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to service 1, "Water Resources Plans and Policies", at page 441 of the *Budget Statements*. The total cost of the service ranges from the 2005-06 actual of \$6.282 million to a budget of \$15.032 million in 2006-07 and a budget estimate for 2007-08 of \$11.575 million. Can the minister explain the variations in those numbers and why it is less now than it was in 2006-07? Can the minister give me some indication of what the cost of the service comprises?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The 2005-06 actual has been adjusted for comparability to reflect a number of things. They include the transfer of the Office of Water Strategy, which represents \$4.865 million. The variation between the 2005-06 actual and the 2006-07 budget mostly relates to movements in funding that is associated with the irrigation reform, which amounts to a variation of some \$4.14 million. That provides a total between those two issues of a little over \$9 million.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Can the minister give me a rough indication how the \$11.575 million is to be spent?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** In four ways - legislative reform, the implementation of the National Water Initiative, the development of the state and regional water plans, and the development of the blueprint for water reform.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Just following on from that at page 442, which shows a continuation of service 1, the number of full-time equivalent employees goes from 12 in 2005-06 to 66 in 2007-08. Can the minister explain the reason for the very significant increase in staff?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** Yes. I understand that the increased numbers represents the people who are in the Office of Water Strategy who were transferred from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to the Department of Water. There was also an internal rationalisation of functions.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** An internal rationalisation that increased the numbers - is that what the minister is saying?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The transfer would have accounted for a number of those.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** We should have more of those rationalisations.

I refer to the major achievements for 2006-07 at page 442. The sixth dot point refers to five projects totalling \$3.1 million that were successfully funded from the second round of the Premier's Water Foundation. Five projects were successful out of 56 expressions of interest received. Perhaps the minister will take this on notice rather than worrying about it now. Can the minister provide me with a list of the five successful applicants and

what they were about? Perhaps I can be provided on notice with a list of those who were unsuccessful in receiving a grant.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The unsuccessful ones I need to take on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No G1.*]

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I can provide details of the successful projects today.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Just read it out quickly; just a rough idea of what each one was about.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I will read out the project title because the document is several pages long. Project title 1 was "Wastewater purification and reuse: mineral-based adsorbents for contaminant removal". The grant total was \$450 000. Project title 2 was "Hydrological controls on managed aquifer recharge in Perth's coastal aquifer". The grant total was \$600 000. Project title 3 was "Aquifer storage and recovery of potable water in the Leederville aquifer". The grant total was \$481 000. Project title 4 was "Assessing the public health impacts of recycled water use". The grant total was \$700 000. Project title 5 was "Vegetation dynamics and water yield under changing climate and management". The grant total was \$899 046. In each case the grant amounts relate to a substantial fraction of the total project cost. In some cases it is roughly half and in other cases it is down to about one-tenth. All of that information will be made available and we will provide a copy of it today. Each of the decisions made about those grants was determined by an independent body.

[5.20 pm]

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** I am aware that there have been recent minor adjustments to the licences and fees that are proposed to be introduced in July. Will the minister provide an update on the current situation and inform me when the changes will be gazetted?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I will do my best to give a quick update from my point of view and then I will hand it over to Mr Rod Hammond, who will fill in the detail. I understand that the Minister for Water Resources and the department are working through a range of issues that have been brought to their attention by water users and other people, including myself as the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Some progress has been made in those discussions. There is probably a little way to go but since the state signed the National Water Initiative, it is obliged to gain cost recovery in a range of areas, including licensing. That issue is probably the most controversial. I will ask Mr Hammond to give the member a more accurate idea of where those negotiations are going.

**Mr R. Hammond:** The adjustments will be printed in the *Government Gazette* tomorrow and they will come into effect on 1 July 2007. After the government has gazetted them, they will be laid on the table of both houses of Parliament tomorrow. There have been some small changes to the proposed licences and fees to make sure that stock and domestic licensees do not pay a fee. Therefore, the bottom scale of the licences now starts at 1 501 kilolitres, whereas it once began at zero kilolitres. Stock and domestic users are exempt from paying a fee. Another small change has been made to allow the considerations of the water used in dams instead of the water taken and stored in the dams. That is a relatively minor change. These changes will forgo just over \$500 000.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** My understanding is that the cost recovery figure is something like \$5.8 million.

**Mr R. Hammond:** That was the original proposal without the minor changes.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** How can it be an equitable scheme when only about 20 per cent of all dam and bore users in the state are levied this fee and the other 80 per cent - perhaps I can be corrected on the exact percentages - are not levied?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I ask Mr Hammond to respond.

**Mr R. Hammond:** All water licensees in the state are subject to the fee, with the exception of the stock and domestic users that I just described. Unlicensed users, such as those with farm dams and backyard bores in Perth, are not licensed and therefore are not subject to a fee. A user can only be subject to a fee for a licence if the user has a licence. The fee is only to recover the cost of the licensing system. It is an administration fee.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** I guess that the equity argument relates only to the licence then. What is the proportion of total bore and dam users in the state, and why is only that sector being licensed and being charged a fee?

**Mr R. Hammond:** We do not license either backyard bores in Perth or the dams throughout the wheatbelt because there is neither an economic benefit nor a water resource benefit to be gained from licensing them. It would not be reasonable or fair to charge a licensing fee just to raise a fee. We have about 13 000 licences. If we add the 150 000 backyard bores and more than 20 000 farm dams, it can be seen that the percentage of actual users that we license is relatively small. Does that answer the question in percentage terms? I have given the member the numbers rather than the percentage. I would have to do the maths to work out the percentage.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** I get the picture.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to "Service 2: Investigation and Assessment of Water Resources" on page 443 of the *Budget Statements*. I note that under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 439 the collection and dissemination of useful and relevant water information in Western Australia is regarded as a key challenge. Why has the department not produced a new set of published water resource estimates for Western Australia, and particularly for Perth and the south west, since 2000, bearing in mind that the "2007 State Water Plan" uses the water resource estimates from 2000?

**Mr P. Frewer:** The "South West Water Plan" is currently underway. It commenced last year and is a review of the current usage, demand and supply trends in the south west. New figures will come about from that exercise. The department is also undertaking a 15-year extensive new and wide-ranging state groundwater investigation program that will examine supplementing our knowledge of groundwater resources throughout the state. Some of the first holes that were drilled as part of that program were at Scott River in the south west. That process will move up into north Gnangara and Allanoona at Geraldton. In addition, we are dealing with a data backlog of accession reports that have been a condition of licences in the past. They will be made available in the future on a website so that nearly 5 000 reports that have been collected over the past decade will be available to people who want to directly access information that has been collected as a result of licensing procedures and exploration undertaken by mining companies and others throughout the state.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** It has been six or seven years since the last lot of data was provided, which, as I said, is still contained in the "2007 State Water Plan". Based on the fact that the department is spending about \$15 million a year on "Service 2: Investigation and Assessment of Water Resources", what has the department been doing with the six times \$15 million over the past six years for which we do not have any up-to-date figures?

**Mr P. Frewer:** Most of the dot points cover the range of work that has been undertaken. Extensive use of new groundwater modelling has been done for the Gnangara mound and the Yarragadee aquifer in the south west. They have produced some of the most extensive and technically recognised models in Australia, if not the world, and we have had those independently verified. An extensive program for groundwater assessment incorporates drilling programs, which come at some cost. An extensive amount of other data has been collected through primary assessment modelling and other investigative work.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to page 22 of the "2007 State Water Plan" which lists the sustainable yield, current allocation and estimated use of the various groundwater resources in Western Australia. I again advise that these figures are based on those provided in 2000. When can we expect to get a 2007 version of those determined locations of water within Western Australia?

**Mr P. Frewer:** Through the regional water plans - the south west is the first one being undertaken - we intend to prepare plans for every region in the state. Those plans will be rolled out over the next three or four years and, as part of that exercise, each of the regional water supply demand and inventories will be updated. On top of that, part of the National Water Initiative is to prepare and be involved in a national database, which the Bureau of Meteorology is running. We have been having early discussions with the bureau about updating databases across the whole of Australia, which will then conform to national standards and will deal with not only regional resources but also basin level and subregional resources. The idea is that within the next three to four years there will be a national inventory of data that is consistent across not just Western Australia but the whole of Australia.

[5.30 pm]

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** In respect of service 2, and on the assumption that the cost of services includes the cost of investigation of water resources and not just costs associated with staff and people involved, why is it that in 2005-06 the total cost of the service was \$15.186 million, which employed 120 FTEs, and in the 2007-08 budget estimate, the cost of the service is not much increased - it is \$15.63 million - yet the minister gets to employ 182 staff members? That is a significant increase in the number of employees. How is it that the minister can employ that many more staff members for the same number of dollars between 2005-06 and 2007-08?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I am happy to have a go at answering that question. If the Leader of the Opposition looks at the note at the bottom of page 443, he will see it indicates that in 2007-08 the average cost decrease is due to increased water resource assessments. I am making an assumption here that there is a critical mass of overhead funding that becomes diluted as the number of assessments is increased. The more assessments done, the lower the overhead cost that applies to each assessment. There is an efficiency factor. I can indicate that in terms of numbers that the Leader of the Opposition does not have available to him. In 2005-06, the actual number of water resource assessments was 108; and in 2007-08, the target number is 151, which is nearly 50 per cent higher. So, there is more actual work going onto the ground. Each of those assessments has an individual cost and if the Leader of the Opposition looks at the second last line item on page 443, he will see that the average cost per water resource assessment falls from almost \$141 000 in 2005-06 to \$103 510 in 2007-08. There is a significant drop-off in the per unit cost of water resource assessment. Perhaps Mr Frewer can help me

here. I would presume from that that there is a dilution of the overhead cost. Members will also note if they go to the first table on that page that between the 2006-07 budget and the 2006-07 estimated actual, there is a significant increase in the cost of service from \$14.69 million to \$16.17 million. When that is transferred to the bottom line of the page, the FTE line, one sees a movement in the same period from 120 to 169, so the additional staff engaged in that area and the cost of the staff are taken into those two numbers.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Has this reduction in the cost per water assessment, which the minister describes as being the result of increased efficiencies, been brought about by increased efficiencies or by employing another 62 FTEs?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I will have to refer that to Mr Frewer. He will tell me whether my speculation was correct or not.

**Mr P. Frewer:** The minister's speculation is correct. The explanation is that as the numbers of staff increase, the numbers of resource assessments increase. By looking at the increased output across the whole of the service, one sees the cost of each of the resource assessments decreased as a result of that.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** With reference to the water user licence and fee system about to be introduced, how will it be monitored and policed?

**Mr R. Hammond:** Currently as part of our licence process we check compliance with the licence. We do that usually on the basis of where we know people might be doing the wrong thing, big users, or there are particular issues in an area. We do a lot of compliance against licence conditions and actual use. Is that the basis of the question?

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** Yes, but how will the department police it?

**Mr R. Hammond:** For example, if a person has a crop of 10 hectares of carrots, an officer will go out and check that he has 10 hectares of carrots. We police it in that sense. If there are meters, we check the meter reading. We police it in a practical, on the ground sense. That is what the fee is about - paying for some level of compliance with the licence. We also have water management committees scattered around the state and they also help with compliance. They know what is happening in their local area and inform our officers to go out and look at the appropriate spot.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** If a landowner is unsure come 1 July about his capacity to be levied a fee and intends to challenge that situation, will he put himself in jeopardy further down the track in terms of obtaining a licence if he does not pay the fee on 1 July? In other words, if he does not pay the fee because it is subject to challenge, is he in effect relinquishing his right to a licence?

**Mr R. Hammond:** A licence is a very valuable item. A property with a licence is often worth an awful lot more than a property without a licence. We are talking about a water licence. In most places in this state, which is pretty dry, a person will have a real shortfall if he does not have water to do things. Whether one is in Manjimup or Carnarvon, a property with a licence can often be worth double to 10 times a property without a licence. That is the major issue. If a person chooses not to pay his licence fee, he runs the risk of not having a licence, and if he does not have a licence he forgoes a very large part of his asset base.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** Can I just clarify one thing? While the regulations will be gazetted to take effect from 1 July, it does not mean that people will get a bill on 1 July. The licence fee will fall due upon the anniversary of the licence, so only those persons whose licences were due on 1 July will get a bill on 1 July. The legislative machinery will be in place for the charges to be made, but the charges will not be made until they fall due on the anniversary of the licence.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** So, new people caught in the net will not get a bill until about a year's time. Is that how I should read it?

[5.40 pm]

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** Yes, I think that is right. If their licences were due on 30 June, it will be a year before they get their bill.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** Okay. If a person is licensed for a certain capacity, and the department's monitoring and policing reveals that that person is not using his full capacity, will that person lose the balance of his capacity over time?

**Mr R. Hammond:** This state has for a long time had a policy of "use it or lose it". That means that if a person is not using water consistent with his licence, we will take that licence back and make that water available to other people to use in a legitimate way. We have done that numerous times. That has the distinct advantage of preventing the problem that is being experienced in other states, where there are a significant number of sleeper licences, or unused licences, that are causing great grief in places like the Murray-Darling basin and the Namoi Valley. In this state, we do not do that. Only late last year, we bought back approximately 16 gigalitres of water

from sand miners in the south west. The mines had reached their use-by date, and they did not need that water any more.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** You bought it back, or you took it back?

**Mr R. Hammond:** Sorry, we took it back. We do not buy water. We give it out, and we take it back. No money changes hands.

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** In the same vein, if licence holders have multiple licences, which obviously makes the whole process more expensive for them, they can amalgamate those licences. Similarly, if the licence is for more water than they will ever need, they can go to the Department of Water and make those changes to adjust the amount of fee that they are paying.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** Over what period of time will the department make that assessment?

**Mr R. Hammond:** Licensees can choose to have their licences adjusted whenever they want. They simply need to talk to their local office. To give an example, not long ago, Perth City Council had 200 licences. We have now amalgamated that into four. Another example is the Manjimup area, where a number of people had three or four licences, when one would do, and those licences have now been amalgamated into one. The objective is administration. It is not to collect money. It has a particular aim.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask from the chair. I refer to page 439, "Service and Appropriation Summary", service 2, investigation and assessment of water resources. The "State Water Plan 2007" contains water conservation targets for 2007-11. Those targets are as follows: agriculture, 20 per cent improvement in water use efficiency; minerals and energy, 20 per cent improvement in water use efficiency; and household use reduction from 106 kilolitres per person to less than 100 kilolitres per person. What initiatives are proposed to achieve those targets, and what funding has been allocated to them?

**Mr P. Frewer:** Basically, we are working with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on preparing a state water re-use and recycling strategy. That will put in place a set of strategies on how we can recycle more water, and also implement a range of initiatives that would lead to more efficient use of water, and water re-use. The targets have already been addressed through a series of measures, such as the sprinkler restrictions that have occurred over the past few years. That has led to a dramatic reduction in per capita water consumption, as the member would be aware. We will also be working with industry and other large users of water to target them specifically and look at how we can reduce their water demand. That strategy should be available at the end of this year. That will have quite wide-ranging implications for water efficiency into the future.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I refer again to that same page, and that same table. Under "Total Cost of Services", there is a significant increase in income from \$14.925 million to \$44.144 million. What is the source of that income? Why does that income then fall significantly in subsequent years?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** The vast majority of the almost \$31 million differential between those two amounts is \$25 million under the Collie River salinity recovery program. That is the sum in that year that will come in as a result of that program. A significant component of that funding - currently \$5.8 million - is the water resource management fee. That is the licence fee. However, as we have heard, that is likely to be some \$500 000 less than that. That change was made after the printing of the budget papers.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to page 444. The third dot point under "Major Achievements For 2006-07" refers to the completion of groundwater assessments for the south west Yarragadee and the Millstream aquifer, among others. What is the sustainable yield of the south west Yarragadee, and what is the current state of the Millstream aquifer?

**Mr R. Hammond:** Our sustainable yield estimate for the south west Yarragadee is currently 120 gigalitres. We are doing an interim allocation plan to see whether that is still the case. The Millstream aquifer has been managed quite effectively, because there have been a number of cyclones through that area in the past couple of years that have allowed that aquifer to be significantly recharged. The Millstream system is now at its highest known level ever.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Perhaps it is climate change!

**Mr R. Hammond:** There is a suggestion that the north of the state is getting wetter.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** In a previous briefing that I attended, there was some talk about underground water availability in the Gingin area. It was suggested that there was about 75 gigalitres of groundwater sustainable yield in that area, but further research was necessary. What underground sources are available in the Yanchep-Moore River area?

**Mr R. Hammond:** The Yanchep-Moore River area?

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Between the two. I think around Gingin was the general area.

**Mr R. Hammond:** The reason I am being very careful in my answer is that north of Moore River there is a different groundwater system. South of Moore River - between Moore River and the Swan River - it is the Gnangara mound. That is a very large resource. If the member is talking about Yanchep in particular, it would be too difficult to answer, because it is part of the Gnangara mound, which is a completely separate discussion. I think the member is talking about north of Moore River, and, as the member is talking about Gingin, I assume he is talking about on the Dandaragan plateau, which has significant water resources. We have recently done some detailed drilling - which was part of an earlier question that the member asked - the data for which is still being finalised. However, it does appear to show that more water will be available in the north - or north of Gingin, anyway.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Is there any rough estimate of the sustainable yield?

**Mr R. Hammond:** I cannot answer that off the top of my head. The aim of the extra drilling is to try to finalise that number. We do not have that information now. I have just been told that we have some water balance modelling for that area, which we will be doing next year, but we do not have more up-to-date data.

[5.50 pm]

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to service 3 on page 444, "Water Licensing and Regulation". This is just a quick question about money again. In 2005-06 the total cost of the service was \$17.494 million, and it employed 158 people. The budget estimate for 2007-08 is \$24.847 million, which is a significant increase, but there has been a decrease in the number of full-time equivalents. Can the minister explain the reason for the significant variation in the total cost of the service, and why fewer staff are needed?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** I may be answering a little more than the question, but just so that it is all in its context, the variation between 2005-06 and 2006-07 resulted from a deferral from prior yields in the rural farm water grants of \$3.45 million. The variation between the 2006-07 budget and the 2006-07 estimated actual chiefly relates to the movement in deferrals on the rural farm water grants, which is about \$4 million, and the Gnangara mound metering, with movements in deferrals of \$1.1 million, giving a total of \$5.1 million.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** It seems that this department has inherited responsibility for the rural drainage network. The line item for service 5 on page 439 shows that the budgeted expenditure for 2006-07 was \$46.841 million, which was roughly double that of the previous year, but the estimated actual was only \$32.11 million, with the budget estimate for 2007-08 rising to \$53.06 million. What are the reasons for the shortfall in expenditure of something like \$14 million for 2006-07, and the rather steep spike in next year's budgeted expenditure? Has it stopped raining so much that the drains are not needed any more?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** There is a little over \$14 million differential between the 2006-07 budget and the estimated actual. The bulk of that is the revision of budget cash flow for the Collie River salinity recovery, amounting to \$11.7 million. There is also an amount of \$2.3 million, which is the depreciation allocation revised down as a result of a reassessment of the asset allocation amongst the treasury services.

**Hon BARRY HOUSE:** What is the reason for the rather steep increase next year to \$53 million?

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** As the Collie River salinity recovery spending starts between the 2006-07 estimated actual and the 2007-08 budget estimate, there is a variation of a bit over \$28 million, which is the result of the revised cash flow of the Collie River salinity recovery project.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to the "Cashflow Statement" on page 452. The last line item is for cash assets at the end of the reporting period, which I understand is the cash surplus that is carried forward. The budget for 2006-07 was \$867 000. Having come down from an actual of \$23 million the previous year, there was an intention to spend all the cash. In the estimated actual for 2006-07, the cash assets go back to \$22.152 million, and remain in the area of \$18 million or \$19 million in the out years. Can the minister explain why it is necessary for this organisation to carry forward those cash assets?

**Mr B. O'Neil:** The cash figure that has changed represents a number of issues. One is the Collie initiative we have just spoken about, with money coming in. The second thing is that we are bringing into account a range of quite extensive external funding coming from the federal government into regional groups and catchment groups, which they are vesting with us. We have signed two-year or three-year contracts with a number of those catchment groups, such as the South West Catchment Council or the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council, to cover three-year programs. The cash flows actually represent the money coming in and the delivery of projects over that year. In terms of the financial estimates, that is what we believe will be the cash that we have, and represents the funds that will be spent over a two or three-year period.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** The first dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 445 mentions statutory water management plans. Can the minister tell me what a statutory water management plan is?

**Mr P. Frewer:** Statutory water management plans are part of the conditions and implementation requirements of the National Water Initiative. At the moment we prepare water management plans and do water allocation

planning in a general sense to reflect supply and demand characteristics of particular aquifers, and then use licensing as a way of controlling and measuring the amount of water that is being allocated. Statutory plans will change the system such that a new set of entitlements will be created from the licences and a new water registry will be brought into play to reflect those entitlements. That will mean that people will end up with separate titles for water, separate from their land titles, which can then be bought, sold and traded. That instrument will be recognised by banks as security and they will be proportions of a consumptive pool. The statutory plan will look at the amount of water that is available. It will allocate water for environmental purposes, for public drinking water supply purposes and for other purposes, which is known as a consumptive pool. Rather than getting a fixed amount of water every year if it is surface water, or over a series of years if it is groundwater, the user will receive a proportion of that consumptive pool. That will be a secure entitlement in perpetuity and will provide them with access to that consumptive pool for the amount of water that is available on a year-to-year basis. The equivalent of a statutory water management plan is a town planning scheme. It becomes a set of entitlements that result from a statutory process.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I think I will go and study the *Hansard* carefully. I refer to the capital works program detailed on page 449. Under "Completed Works" there are line items for the state reference network and replacement and maintenance of monitoring bores and river gauging stations. Why is that considered to be a capital work rather than a recurrent expenditure?

**Mr P. Frewer:** The state reference network comprises built assets; therefore, it has always been regarded as capital works. There is an ongoing program to retain and replace those. Treasury sets the rules for capital works and our asset replacement program, and they are regarded as part of the capital works program as such.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I just thought that maintenance was a recurrent expenditure rather than a capital cost, but I will take those comments on board. In the table headed "Capital Contribution", there is a line item for capital grants paid to other agencies. The 2006-07 estimated actual was \$4.5 million. Can the minister explain what that \$4.5 million refers to?

[6.00 pm]

**Hon KIM CHANCE:** These capital grants relate to the Carnarvon floodplain mitigation project. The grant payment to Main Roads was \$2.25 million together with an additional \$2.25 million payment for the same program in 2006-07. The other reason for the significant variation between the 2005-06 and the 2007-08 budget estimates and the other two subject years is a reduction in new funding, which was associated with asset replacement for the state reference network and the ground resources investigation and monitoring programs.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Members, having regard to the time, we should finish this session. If members have further questions, they can submit them for answers. I thank the minister and agency representatives very much for their time.

*Meeting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Division 63: Environment and Conservation, \$216 766 000 -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Sally Talbot, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment.

Mr K. McNamara, Director General.

Mr K. Taylor, Acting Deputy Director General.

Dr J. Byrne, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr R. Atkins, Director, Environmental Regulation.

Mr R. Sippe, Director, Strategic Policy.

Mr A. Walker, Director, Regional Services.

Mr P. Sharp, Acting Director, Parks and Visitor Services.

Mr S. Dawson, Chief of Staff to the Minister for the Environment.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

At this time, I would ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form.

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Before I call for questions, I note that there were two sets of questions asked by Hon Nigel Hallett and Hon Barbara Scott. The answers are now tabled for members' information.

I will take the first question from Hon Paul Llewellyn.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I refer to the service and appropriation summary at page 1095 of the *Budget Statements*. Service 11 refers to the funding of environmental impact assessments of development proposals and planning schemes. I note that the funding allocation is to increase from \$6.699 million in 2006-07 to \$6.883 million in 2007-08. When the expected inflation rate of three per cent is taken into account, there is no increase in funding in real terms. How does this compare with the expected change in workload from 2006-07 to 2007-08?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I refer that question to the director general.

**Mr K. McNamara:** The 2007-08 figure of \$6.883 million is the estimate. If that is compared with the 2006-07 budget, it is an increase of \$700 000. The estimated actual for 2006-07 is \$6.699 million. The cost pressure increase has been applied against the budgeted figure rather than the estimated outturn.

[7.10 pm]

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Could the director general talk about the increase and expected changes in workloads as a result? That was the question. There seems to be a small increase in funding, but what is the outlook for the expected growth in workload?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask the director general to respond initially to the detail of that question, and then I will refer the question to Kim Taylor.

**Mr K. McNamara:** My initial comment is that the extra workload, with the strong economic growth that we are experiencing, has been recognised over recent years, particularly through the Keating major projects review process. Extra resources have been allocated to the environmental impact assessment part of the department over the past couple of years, and they have taken effect before this year. Also, the input to the Environmental Protection Authority environmental impact assessment function is derived not only from the EPA services unit part of the department, but also quite broadly across the department. I now ask Mr Taylor to further explain.

**Mr K. Taylor:** I was going to comment, as the director general has, that the government provided additional resources two or three years ago because of strong economic growth. We are continuing to review that level of resourcing, and if we feel there is continued or further growth in the workload, we would make a submission if we considered there was a need for further resources in that area.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I am looking at the same page, but I am now looking at the service and appropriation summary for service 7, "Regulation of Discharges to the Environment". What targets have been established for the departmental inspections of regulated premises, and is the department meeting those targets? The budget papers indicate that actual expenditure on the regulation of discharges to the environment in 2006-07 is \$13.968 million. That was substantially less than the budgeted expenditure in 2006-07 of \$16.202 million. Why was there underspending of more than \$2 million last year, and has this compromised the department's ability to meet its inspection responsibilities?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask the director general to make some initial comments and then refer the question to Robert Atkins.

**Mr K. McNamara:** One part of the answer is that in previous years, the regulation of discharges to the environment service also included the native vegetation clearing function of the former Department of Environment, but that function has now been transferred to the nature conservation service of the department. It

is not an underspend; it reflects a change in the placement of that expenditure, which is in the order of \$2.5 million per annum.

In terms of the budget for this area, the government has approved increasing licence fees so that industry contributes the full cost of the necessary regulation of discharges. The revenue of \$8 million in the past financial year will increase by \$2 million in 2007-08 with the increases that have been approved in this budget and by a further \$2 million in the following year to take that revenue up to \$12 million and to fully fund what we regard as the necessary level of carriage of our responsibility to regulate those discharges. In terms of meeting the department's targets for inspections of licensed premises, Mr Atkins, the director of environmental regulation, is better placed to provide that information.

**Mr R. Atkins:** The target for this financial year is 290 premises to be inspected. As at the end of April, 160 had been inspected. We are looking at an achievement of a little over 30 per cent of the set targets. At this stage, the targets will remain in place for the next financial year until additional resources are taken on as a result of the increase in revenue.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The tenth dot point on page 1094 refers to staff recruitment. Given the current mining boom - this is almost rhetorical - is there a problem attracting staff to the department, particularly in the area of industry regulation? What strategies are proposed to deal with this problem, and has sufficient funding been allocated to implement those strategies?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Can the member repeat the first part of the question?

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** This dot point refers to the staff recruitment and retention challenges in a buoyant economy. Given that there is currently a mining boom, is there a problem attracting staff to the department, particularly in the area of industry regulation? What strategies are proposed to deal with this problem, and has sufficient funding been allocated to implement those strategies?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask the director general to comment.

**Mr K. McNamara:** Staff attraction and retention is challenging many government departments in the current economic circumstances, as is widely known and widely publicised. It is not so much a difficulty for the department to attract staff, and certainly not into the more junior levels. The challenge is more of retaining staff who, after some years of experience, are well placed to take up alternative employment in the resources industry with better pay and conditions. Many staff, of course, choose not to do so; they are very committed to their careers in the Department of Environment and Conservation and wish to remain there. Attracting staff is more of a challenge in the middle to more senior levels, which is where we are after experienced people, rather than at the initial intake end of new graduates. The department is working on a wide range of fronts. Frankly, the main thing that government departments like our department can do is offer rewarding and attractive careers and careers which offer a lot of opportunity for progression and movement around the state and for working in a wide variety of fields and which are supported by good mentoring programs, a strong graduate recruit program that takes in more than 30 staff each year with solid training, strong scholarship programs, Aboriginal employment programs, and initiatives such as the one we put in place last year whereby we have an annual exchange of four or five staff with the United States. Those sorts of programs help to create an attractive workplace in which people who are already committed to working in the environment will choose to make their careers, but it is challenging in the current economic boom.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The specific question I asked was about the industry regulation sector particularly. I know that the department would have a general problem because industry is attracting staff across the board. However, in the regulatory arena there is obviously a drain of corporate intelligence from the department at the highest level to industry, yet there is recruitment of people with less experience. There is a widening gap between the capacity of industry and its understanding of the regulatory framework, because it is harvesting experienced staff, and the capacities within the regulatory agency. Can the director general talk about that, particularly in relation to industry regulation?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I think the honourable member is absolutely right. The problem that the director general has just identified is at its most acute in the area of industry regulation and environmental approval. That has just been outlined by the director general.

[7.20 pm]

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The parliamentary secretary dealt with the strategies to deal with the problem. I then asked whether sufficient funding had been allocated to implement those strategies. Is monetary support needed to attract and keep senior level staff in the industry regulation sector? How is the government travelling with regard to keeping industry regulation standards in place?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask Mr Robert Atkins to respond to that question.

**Mr R. Atkins:** The issue is not funding. Industry can always outbid government to attract employees based on salaries. Therefore, we must look at other ways of attracting experienced people to the department. One way to do that is to offer more flexible working conditions for experienced staff. We accept that it is sometimes better to have staff working on a part-time basis rather than full time to retain their experience. We are looking at workplace conditions rather than salary packages because industry can always up the ante on salaries. We have had some experience of that over the past 12 or 18 months when we have been outbid by companies in a bidding war. We are looking at offering better working conditions and flexible and family friendly working environments. We are often looking for people who have school-aged children and who are looking for either shorter or more flexible working hours to fit in with their family duties.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The department cannot buy itself out of that one!

**Mr R. Atkins:** It cannot.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I again refer to page 1095 of the *Budget Statements* regarding the funding of climate change initiatives. The budget paper identifies 12 services that have been delivered in the portfolio, and it also outlines the funding allocated to those services. Which of those services include climate change initiatives? In future budgets, will there be a separate line item related to climate change so that government spending in this area is more transparent? Can we unpack where the climate change initiatives are buried in this budget? How will that be identified in the future?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** As Hon Paul Llewellyn would know, early last month the Premier announced a funding package of \$101 million across government over five years to address climate change. The Department of Environment and Conservation will receive \$45 million of that funding. The state government has also committed an extra \$8.6 million over the next five years for climate change research and adaptation. That includes enabling the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative to continue its research. As the honourable member knows very well, the IOCI is a climate research partnership between the state government, the Bureau of Meteorology and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. The climate change funding package links with and builds on the state government's earlier \$21 million initiative to set up the Western Australian Marine Science Institution. We are looking at a climate change package that is not just a whole-of-government approach but is a whole-of-government approach associated with a community response. The Department of Environment and Conservation is planning to contribute to that in a variety of ways. The member will have noticed that in the past couple of weeks we have launched the "Act Now for the Future" advertising campaign, which will be administered by the Department of Environment and Conservation. DEC also administers the energy innovation fund on which \$30.65 million is planned to be spent over the next five years to support technological breakthroughs and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gases. The department will coordinate a whole-of-government response to climate change through a new office of climate change. This is the Carpenter government's single most important initiative on climate change. It is a major funding package. It is now very clear that Western Australians, and people who live much further away, expect their governments to show real leadership on this issue. A global approach is needed, and the Carpenter government is doing its part to establish that. People also want industry to play its role and, most importantly, they want to know what they can do personally. They want to know what they as individuals can do and what their families and communities can do. I am advised that in the future the plan is to have a separate service listed under the heading of climate change, which I think goes to the heart of the honourable member's question.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I saw one of the fabulous advertisements for the public awareness campaigns "Act Now for Tomorrow" -

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** It is "Act Now for the Future".

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** It was something like that.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** We obviously did not test it on the member.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** It will get \$60 000 next year.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** It is failing in its purpose.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Obviously I did not get the message.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Dumb it down a bit - sorry!

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The point I want to make is that spending \$20 million a year is not a substantial contribution to climate change. The "Act Now for the Future" campaign has been allocated \$60 000 for next year, which is an election year, and then \$100 000 in 2009 and 2011. Obviously the climate problem will become simpler. Why is the budget being reduced and not increased?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I think that is a slightly gratuitous point for the member to make. He would complain long and loudly if we were not spending \$20 million on this package. I will ask Mr Rob Sippe to provide the

member with a detailed response. The funding for the “Act Now for the Future” campaign is aimed at advertising for the first couple of years. Obviously that budget will be reviewed down the track. However, in the first couple of years that money is earmarked for advertising.

**Mr R. Sippe:** There are set-up costs in the initial stages of the campaign in the preparation of advertising material as well as the whole-of-government web portal that is being established. Naturally, the set-up costs are one-off costs and the ongoing funding will be used to maintain those initiatives. I will reinforce the parliamentary secretary’s comments and add that nothing precludes us from going back to maintain that program. It has an evaluation side to it. If that evaluation shows that we are making real progress, we will revisit those budget figures.

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** I refer to the “Capital Works Program” on page 1114 of the *Budget Statements*. The conservation land acquisition is only a small item under “New Works”. Is the government acquiring, or has it acquired, any land such as wetlands or other land under the conservation acquisition program for purposes related to the building of the southern suburbs railway?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask the director general to respond.

**Mr K. McNamara:** We have an active program of purchasing land for the conservation reserve system across the state by the targets and criteria prescribed for that reserve system. They include freehold purchases on the swan coastal plain and in the south west when we have the funds and when the priorities present themselves. However, our department is not purchasing or funding the purchase of any areas of wetland in relation to the particular project that the member asked about in the question.

[7.30 pm]

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** Do I have time to ask a couple of quick questions?

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Yes.

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** In that case, rather than bounce backwards and forwards, I will stay on capital works. Is the firefighting fleet replacement program purely for the departmental firefighting officers, or is it related to other services, such as volunteer services with the brigades and that sort of thing?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I refer that question to Alan Walker.

**Mr A. Walker:** The equipment that has been acquired for fire suppression and other fire management purposes will largely be utilised by departmental staff. However, when we undertake wildfire suppression these days, it is a collaborative effort between departmental resources, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, shires and local fire brigades, including volunteer brigades. There has been a sharing of equipment and common training with the types of equipment that are now being standardised for use across all firefighting and fire combat agencies. Therefore, it is developing to be more of a collaborative effort than it once was.

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** This is another quick question, but I appreciate that it may need to be taken on notice. Again, I refer to the new works listed on page 1114. The park improvement program has an allocation of \$7.2 million. I was wondering whether we could have a breakdown of which parks will be enjoying the benefit of those improvements and for what amounts. I appreciate that the parliamentary secretary may have to take the question on notice.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will refer that to the director general and then to Peter Sharp.

**Mr K. McNamara:** That program funds works across the entire state annually. For example, in the past year and going into the next financial year, there is a major visitor centre at the Nambung National Park near Cervantes that we will see the benefit of in the coming months. That is a \$6 million project over several years. About \$2 million of that \$7.2 million or \$8 million that is available is used generally for maintenance of existing visitor facilities in the parks right across the state, and the remainder is used generally for the creation of new visitor facilities. However, the director of parks and visitor services would have some examples of the spread of those funds.

**Mr P. Sharp:** With regard to the funding for the capital works, there will be an expenditure of \$1.175 million in the Kimberley region. For example, we will be expending \$500 000 in Purnululu National Park for roadworks and reconstruction of accessways. We will be expending about \$75 000 there for road safety repairs. We will be spending about \$100 000 in the King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park, and another \$60 000 in Purnululu on walk trails. I could keep going through these. However, if the member likes, I will perhaps give him a summary of expenditure in the key regions, because we spend across the state with a reasonable spread. In the Pilbara, we will be expending about \$500 000.

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** Through you, Madam Chair, would it be possible to receive the schedule as supplementary information to save reading the minutiae into the record?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** We would be very happy to provide that information to the member as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No H1.*]

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Does the member have a further question?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Yes. I want to flick back to service 1 on page 1098. I just use that as the reference point to comply with the rules. In the last financial year, there was a cane toad initiative. People often grin when cane toad initiatives are mentioned. However, the fact is that it is a very serious matter. Firstly, what is the allocation for this financial year and, if the parliamentary secretary is able to tell me, for other out years for the cane toad initiative or whatever program is in place to tackle the cane toads? Secondly, what is actually being done? I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary can give a brief description of the nature and the scale of the operation that is underway to try to do something about that approaching menace.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** The honourable member would probably know already, given his interest in these matters, that the Western Australian government is the first state government in Australia to fight this invasion before it actually gets here. We have allocated more than \$10 million since December 2004, so we are into real innovation in trying to keep this pest away from our state boundaries. We are looking at a cooperative program involving a couple of departments. Obviously, there is the Department of Environment and Conservation. There is also the Department of Agriculture and Food, and there are two community-based organisations - the Stop The Toad Foundation and Kimberley Toadbusters. The government is currently looking at future funding assistance options for both of those community-based groups. To be frank, the chances of our being successful in stopping the cane toads crossing over the border from the Northern Territory are slender. They have been confirmed as being as far west as Dick Creek in the Northern Territory. That is about a hundred kilometres from the WA border. However, given the way that cane toads reproduce - I am sure that the honourable member will be interested in knowing that a female cane toad produces 30 000 eggs in one pop -

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That is just irresponsible of them to do that.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Indeed it is. I am sure we would welcome any suggestions from the honourable member about how we might curtail that rapid rate of expanding population. Of course, it is not just to do with the way they reproduce in such concentrated numbers; it is also to do with the fact that they breed in areas that flood, and are then carried on the back of the waves and spread themselves along the floodwaters. Therefore, this is very difficult stuff. As I said, they are already confirmed as being in the Northern Territory, about 100 kilometres from the Western Australian border. However, we are very conscious of the fact that it is possible that there are undiscovered populations further west than we have been able to document so far. Nevertheless, we will continue to direct every effort at delaying the official reaching of the WA border by the cane toads. I understand that we currently allocate \$900 000 per annum. I know that there is an ongoing review of funding to those two community groups I mentioned earlier. I will hand over to the director general, who will be able to dot a few i's and cross some t's.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I will just add to the question before the answer is given. As the centre of the fight is 100 kilometres east of our border, are we projecting people into the Northern Territory to be on the ground? Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could let me know, because that is slightly problematic.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Indeed, we are. As Hon Simon O'Brien would know, it is not usual practice for a state government department to do that. Not only do we have officers from the department working over the border, but also we have people associated with both of those community groups working in the Northern Territory. I will now hand over to the director general.

[7.40 pm]

**Mr K. McNamara:** The \$900 000 per annum is the core allocation by the department to the front-line fight against cane toads, and that is spent on field operations, Kununurra border checkpoint surveillance and associated projects. In addition, we have \$350 000 set aside to contribute to the WA Institute for Medical Research. Professor Grant Morahan is looking at some genomic research that will assist in the search for biological control agents against cane toads. We are contributing to studies by the University of Sydney, together with the Australian Research Council, to the tune of \$60 000. There is also \$4.3 million complemented by \$2.7 million of commonwealth funding under the Natural Heritage Trust to survey the biodiversity of our Kimberley islands so that we understand what we have on the islands, and what we have on the islands that we do not have on the mainland. I think a very important strategy in the future will be to protect the integrity of those islands against cane toads reaching them. The Northern Territory has had to take some native species from the mainland to islands because of the effect cane toads are having on them on the mainland.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I thank the department for the answer to my question on notice and seek some clarification. The first dot point on page 1093 of the *Budget Statements* relates to how the department is increasing community awareness and what is the cost of the program to increase the level of awareness about

climate change. I notice that most of the education programs are to be delivered to households through the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. Can someone tell me whether any of the funds that are allocated to raising the level of awareness in the community are being directed to school programs for children?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I thank Hon Barbara Scott. I will hand over to Mr Sippe for a detailed answer, but I am sure the member will be aware that we are indeed involving schools very much in the whole climate change package. I think we are planning to increase solar schools; we currently have about 100 schools that are solar powered. We are planning to treble that, so we will get to about 300 schools on the solar power program. I will hand over to Rob Sippe for a more detailed response.

**Mr R. Sippe:** There are three components to the community awareness side of the climate change budget - the solar schools program; the public awareness and education campaign; and the one that has been mentioned in response to an earlier question by the committee, which is the education program the Department of Planning and Infrastructure will be rolling out. On top of that we have a range of schools programs that the department already runs, and we will be looking to graft onto those aspects of climate change - for example, Ribbons of Blue, Waste Wise and a range of those things that are already in schools and running. We will be adding aspects of climate change to those programs. We understand also that Scitech, through private sponsorship, is looking at a schools-based program for climate change. We are a bit concerned that, if anything, the field will get a bit too congested rather than nothing being done. I think there will be a lot of action on climate change in schools in the out years.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Thanks for that. By way of comment, we were sitting through the education hearings this morning and talking about the level 3 status of schoolteachers. I have an outstanding teacher in my electorate who founded the Ribbons of Blue program and who is still struggling to achieve level 3 status. Maybe the department can push his cause through that program.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I am sure that has been noted where it needs to be noted.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Good. I want to refer now to the third dot point on page 1099 that refers to major initiatives for this year. I am not sure whether this question is relevant, but the dot point refers to a new agreement for a cooperative program of natural resource management funding replacing the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and also the second phase of the Natural Heritage Trust will be negotiated with the commonwealth government. Can the parliamentary secretary explain what the second phase of the Natural Heritage Trust involves, and does the department through this initiative capture any of the issues around the art on the Burrup Peninsula in a natural heritage environment?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask the director general to respond to Hon Barbara Scott's question.

**Mr K. McNamara:** The state government has had a partnership with the commonwealth government under the Natural Heritage Trust since the trust was introduced in 1997 and also with the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality since it was introduced several years after that. There is joint investment with the commonwealth in regional delivery as well as some statewide strategic delivery of a wide range of natural resource projects. The commonwealth government in its recent budget committed to the NHT continuing for a further five years, I think, post-June 2008, and the state government is engaged in discussions with the commonwealth about that renewal of the program. The Minister for Agriculture and Food, and Forestry, is the designated lead minister for natural resource management and salinity and for those negotiations with the commonwealth, but our department is certainly working closely with his and other departments as we move to the next phase of the NHT.

In respect of the Burrup, the Natural Heritage Trust is a program that deals with the natural environment, the biodiversity of the country, land and water quality and so on. It is not a program through which the commonwealth invests in Indigenous heritage value protection.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Under the major policy decisions on page 1095 of the *Budget Statements*, funding is allocated to the low-emission energy development fund. What will the funds be spent on and are they directed primarily towards subsidising existing low emissions technology or towards research and development? The item is in the tables at the top of the page.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** The energy innovation fund will support technology breakthroughs and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The governance agreement to manage the fund will be agreed by the Premier and the Ministers for Energy and Climate Change. There will be an independent expert advisory body, which will be appointed to assess applications and to advise those two ministers on recommended projects. The criteria that will govern the allocation of the fund will be investment in projects that are designated innovative greenhouse technologies that are in keeping with the state's strategic objectives and, indeed, with market advantages.

We in Western Australia have some unique opportunities in niche markets in clean energy and greenhouse technologies and services. I know this is a subject that is very close to the honourable member's heart. They

will be an important part of the state's strategy for diversification. Those key technologies, as the honourable member would be very much aware, include bioenergy, wave, geothermal, solar thermal and geosequestration. We will be looking for matching investments to the fund from industry and, of course, from the commonwealth government.

[7.50 pm]

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The amount of \$8.6 million for the low-emissions technology fund will not go a long way to sponsoring many large-scale projects, given the huge capital cost associated with them. Will the money be spent on grants or on development and research? To get any leverage, the capital costs of these projects will far exceed that sort of money.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** That point is not lost on the state government. As Hon Paul Llewellyn just heard me say very clearly, the state government will be looking for matching funds from both industry and the commonwealth government. I have already made the point in responding to questions about the government's climate change initiative that we are looking here for a response that obviously goes beyond a state government response. It is entirely appropriate that we should be providing funds to encourage investment in this crucial area from industry and from our commonwealth counterparts. I will ask Rob Sippe if he would like to add more detail to that response.

**Mr R. Sippe:** The only thing I will add to the fairly full answer by the parliamentary secretary is that this will be a capital grants based program, so almost the entire amount of \$36.5 million over next year and the out years' budget allocations will be for capital grants. There will be a very small amount for one program manager, which will be the only other cost associated with it. The Ministers for Energy and for the Environment will be the decision makers, and they will be supported by an expert technical advisory group on the selection of appropriate technology to support that capital grants program. We think the potential for leveraging funds is very high in this area. We anticipate anything up to a three to one leveraging of those funds. That will grow that pot to a fairly sizeable amount.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to page 1118 and donations listed under "Income" on page 1116. There was an anticipated \$5 million worth of donations in the 2006-07 financial year, but nothing realised, and nothing is projected for the 2007-08 financial year. Why were we suddenly expecting \$5 million in donations, why did it not materialise, and why are we no longer expecting \$5 million per annum in donations?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** That is an excellent question. From 2007-08 onwards this item has been included with "Other revenue".

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I am looking at "Income" on page 1116. The \$5 million, which was budgeted for 2006-07 - apart from that, there is no figure showing it has been received - has found its way into the bottom line, "Other revenue", a couple of lines further down. Is that the case?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** The director general can give the member a fuller response.

**Mr K. McNamara:** The \$5 million entry on page 1116 is for 2006-07 only. The Department of Environment and Conservation was formed only at the start of 2006-07, and the budget figures there show how the budgets were set up for the former Department of Environment and the Department of Conservation and Land Management as separate entries. The special purpose grant revenues that the former Department of Environment receives for the 2007-08 figures and the out years are shown in among other revenues, rather than as a standalone entry simply reflecting the history of the former departments.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** How much does the department receive in donations, and in, general terms, where do they come from?

**Mr K. McNamara:** Most of the income that we receive is from licence fees, the waste management and recycling account, sale of goods and services, compensation for bauxite mining in the state forest, recreation income, park entry and camping fees and the like and a wide range of grants, particularly from the commonwealth government through, for example, the Natural Heritage Trust for various biodiversity conservation programs, research programs and the like. Those revenues total \$70 million for 2007-08, as shown on page 1116. The amount of straight donations, as distinct from grants for projects and so on, is quite a small part of that. I do not think it would be more than a few thousand or tens of thousands of dollars.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Does that come from donation boxes at the entrances to parks and that sort of thing?

**Mr K. McNamara:** The money collected at entrances to parks and so on, some of which are staffed and some of which contain donation boxes, is counted in our recreation income, which is about \$9.5 million. I think we still have, for example, a wishing well at Yanchep National Park. There are miscellaneous donations of relatively small amounts.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I refer to "Major Initiatives 2007-08" at page 1112 of the *Budget Statements*. One of the major initiatives for 2007-08 is to complete the strategic assessment of the IP 14 land at the Kwinana

industrial area. Is it possible to have a brief outline of what that strategic assessment involves and whether it takes into consideration the assessment or the environmental impact assessment on Cockburn Sound for the use of that land for the proposed IP?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will ask Kim Taylor to respond to that question.

**Mr K. Taylor:** This assessment is being carried out by the Environmental Protection Authority at the initiation of LandCorp, which is responsible for developing the land. The strategic assessment will be primarily on the biological values of the land, particularly wetlands and vegetation communities that need to be protected as development is permitted on the land. It will not look at industries that have been established there or at potential impacts in areas off Cockburn Sound. They will be looked at when specific industries are proposed for the site. At this stage it is looking at general biological and wetland values that will need to be protected.

[8.00 pm]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I might be looking at the wrong part for this inquiry, but I think "Service 6: Air Quality Management Plans and Air Quality Monitoring" is listed on page 1106. I do not know whether the subject belongs here or somewhere else but I am guessing it belongs here. I refer to the department's involvement with the Canning Vale Regional Resource Recovery Centre, if I have got my Rs and Cs in the correct order. An issue has arisen there locally about the emission of odours. I understand that the DEC has been asked to assist and is providing some services, even after-hours services, to help assess whether there is a problem, the nature of the problem and the seriousness of it. Can the parliamentary secretary or her advisers tell the committee what the DEC is doing with that site, and what capacity is provided under either this service or another service to check for this sort of odour? I hope I have defined the question clearly enough - if not, I can come back to it - but if the parliamentary secretary would take that up, I would appreciate her advice.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Hon Simon O'Brien has made it crystal clear! I should say at the outset that the government wants this facility to work. The member would be aware, because he has just given a bit of the background, that the South Metropolitan Regional Council voluntarily stopped receiving waste at this site on 27 March this year. The council has now completed upgrades to the waste composting facilities, with the aim of reducing those odours. The facility has now been opened again and has recommenced waste acceptance. The council advised the department on 9 May 2007 that the facility has reached about 50 per cent capacity, and it is progressively gearing up again to full capacity. The council has said that it will consider increasing to full capacity when the department has advised the council that the upgrades to the facility have been completed to a satisfactory extent, and when it receives advice from the health department on the health risks. On 10 and 28 May 2007, a DEC inspector conducted an audit of the upgrades carried out at the facility.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** So, very recently.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Yes. The department is currently awaiting further information to ensure that those works are being carried out satisfactorily. The department has issued two local residents with vacuum air collection cylinders to sample the odours. The sample result from one of those residents has been sent to the health department for advice, and the department is currently awaiting a response from the health department. I will ask Mr Atkins whether he would like to add anything to that answer.

**Mr R. Atkins:** I can add to that. The department's role in this matter is in regulating licensed premises. The facility is licensed under part 5 of the act -

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Is that another service?

**Mr R. Atkins:** Yes. The member is off by one. It is actually regulated under service 7, which is the regulation of discharges to the environment. However, service 6 is relevant, because our air quality expertise sits in that service, and the air quality scientists are providing advice to us, and assessing the monitoring reports and the information provided by the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council. It is a regulatory function rather than a research and development function. Since the monitoring and inspections that were mentioned by the parliamentary secretary, the department has responded to further odour complaints from local residents. The department was able, the day before yesterday, to confirm one of those complaints, not at the complainant's residence, but at the boundary of the premises, which will give some idea of the transient nature of the odour and the way in which the odour moves around when it is present. We are in the process of putting a DEC inspector in the area each night of the week for several nights in a row to try to plot at first hand what is going on as part of assessing the performance of the upgrades of the system. We have insisted that the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council retain the services of an odour air quality expert from the eastern states to both monitor the improvements and provide advice on how well those improvements are working. The bio-filter system that is used to scrub the odours is proving to be a fairly complex piece of equipment to keep running, because it is a biological system, and the gases that come off a composting facility are fairly harsh on the way in which the system operates, so it is causing some difficulties.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Could the parliamentary secretary describe the equipment that the two householders have been issued with? Is it like a jar with a vacuum on it or something, and the householder takes an air sample, or is it more sophisticated than that? I want to get an idea of what sort of technology is available. To pay at least lip-service to the committee chair, I also want to know what the cost of that equipment is.

**Mr R. Atkins:** That was actually a pretty good description! It looks like a barbecue gas cylinder and is about the size of a gas lamp cylinder. It is made of stainless steel, and it has a gauge on it, and a tube and a tap. It is vacuumemptied in the manufacturer's laboratory, so it comes evacuated. It is quite simple to operate. If a person can smell an odour that is unpleasant, he simply turns the valve, and it draws the air straight in. That is why it is actually quite a useful tool for community representatives, because it does not require any sophisticated skills to use. The warning is, of course, that the person has to be confident of the sorts of circumstances under which he is opening the cylinder, because if the person just rushes outside when he smells something and opens the tap, he may be drawing in a neighbour's barbecue gases, or smells from an incinerator or something. Therefore, we have issued logbooks as well and have asked people to describe the circumstances, such as the wind direction, the strength of the smell and those sorts of things, so that we can gauge whether what is being detected is right or not. Once the cylinder has been held open a set period of time, the person just has to shut it off, and we collect it. We then send it as is to the laboratory, and the laboratory opens it and passes the gas through a gas measuring device, which measures a range of what is called volatile organic chemicals. It is not good for measuring everything. It does not measure acid gases. However, it does measure organic chemicals quite well. The turnover rate is about \$600 or \$700 for every sample that is processed, so the cylinders are quite expensive to operate, but I do not know the actual capital cost of the cylinders themselves.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** It sounds as though it would cost more to analyse the sample than it would to purchase the unit.

**Mr R. Atkins:** We would get that cost back over time, of course, because the cylinders are reusable. Once the cylinder has been used once, it can be cleaned out in the laboratory, re-evacuated and put back into circulation. We have a supply of them - I think about 20 or 30. We are using them successfully at Wagerup. We will be using them at Midland. We are obviously using them in this circumstance as well.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Are there any similar waste recycling establishments run by other regional councils that the department is involved in monitoring, either as a normal business routine or because it has been called in specially?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I understand that there are no other similar facilities, but I will ask Mr Atkins to elaborate on that, and possible future facilities.

[8.10 pm]

**Mr R. Atkins:** This is the only facility of this type in Western Australia that is a closed composting facility. There are other composting facilities in the outer metropolitan area, and south of Perth towards Mandurah, such as the one associated with the piggery that is just north east of Mandurah, but they are open, so they are not causing odour problems, because they have buffers. A similar municipal composting facility is planned for Mindarie, but that is in the tendering phase. I understand that the owners of Mindarie Regional Council are looking very carefully at what is happening at the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council. There are similar composting facilities in the eastern states in New South Wales and Queensland.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I am not sure whether my next question relates to service 1 or service 12. Service 1 relates to nature conservation and service 12 relates to the EPA.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** If the member gives us the question, perhaps we will decide.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That might be best. What operation is the DEC - I do not know whether this is the right agency - carrying out with the replanting or reinstitution of seagrass meadows in Cockburn Sound, or anywhere else where they occur, what resources are being put into such a project and what sort of results are we getting?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** We can elaborate to an extent by way of an answer to that question. When the proponents put forward a plan, one of the requirements that are made of them is that they undertake such measures that the honourable member referred to in his question. However, I will ask Mr Kim Taylor to provide the member with a more detailed response.

**Mr K. Taylor:** In brief, as the parliamentary secretary said, conditions have been placed on proponents, particularly in relation to Cockburn Cement's shell sand dredging project in Cockburn Sound, to rehabilitate the seagrass meadows. They are required to undertake rehabilitation of certain areas and to report to us periodically as part of the conditions of approval of that project.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** What is the success rate?

**Mr K. Taylor:** I will take that on notice. I do not have that information at hand.

[*Supplementary Information No H2.*]

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I point out that the Cockburn Sound Management Council produces an annual report card that is tabled in Parliament.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I will continue the dialogue as the Chairperson pinched my next question. That is the Chair's prerogative. The reason I sounded hesitant is that duties and names of government agencies seem to be changing a lot lately, in not only this area but also other government agencies, and it has become unclear where responsibilities lie. Would it be correct to say that with the seagrass question and the Cockburn Cement operation, which is as good an example as any, that most of the work and expense that goes with it is borne by the company involved in the activity and that DEC's involvement is really more of a monitoring role?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I could not put that more succinctly. The DEC has a monitoring role and it is not responsible for carrying out the program.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** What about providing assessments ahead of projects in the sound?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** The projects of that kind would go through the environmental approvals process under the auspices of the EPA.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** The second last dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 1107 reads -

Review of the Interim Odour Guidelines for industry.

It may be obscure, but there has been a recent issue with the monitoring of the odour from the waste water treatment plant in Woodman Point. There has been a review of that and odour control is being carried out. In the review of the interim odour guidelines that the agency is conducting, is there any ability within the department to put constraints on the Water Corporation to hasten its management practices of odour control?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Is the member talking about the Woodman Point waste water treatment plant?

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Yes, but I am speaking in reference to the *Budget Statements* at page 1107, where it states that the agency will carry out a review of the interim odour guidelines for industry as a major initiative for 2007-08. In that review of the interim odour guidelines, does the department have the ability to look at the odour controls that the Water Corporation is putting on the waste water plant and speeding up the spending of money to contain the odours?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** When I was preparing for this session I was hoping I would be able to use the phrase "ground truthing of odour". My chance is here.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I have a large document on a recent review.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will make specific points about the Woodman Point waste water treatment plant and hand over to Robert Atkins for more detailed comments on the points the member raised.

The state government obviously is committed to making sure that people who live within smelling distance of a facility of this kind do not have their way of life adversely impacted upon by an unreasonable level of odour. We are very conscious that this particular waste water treatment plant was the subject of advice from the EPA. It said that the Water Corporation should implement stage 1 of its odour controls that it estimated would halve the current odour levels. The instruction from the EPA was that should happen as soon as possible, but no later than the end of 2008. In the same advice the EPA said that the current buffer should remain until the stage 1 controls had been implemented. Following this, further emissions estimates, modelling and ground truthing of odour should be undertaken to determine the extent of odour impact and a long-term buffer should be reconsidered. I understand that the member is making a more general point on the projected achievements or expectations for the next financial year.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** My question is a more specific request; that is, can the department place any constraints on government to get the Water Corporation to do what is required? It knows what has to be done, but it says it does not have the budget. I know there are issues around the Water Corporation being told what it should be doing and it not wanting to do it. The environmental department should have some clout in saying what should be done.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I understand the question. I will ask Mr Atkins to give a detailed answer. The reality is that we cannot direct the Water Corporation to spend its budget allocation. I will ask Mr Atkins to provide a detailed response.

[8.20 pm]

**Mr R. Atkins:** The program outlined by the parliamentary secretary that the Water Corporation is required to undertake as a result of the Environmental Protection Authority assessment is locked in through the works

approval that is issued under part 5 of the act. That is the primary regulatory tool for ensuring that the Water Corporation meets its commitments. Once the works approval has been issued, and has that timetable in it, it is possible under the act to amend works approvals through application by either the Water Corporation or the department, if it thinks things need to be sped up. The works approval is the regulatory tool for that. That whole exercise is separate from the review of the interim odour guidelines for industry. The review of the interim odour guidelines for industry arises from situations such as the one to which the member referred - the one she mentioned in relation to the waste composting facilities. There are a number of other situations, particularly in the metropolitan area, where the primary sources of complaints about industry relate to odour. There are no firm guidelines and standards for what is a reasonable odour and what is an unreasonable odour. No standard method has been adopted by the department for monitoring or measuring odour. We rely on several sets of guidelines used by other jurisdictions.

The initiative to review the interim odour guidelines for industry is to go back over what we are currently using and develop a more comprehensive odour monitoring framework for the department as a regulatory tool, which will include specific training for Department of Environment and Conservation officers to undertake the monitoring. The experience that we have over the time that we have been using the interim guidelines is that the so-called sniff test is the best tool for determining whether an odour is unreasonable, rather than trying to measure odour as a concentration of milligrams per kilogram or something like that. The reason for that is that odours are made up of a complexity of chemicals so it is not possible to do analytical laboratory tests to come up with an odour impact. It is really a coalition of the effects of a range of compounds that varies from source to source. In summary, we are looking to the review to come up with a framework that has a personal monitoring regime using trained staff. Although people tend to snigger at the sniff test, it is an internationally recognised way of doing it, so long as people are trained in the right way.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I will make one further point by way of elaboration. I place on the record that the Minister for the Environment has advised the Minister for Water Resources that he would not support any requests for deferment of these works.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** I thank the parliamentary secretary for the explanation. One of the complaints I have had about that whole issue is that the works approval was given to the Water Corporation before the modelling was conducted, which seemed to me to be the wrong way around for the local residents.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Does the parliamentary secretary wish to respond to that?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I am not sure that I can hear a question there. I will take it as a comment.

**Hon BARBARA SCOTT:** Fine, I think it was explained in the last response. It did seem curious to me that the works approval could be given before the modelling assessment was completed. Residents were told that that would be done afterwards.

**Mr R. Atkins:** I cannot offer a comment on that because I do not know the details.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I will take the liberty of asking a question from the chair. I refer to the second last dot point, under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 1093, relating to the need to establish comprehensive, adequate and representative conservation reserve systems, both terrestrial and marine. At the current rate of progress in establishing a comprehensive, adequate and representative conservation reserve system in the marine environment, when might that target actually be met? Will it be this century or next?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will ask the director general to respond.

**Mr K. McNamara:** It is early in the century, so I can confidently say that it will take place this century, I would think, and I will not be around to account for it! Since 2001, the government has created a number of new marine parks and has significantly expanded the Ningaloo Marine Park. Currently, following the planning and public consultation processes, the government is getting close to finalising the creation of the Walpole-Nornalup Inlet Marine Park, the Geographe Bay-Cape Leeuwin-Cape Naturaliste-Hardy Inlet Marine Park, and a new marine park in the Dampier Archipelago, as well as another reserve immediately to the west of the Dampier Archipelago. In addition, the government has embarked upon a regional marine planning process on the south coast, looking at the entire area from the cape across to the South Australian border. That process will also identify candidate areas for future marine park status. There is an active program. Three new marine parks are expected to be created in the coming months and programs are underway to identify further areas.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** By way of supplementary, and perhaps on notice, is it possible to indicate the expected gazettal dates of the parks you mentioned? I can take that on notice if necessary.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** The director general would be quite happy to answer the question now, if that suits your purposes.

**Mr K. McNamara:** It is always difficult to put a precise date on such things, because the legislation, the Conservation and Land Management Act, clearly requires that the Minister for the Environment consult his

ministerial colleagues responsible for resources and fisheries, and obtain concurrence for the establishment of those new marine parks. The indicative management planning processes are complete, and the Minister for the Environment is currently working towards achieving those concurrences. I cannot put a time frame on the outcome of that process, but the expectation is that the creation of the three new marine parks referred to is a matter of only a few months away in one or two cases and before the end of the year, I would think, for all three.

**Hon BRUCE DONALDSON:** Would the proposed marine parks be along the lines of the Jurien Bay Marine Park, which is a multi-use park, rather than all the fish being locked away?

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** The answer is yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** We will have to finish this session. I thank the parliamentary secretary and members of the department for their attendance tonight. If members have any further questions, could they please hand them up?

*Meeting suspended from 8.29 to 8.35 pm*

**Division 44: Commissioner of Main Roads, \$893 771 000 -**

Hon Giz Watson, Chairperson.

Hon Adele Farina, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr G. Norwell, Executive Director, Technology and Environment.

Mr R. Phillips, Manager, Budget and Program Management.

Mr J. Marmion, Executive Director, Regional Services.

Mr P. Woronzow, Executive Director, Financial and Commercial Services.

Mr P. Ladner, Executive Director, Infrastructure Delivery.

Mr D. Snook, Executive Director, Road Network Services.

Mr R. Farrell, Principal Policy Officer, Office of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr S. Potter, Policy Officer (Roads), Office of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to this evening's hearing. This hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private, either of its own motion or at the request of witnesses. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance.

It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. Have each of the witnesses read, understood and completed the "Information for Witnesses" form?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The CHAIRPERSON:** I inform members that responses are available to questions on notice asked by Hon Donna Faragher, Hon Simon O'Brien and Hon Norman Moore. Those answers have been tabled and are therefore publicly available.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It would not be a Main Roads division if I did not ask about cycleways. My question follows on from questions that I have asked at previous estimates committees. I refer to the dot point above "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 792 of the *Budget Statements*. My question also relates to the fourth dot point on page 793. The *Budget Statements* state that the contract for designing and construction of the Perth-Bunbury highway has been awarded and that the project is expected to commence soon. When I previously asked about this issue, I was interested in the cycling facilities that would be built during construction of that road and what form they would take. Can the parliamentary secretary provide an update on what form the cycle facilities alongside the Perth-Bunbury highway extension will take?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will ask Bill Ladner to answer that question.

**Mr P. Ladner:** The current cycleways or principal shared path that exists on the Kwinana Freeway will be extended to the Pinjarra Road interchange. As far as I am aware it will not be extended any further south at this stage. Cyclists would be expected to ride on the sealed shoulder south of Bunbury Road through to Lake Clifton, where it joins in with the existing Bunbury highway.

[8.40 pm]

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** What sort of service would it be on that shoulder? Would it be the standard rough aggregate or would it be a slightly smoother surface on the shoulder, because rough aggregate is very difficult to ride on?

**Mr P. Ladner:** I would assume it would be an asphalt surface.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is that smoother than the rough aggregate on a normal country road?

**Mr P. Ladner:** It would be an asphalt surface, not a chip seal.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Right.

**Mr P. Ladner:** Does that make sense?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Yes. My other two questions continue on that line. Are there any plans in the long-term plan to provide for cycleways alongside Reid Highway and also to put a softer seal on Marmion Avenue at any point in the future?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will ask Des Snook to answer that question.

**Mr D. Snook:** As far as Reid Highway goes, the plans are to extend the cycleway along Reid Highway from Erindale Road to Mitchell Freeway and then to connect it to Balcatta Road. So, that proposal is in the 2007-08 program. I am sorry; I missed the second question.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is there any intention to change the edges on Marmion Avenue to make them more suitable for cyclists?

**Mr D. Snook:** No, there is no plan at this stage to do any work along Marmion Avenue.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to the top schedule on page 781 under "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators". I want to ask about the line "Return on Construction Expenditure". What does a return on construction expenditure mean, or, perhaps more accurately, how would the parliamentary secretary define it for these purposes? Why has the budget figure for return on construction expenditure for 2006-07 of 1.40 set to be exceeded by the estimated actual of 3.37? Then why is the figure set to rise further to 3.97 in the 2007-08 year?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will ask Gary Norwell to answer this question.

[Hon Ken Travers took the chair.]

**Mr G. Norwell:** Firstly, the definition of "return on construction expenditure", and another term that we use is "benefit-cost ratio", which is the ratio of the benefits that is predicted to flow from that work over the life of the job, and that is discounted back to net present value. So, where the member sees a figure of 3.97, it means that over the life of that piece of infrastructure, the benefits will be 3.97 times the construction costs. The 1.40 that the member mentioned in the 2006-07 budget sounds very low to me. I am not sure whether that has been checked at all, but it is lower than any BCR that I have seen over a period of time.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** So the higher the figure, the better the return?

**Mr G. Norwell:** Absolutely.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Through you, Chair, is it possible, just to improve my education, for me to get some more information on how that return on expenditure is calculated, with the sorts of considerations that are taken into the formula to work that out, perhaps as supplementary information?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** We may be able to deal with that now.

**Mr G. Norwell:** The majority of the benefits are normally the improvements in safety and the reduction in crash costs. There is a reduction in vehicle operating costs. A new, wider and smoother road has an impact on helping to reduce vehicle operating costs, whether it is cars or heavy vehicles. We can sometimes run heavier and longer vehicles - more freight-efficient vehicles - on new roads whereas we could not do so before when they were of a lower standard and before they were reconstructed. The majority of benefits are accumulated in that way. Savings in travel times are another benefit. Those savings are aggregated. The figure, the benefit-cost ratio, is one of the key factors in helping us to prioritise work. Obviously, the higher the BCR, the better. Those projects would be more inclined to be funded earlier than those with a lower BCR.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to the works in progress at page 794 of the *Budget Statements*. I refer to the Great Eastern Highway-Roe Highway construct interchange. Why has the estimated total cost of the project increased from \$24.1 million in last year's budget papers to nearly \$70 million in one year?

**Mr G. Norwell:** There are a combination of factors. There has been an increase in the cost of our contracts these days because of the boom in the state. We are having more difficulty getting contractors to bid for our work. We have received only one tender in quite a number of cases. As I mentioned, the boom is really pushing up prices. We have had to re-estimate the works over and above that. We have had to re-scope that project. When the initial estimates were done, they were done on a concept design. When we got into detailed design, we started to appreciate the lanes and tapers for traffic to move off Roe Highway onto ramps. To get to Great Eastern Highway they had to extend back further. We now have to factor in bridges over the railway line and the road adjacent to that railway line. That has added significantly to the cost. Those two factors represent the majority of the cost escalation.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I understand that this is part of the AusLink commitment with the Australian government, and that that government has committed \$22 million or \$23 million. Has the state approached the federal government for more funds?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I understand that federal funding for this has been capped at \$22.4 million and the state is contributing the rest of the cost. I will ask Mr Phillips if he has some comments.

**Mr R. Phillips:** The commitment of the commonwealth is \$22.4 million of what was originally an estimated project cost of \$28 million. We have been looking at the final cost of the project. We intend to take it up with the commonwealth in terms of having a greater share of the cost met by the commonwealth. It depends on what the final cost is.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** What amount of funding has been committed by the state government at this stage for the project?

**Mr R. Phillips:** At this stage there are no funds allocated by the state.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** None at all?

**Mr R. Phillips:** Not for this project, other than the funds that have been spent to date, including the funds that have been set aside to complete some design work in 2007-08. It means that they are the total funds at this point in time that have been set aside for the project.

[8.50 pm]

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I appreciate what has been said about difficulties with construction costs and whatever else. I understand that the minister has asked that this project be delayed until after 2008. Is that correct?

**Mr R. Phillips:** There is a suggestion that this project be delayed until AusLink 2 comes on stream in 2009-10. No final decision has been made on that.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** When will that decision be made?

**Mr R. Phillips:** We are not aware of when the decisions will be made by the commonwealth about the projects that will be funded under AusLink. With the second program to start in 2009-10, we expect that the decision on that will be made shortly before June 2009.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** If it were delayed, would the funding that has already been provided by the Australian government just sit in abeyance or would that go to another project?

**Mr R. Phillips:** We have not discussed that yet with the commonwealth.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to the same page and the Safer Roads program. Reference is made to the works on Reid Highway from West Swan Road to Great Northern Highway, which is the Middle Swan Road upgrade. In May this year I requested information on the recommendations of the working party that looked at alternative local access options. The government was considering those options. Can I get an update on whether the government has made a decision about that?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will ask Mr Phil Ladner to answer that question.

**Mr P. Ladner:** The estimate is based on consultation with the community. However, I stress that the option that has basically been accepted by the community is still under consideration. Some scope issues are still outstanding for the project. However, we expect to be able to go to the market in, say, July-August to start the tendering process.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** And a decision should be made by then on whether or not the local access issues will be resolved?

**Mr P. Ladner:** We may not have the decision by then, but we would have the decision in time for the process to run, given that the expressions of interest and tender processes could take nine months before we actually award. Within that period, we will have time to do lots of things, including getting environmental clearance. Some of the things are done in parallel with going to the market.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to page 795. The total estimated cost of the capital works program is about \$6.463 billion. How does that relate to the government's much spoken of, I think, \$21 billion capital works program? Is that amount part of the \$21 billion capital works program that we hear the Treasurer speak of?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Yes, it clearly is.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Is it \$6.463 billion off that total?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Yes; I would expect that that is a portion of the \$21 billion that the Treasurer has been referring to.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** So would I. I return to the question that my colleague Hon Donna Faragher asked about the Roe Highway project, which is now up to a total cost of \$69.583 million. It is referred to on page 794.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Can the member repeat that?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Yes. I refer to the line item on page 794 for the amount of \$69.5 million for the construction of the Great Eastern Highway-Roe Highway interchange. I put it to the parliamentary secretary that more than \$64 million of that amount has been deferred indefinitely. Is that the case; and, if so, what will happen to the \$22 million that we got from the federal government?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will ask Mr Phillips to answer that.

**Mr R. Phillips:** The \$69.583 million is the total estimated cost of the project. Of the initial cost estimate of \$28 million, the state was to put in \$5.6 million, and \$22.4 million was the federal government's contribution. The estimated expenditure to the end of June of \$4.089 million, plus the \$1.25 million to be spent in 2007-08, basically totals \$5.3 million, which is close to the state meeting its contribution. The \$22.4 million at present is sitting as funding to the state from the commonwealth government until some decisions are made about where we are going with the project. The funds have not been lost at this time. They are still sitting as an allocation under AusLink 1 to the state.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Do we actually have the money sitting somewhere in a satchel in Western Australia?

**Mr R. Phillips:** No. All projects funded under AusLink 1, other than an accelerated upgrade package that was announced by the commonwealth government in June 2005 when it paid the state \$323 million in advance, are funded on a recoup basis. We make a claim each month to the commonwealth and it recoups us the expenditure. We will not get funded for that \$22.4 million until we lodge a claim based on expenditure. The member made a point about whether the balance of the project is unfunded. At this stage, the balance of the project is outside of the forward estimates and therefore will be considered in future budget discussions.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I ask Mr Richard Farrell to add to that answer.

**Mr R. Farrell:** I will make two additional points. Detail was given in answer to a question on notice of the expenditure in the out years for the projects that were listed in the budget papers. As part of that response, there is a final column outside the forward estimates of additional project costs that are not found in the forward estimates. That amount for that project would appear in that column. Probably more accurately - it is ultimately a question that would need to be addressed to the Treasurer and the Treasurer's staff - I expect that the global figure the member referred to would refer to the figure in the forward estimates. The final column in the information that has been provided in the answer to the question on notice will identify that part of the total budget cost is outside the forward estimates. Another point with regard to the AusLink funding and its status is that I recall Minister Anderson, in his capacity as Minister for Transport and Regional Services, made it clear in last year's federal budget that there was capacity within the AusLink program, as projects evolved, slipped or were brought forward and so on, to move money within approved projects on an agreed basis. I understand that there were some other projects that were expected to be wholly funded that have come under cost pressures. It might make sense in the short term for federal funding to be used to meet those additional costs and so on and so forth. That flexibility is contemplated within the AusLink arrangement.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** For how long do the AusLink arrangements that are put on hold in the way Mr Ladner described survive when the state produces its receipts or makes its claim? Would they change if there was a hypothetical change of government in Canberra, for example? Would those arrangements survive such a scenario?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Are you expecting one?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** No.

**Mr R. Farrell:** I would not expect that there would be a change to our disadvantage.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I record that there are straight faces all around, Mr Deputy Chairman.

[9.00 pm]

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I refer to page 787 and to the Karratha-Tom Price road stage 2, which is a major initiative for this coming year. Completion of stage 2 will provide 115 kilometres of sealed road. Can the parliamentary secretary tell me when the road will be completely sealed from Tom Price to Karratha?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Again, it is good to see that we have consistency with our questions.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I just want to make sure that the promises that were made way back in 2001 are delivered some time in the future.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The member has had to ask that question year after year.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Every year, yes. It is a hardy annual.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Construction is now well underway, and stage 2 is expected to be completed in March 2008. At this time, there is no funding beyond stage 2 within the forward estimates.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** No funding at all?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** No.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** What has happened to the commitment made by the government back in 2001 that this road would be completed within its first term of government?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** All I can advise the member is that completion of stage 2 is well underway. There is no money currently allocated in the forward estimates, but there is an annual budget process, and, clearly, consideration of funding for the road will be given on an annual basis. We are spending more on Main Roads funding for roads than ever before in this state. However, cost escalations have had an impact on how much road we actually get for the same number of dollars.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** So the government is renegeing on its commitment.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** No, I did not say that.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I seek some clarification. I assume we are looking at the Karratha-Tom Price link road stage 2, which I understand will cost \$125.89 million. I am sure that the capital works pages that we have just been looking at show that it will in fact be completed shortly; that is, stage 2.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** That is only about half the road.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I thought the parliamentary secretary was saying that stage 2 was not going to be completed.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** No. Stage 2 will be completed in March 2008.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** This question may have been asked, but it is to do with the Perth-Bunbury highway, which is mentioned on page 793. Can the parliamentary secretary tell me when that project will be completed?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** The expected date for completion of construction is December 2009.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** For the whole project?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Yes.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I want to refer now to a question that I placed on notice regarding the New MetroRail project, which is certainly mentioned on page 787, and probably also elsewhere. The question that was on notice - I thank the parliamentary secretary for the answer - was about the sums paid, or to be paid, to Main Roads for reimbursement of works undertaken by Main Roads Western Australia as part of the New MetroRail project. For the record, I note that in the answer the total amount was of the order of \$130 million, mostly consisting of \$129.9 million for the New MetroRail package E, Narrows Bridge to Glen Iris. I also note, so that the parliamentary secretary does not think I am ignoring it, that there was a payment of \$1.415 million for other project management costs.

Were there no other capital works south of Glen Iris to Mandurah that Main Roads had to be involved in as part of this project?

**Mr P. Ladner:** The only involvement by Main Roads in works other than package E was of a traffic control nature in that Main Roads had the overall role on the project to approve traffic management plans all the way down the freeway and all the way to Mandurah. Obviously we had officers who were liaising with the contractor on package E, the contractor on package A, and even the contractor on package F. It was a

liaison-type approval role. In terms of works, any adjustment of roadworks that was required was included in the relevant rail packages, so roadworks were built into the rail contracts.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** If I could just pursue that to make sure my understanding is clear, there were significant works at the western end of Stakehill Road, as you know. There were new lights at the intersection with Ennis Avenue, and a bridge heading east from there, over the new railway, and the road sweeps around from there. Were those sorts of works done by Main Roads or by a contractor directly under the New MetroRail project?

**Mr P. Ladner:** That particular intersection was actually done by the council, from memory. The other bridgeworks nearby would have been in the package A contract by RailLink. It was a unique situation in that the Rockingham council wanted to extend the road to make it a four-way intersection, so it contributed one-third, the Public Transport Authority contributed one-third and Main Roads, out of its other traffic signal-type money, contributed one-third. In other words, it was bringing forward works that Main Roads would have had to spend moneys on at another intersection. If the lights had not gone in there, they would eventually have gone in at the old intersection where Old Mandurah Road came in, and that is now closed.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I think there was a parliamentary inquiry report into lights for that intersection many years ago. The Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs looked at the Stakehill Road issue.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I am sure it was a very distinguished report by a very fine committee, Mr Deputy Chairman! May I have the call again?

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Just to finalise that avenue of inquiry, I am trying to ascertain that the \$129.9 million is the totality of works entered into at Main Roads' expense, as it were, in connection with or in relation to the New MetroRail project.

**Mr P. Ladner:** Yes, that is correct.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** That is in addition to the \$1.45 million -

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Yes, in addition to the project management stuff. It was actually the big ticket items I was interested in.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I refer to the appropriation and forward estimates on page 777 and item 86, net amount appropriated to deliver services. I note that the net appropriation of \$166.4 million for 2007-08 is substantially higher than the actual budget expenditure for 2006-07. Can the parliamentary secretary tell us what the main reasons for that increase are?

[9.10 pm]

**Mr R. Phillips:** It is a substantial increase on the expected out-turn for 2006-07. We need to look at the total, about the third line down, where it refers to total appropriations provided to deliver services, increasing from \$424 million to \$487 million. A lot of those funds eventually may be charged across the capital works projects, depending on the extent of those costs that we can attribute to capital. At this point in time, a number of those costs have been included in the delivery of service appropriations, which, through the process of delivering capital works, we may have to charge eventually across to capital projects. An assessment was made early in the budget process about what proportion of those costs can be charged across to capital. The review of these is ongoing in the delivery of the capital works program and what we can charge across.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators" at page 780, and the line that refers to the road fatality rate per 100 million kilometres travelled. I note that the rate budgeted for in 2006-07 was 0.49 fatalities per 100 million kilometres travelled, but the estimated out-turn for 2006-07 is 1.00. Why is that figure for 2006-07 set to be exceeded so greatly? If it is simply a statistical aberration, why is the 2007-08 rate also set at 1.00?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will ask Mr Des Snook to answer that question.

**Mr D. Snook:** The rate set in the 2006-07 budget of 0.49 was the estimate that Main Roads put in there based on the target for the overall road safety strategy for WA. As you will be aware, the actual number of fatalities has been increasing. The 2006-07 estimated out-turn figure reflects the actual higher fatality rate. The 2007-08 target is our estimation of the continuation of that rate.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** On that matter, in 2005-06 the 0.75 actual and the expected figure, marked down to 0.49, for 2006-07, is a radical drop. What was the basis for that anticipation? Was there a program of road safety? It seems extraordinarily optimistic.

**Mr D. Snook:** That figure was based on the target rate from the overall government road safety strategy. At that stage, we anticipated that the overall effect of the road safety improvements being made at that time, not

only within Main Roads but also within a number of other agencies, would contribute to the lowering of that fatality rate. As it turned out, that has not happened. The actual rate in 2006-07 and the estimated rate for 2007-08 reflect that.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Is that because some agency or other that was meant to participate or contribute to those safety programs failed or fell short?

**Mr D. Snook:** No; I do not believe that is the case at all. The target that was provided in the WA road safety strategy was a target that was sought to be achieved. All agencies were participating to achieve that outcome. However, what has happened is that the actual number of fatalities is higher than what was predicted.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That is tragic. It has increased from a rate of 0.49 fatalities per 100 million kilometres travelled, to a rate of 1.00 fatalities. That is more than double what was anticipated. Does the government view that as statistical evidence that its road safety strategy is failing, and that, particularly in view of the 2007 projection, it will continue to fail?

**Mr D. Snook:** I cannot comment on behalf of the government. However, as the member would be aware, preparation is being made for a new road safety strategy that will commence in 2007-08 and head on to 2012. A lot of consultation is taking place with the public at the moment. That is being headed by other agencies within government.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I refer to page 779, service 4, road-use safety improvements. Has any specific funding being allocated to develop a road safety plan in the south west in relation to the expansion of the blue gum industry? What is the proposed expenditure for road improvements in relation to the blue gum industry? What cost sharing or cost recovery arrangements are in place to account for the growth in blue gum haulage?

**Mr D. Snook:** As far as funding for road upgrades due to the blue gum timber industry, and the increased heavy haulage movements from that industry, there is funding for a number of different projects throughout the south west and great southern. For 2007-08, \$5 million will be provided for South Western Highway to continue improvements that were commenced on that road during 2006-07. Also, \$5 million has been allocated for works on the eastern end of Muirs Highway that will link into the Mt Barker northern bypass road, and also link into other bitumen seal widening works that have been done during 2006-07. Finally, further funding will be provided for road upgrades at the western end of Muirs Highway.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I want to pursue this. I understand that the blue gum industry has been expanding rapidly and causing not only damage, but also safety issues, on south west roads. Has Main Roads undertaken a specific industry plan for the blue gum industry; and, if yes, where are those reports? Does Main Roads have a specific program for managing the impact on road transport of the expansion of the blue gum industry in the south west?

[9.20 pm]

**Mr J. Marmion:** All I can advise is that, in the past, the Department for Planning and Infrastructure has been coordinating actions across various agencies, including Main Roads, and identifying total needs for upgrading local government roads in the great southern and the south west regions. I am not aware of the current status of those works by DPI.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Therefore, DPI is responsible for the coordination and development of the road plan for the blue gum sector. Someone needs to pick this up. Obviously, it will expand. Over the next few years, five megatonnes of blue gum woodchips will be transported through the south west region. With the emergence of the biomass industry, an additional two or three megatonnes of blue gum branches and tops will be moved on south west roads. That will lead to a predictable increase in traffic hazards and have an impact on the roads. Are there any reports on predicting the growth and development of a road transport strategy for the blue gum industry?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Some of the difficulty that we have in answering the question is that a lot of that strategic analysis work is done in the Department for Planning and Infrastructure's component of the minister's portfolio, particularly the minister's strategy to get more logs onto rail. It is difficult to answer the question in detail. As part of the minister's and the government's commitment to the north Greenbushes intermodal facility and to getting the logs onto rail, funding has been allocated for the improvement of the roads that will feed into that intermodal facility. I do not have that detail with me.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I remind members that representatives from DPI will appear before the committee later this year.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The point is that there needs to be some template against which Main Roads is developing the rolling out of its capital works program. It should take into account the expansion of a major industry in the south west. I would expect there to be some linkages and no confusion about where we are going with that.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** We note the member's opinion on that matter.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** On page 794 of the *Budget Statements* reference is made under "Goldfields Highway" to the construction and sealing of the Wiluna-Meekatharra road. The total cost is \$174 million and the allocation for 2007-08 is \$241 000. Can the parliamentary secretary indicate when that road will be completed?

**Mr J. Marmion:** Main Roads is undertaking planning and design work on sections of that road, as well as annual specific maintenance, such as resheeting and drainage and gravel improvements. Currently there are no funds in the forward estimates to extend the construction works on that road.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I will ask a question on something that is not in the capital works budget and perhaps the parliamentary secretary can tell me why it is not. Are there any plans to construct and seal the road from Newman to Nullagine and Marble Bar?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Can I ask for the page and line number?

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** It is not actually in the capital works. I am asking why it is not. Is it not in there for any particular reason?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I thought the questions were related to the current budget.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I am surely able to ask whether the government intends to seal that road. If it is not intended, the parliamentary secretary should just say no, or say that it will happen at some time in the future.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** It is related, because it is a question about whether or not that item is in the budget. If it is not being considered, then the answer is that it is not in the budget.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** There are no plans at this stage.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** They will be pleased to hear that.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** This is a similar question, so the parliamentary secretary will love this one. It is about whether something is in the budget or not, because I cannot find it. I note that in the 2006-07 budget, under "Road Network Maintenance", there was mention of work, though it was not itemised to an actual dollar figure, to be done on the Causeway bridges. The item states -

... replace existing expansion joints to avoid further deterioration. The repairs will overcome the drainage problem under the deck, due to leakage through the existing expansion joints, which if left in the current state could become a safety issue.

As there is no mention of these works in the 2007-08 *Budget Statements* that we are now considering, what is the status of this project? Has it been completed, since it is not included in the budget, or is it in abeyance?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Mr Des Snook will answer that question.

**Mr D. Snook:** Work was done on the expansion joints on the Causeway during 2006-07. I would have to get some supplementary information about when it was completed but, because it does not appear in the 2007-08 budget, that would indicate that it has been completed.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That is a reasonable inference, but I would like that confirmed by way of supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No II.*]

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I refer back to the question I asked before. I asked specifically about the blue gum industry expansion in the south west. I am now interested in the management and operations of the road network. Is there a road transport and heavy haulage plan for the whole of the state, and the various sectors?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Mr Des Snook will answer the question.

**Mr D. Snook:** For heavy haulage, Main Roads currently has a plan for compliance and enforcement activities. We have a strategy for that. That is an important part of the management of heavy vehicles in the state. Can I have some clarification on exactly what else the member is seeking?

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Main Roads has a road network operations and management budget of \$81 million in 2006-07, with an estimated actual of \$78 million. That is a big budget. We are either following our nose on traffic loads, and upgrading roads in response to demand - reacting - or we have longitudinal planning that sets out the kind of transport infrastructure we need to have. Does Main Roads involve itself in that kind of longitudinal planning so that it can predict where the road will take it, effectively, over time? Where will Main Roads be as an agency, and what obligations will it have to meet growing transport needs?

[9.30 pm]

**Mr D. Snook:** There are a lot of components to the overall road network operations, including the work that we do with our normal, day-to-day traffic management on the road network. It also covers all the work that we do at

our heavy vehicle operations branch, which includes the way in which we permit vehicles to go on the road and how we undertake compliance and enforcement on the road. The way in which permits are issued, and the decisions that are made about the roads for which we are prepared to issue the permits, has developed over time. The network on which those vehicles are allowed to travel has developed over a number of years. We will bring that work together during 2007-08. We will be developing a heavy vehicle access strategy for roads in Western Australia. That is one of the important outputs that we will produce in 2007-08.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Is that funded through the service 1 budget?

**Mr D. Snook:** That is correct.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Gary Norwell will add some further comments in response to that question.

**Mr G. Norwell:** In terms of road planning, I add that we have divided the whole state network into 150 or 160 discrete links. We monitor the volume of traffic for each of those links, as well as the volume of freight and the classification of vehicles using those links. We have a set of investigatory or intervention criteria that we monitor that indicate to us when there is a need to intervene and upgrade those specific links. Is that part of the longer term planning that the member is looking at? We predict growth rates on our roads and anticipate when we might have to make improvements to cater for those developments, be they mineral developments in the north or growth in the volume of traffic in the south west. We have permanent count stations that monitor traffic volumes. We can predict when we will need to either widen or duplicate existing roads. We do that as a matter of course. That feeds into our planning and programming process.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I can see that your role is in the management of the assets and the rolling out of the capital works programs. I am more interested in the connection between asset management, the capital works programs and predictive planning, which is about where we will end up or where we want to go. Clearly, there is not a close link between the functions that Main Roads is performing and longitudinal planning. If there were, I suggest that there would be a more fluid and ready answer.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I will just go back to my earlier answer; that is, a lot of that strategic planning is now done by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Main Roads has the responsibility to build and maintain the roads. The member might perhaps want to save that question for when the Department for Planning and Infrastructure is before the estimates committee.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** If I can use this opportunity for an advertisement, the Department for Planning and Infrastructure will appear before the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on 27 August in the committee rooms.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I must say that this is where we need to find out whether there is connectivity between planning, asset management and capital works programs. This is where it happens. Main Roads has the people who are spending the money. That is not a critique; it is merely an observation.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Are there any further questions?

**Hon ANTHONY FELS:** I will ask a question about Indian Ocean Drive. I refer to page 794 and the estimated expenditure for 2007-08 of \$24 509 000. Where is that at the moment? The *Budget Statements* indicate that the extension from Lancelin to Ocean Farms Estate commenced in April this year and that it will be completed by May 2008. Is that on track? What is the status of discussions with the Shire of Dandaragan about any additional works on the remainder of that section through to Cervantes?

**Mr P. Ladner:** The current contract with Highway Construction is well underway. It is planned to be completed by May 2008. In addition, there is a short section of what is called the Mimigarra road, which the Shire of Dandaragan and other resources are working on. That is part of the original project. There is no definite time line at this stage for when what we call stage 2 of the Lancelin-Cervantes road will be completed. It is dependent on future budgetary decisions.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I advise that the completion date is June 2008, not May 2008.

**Hon ANTHONY FELS:** The total estimated cost of the project is \$153 million. The parliamentary secretary indicated there is no set date for completion. What time frame is that \$153 million based on in net present values or in the foreseeable couple of years? What is holding up continuation of the works required to commence a line of sight and at least a two-wheel gravel type road or a sealed bitumen road?

**Mr R. Farrell:** If the road was proceeding as quickly as it could proceed, I am advised that stages 1 and 2 would be completed by 2011. The stage 1 part of it is funded and is proceeding. As the minister has publicly announced, funding for stage 2 will be dependent on the next time it receives budget consideration, which will be in the 2008-09 budget. If the availability of funds is such that it can be allocated to enable it to proceed as was expected, it will proceed according to that time line. All the funds currently allocated to the project are committed to stage 1 Mimigarra - those works have been committed to - or preplanning for stage 2.

**Hon ANTHONY FELS:** What is the status of discussions with the Shire of Dandaragan about its work contribution and the amount of work to be subcontracted? What is the status of its involvement in the project?

**Mr P. Ladner:** There are no discussions going on to my knowledge, because until we get a commitment to build stage 2, such discussions would be premature.

**Mr R. Farrell:** Unless the member is talking about the involvement in the Mimigarra road construction, which was in contemplation. My understanding is that it was initially conceived that there would be a drought relief component in that. It was expected that the shire would project-manage an available labour force of farming people who had time on their hands as a result of the drought. As I am advised, that proposal did not end up eventuating as it had expected it would, and so the works have been done on a more traditional contract basis. I anticipate that is what the member was asking about.

[9.40 pm]

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** If that answers the member's question, I might move onto Hon Simon O'Brien and then Hon Ray Halligan.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to page 782, "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" under service 1, "Road Network Operations Management", and I note the dot point about heavy vehicle operations and the development of the period permit system for the reasons given in the *Budget Statements*. I also note in passing a media statement dated today headed "Omodei has nothing to offer South-West on timber transport." When will the restrictions announced today come into effect for trucks moving timber industry product on south west roads? Is the Transport Co-ordination Act the mechanism that the government will use to require licences for those products on those roads? How many vehicle movements relating to that timber industry currently occur on those roads?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Mr Des Snook will answer that.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I had a good briefing on this the other day and I wanted to demonstrate that I had retained something!

**Mr D. Snook:** Thank you very much for that.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I do not think it is appropriate to ask public servants to comment on that, though, Hon Simon O'Brien.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Ten out of 10!

**Mr D. Snook:** The restrictions will come into place in December of this year. With regard to the second question, the mechanism that will be used is the Transport Co-ordination Act. As far as the number of vehicle movements that are involved, I do not have that information.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Mr Deputy Chairman, if I could address the question back through you to the parliamentary secretary.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Is it possible to get by way of supplementary information that information upon which the government presumably based this policy announcement - that is, the number of vehicle movements that it is trying to get off south west roads?

**Mr R. Farrell:** If I could make an observation in response to the question, I understand that the minister's motivation was not a quantitative calculus; it was about an overall assessment of the situation. Part of what this licensing will do will result in government having more accurate information about these sorts of matters, which the currently regulated system does not afford it. It will also enable a more applied and targeted approach to doing what can be done to make rail more viable where it can make a contribution. Therefore, it will not necessarily be an immediate direct tool to take immediate direct effect on 1 December. It will come into operation on 1 December, but how it applies from that point on will depend upon the opportunities that are available to use that new instrument in the hand of government to achieve benefits to the balance of transport.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Period permits will not be enough now. However, is it anticipated that licences will now have to be applied for and, to the extent required, issued for road vehicles to carry these products on south west roads from December this year, even though we do not know how many, how much product and for how long? Is that about the summary?

**Mr D. Snook:** The way the Transport Co-ordination Act works is that, once it is put in place, the transport operators have access to the road if they are carting logs or woodchips once they have applied for a licence. The member is correct; they would require a licence. As I have already said, I am not aware of the number of movements that are involved.

**Mr R. Farrell:** The other thing is that a licence could be structured to be as administratively convenient as is possible so that there would not be the situation where a person would need to apply for a licence for each trip. It could be for a period of some extended duration.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** It could be one trip, six months or whatever.

**Mr R. Farrell:** As appropriate.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** It is a bit hard to plan for if a trucking company is wondering whether to spend millions of dollars on capital equipment and does not know for how long it will be able to operate the equipment. When are these matters we are discussing likely to be known? Trucking companies will need to make those decisions. I am also aware that one of the major initiatives for 2007-08, the development of period permits to provide industry with greater flexibility and reduce administration costs, may be in jeopardy.

**Mr R. Farrell:** We are in the same situation where the expert personnel involved in these regulatory arrangements reside in the Department for Planning and Infrastructure rather than Main Roads. I am trying to offer what assistance I can to the committee but the public servants who have been behind the conception of the regulatory introduction are not available to provide all the detail that the member is asking for in the context of Main Roads.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I appreciate the assistance that is available. It appears that we have probably gone about as far as we can go tonight with that line of questioning.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I refer to "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators" at page 780 of the *Budget Statements*. One line item refers to road standards. I presume this is able to advise us what the standards of roads are from year to year. We can see that the percentage figure is in decline. The explanation suggested is that the "decline compared to prior years is not a reflection of a decline in standards but is attributable to a change in the data used to calculate the indicator." Can that matter be explained a little more? Do we have any other indicator to tell us about the standards of the roads?

[9.50 pm]

**Mr G. Norwell:** I will start by explaining what that indicator consists of. It is a measure of three attributes: shoulder width, design speed standards and seal width. It depends upon the volume of traffic. We set standards according to the volume of traffic that is being carried on the road. The explanation shown there is an indication that this year we have upgraded the traffic volume statistics and there has been a quite significant growth in traffic, which means that some particular links that were of a reasonable standard at one stage are no longer the desirable width for that volume of traffic. That is the background to that comment. The percentage does not refer to the length of road; that is the percentage of travel on roads. That does not mean that 45.3 per cent of roads are substandard; it means that 45.3 per cent of roads are either slightly too narrow in seal width, the shoulder width is not adequate or the design speed value is not at a level that we would like it to be at. It does not mean that the roads are dangerous; it just means that if any of those three attributes is not up to standard, that section is classed as not being of the desired standard.

The second question was whether there is a better measure to indicate whether our roads are up to a better standard. The best one I can suggest is smooth travel exposure. That is a much higher figure. The figure is referred to on page 781 under the first outcome, "A well-maintained road network." The smooth travel exposure line item indicates that 98.2 per cent of all travel is carried out on roads that we believe are of a standard of smoothness and comfort that is warranted for people using those roads. I believe that is a better indication of the condition or health of roads than the other indicator, whereby those three attributes are taken into account. As I mentioned, and it is worth repeating, if any of those three attributes is not up to the standard for that particular link, we class it as not meeting the standard.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I thank Mr Norwell for that explanation, but, without that explanation, these figures are absolutely meaningless to us. It sounds as though they are very good internally, but externally they mean absolutely nothing. That means that pages are taken up with things that are useless. I would prefer something that is more meaningful to me and that I can pass on to my constituents if need be.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** We note the member's opinion.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to page 791 and to service 6, "Road Infrastructure for State Development". The budget papers indicate that the objective of this program is to expand the road network in accordance with government transport and land use strategies etc. I hope to use this subject as the vehicle - no pun intended - for my question. The government has announced reasonably advanced plans for an outer harbour island port, which will obviously need road links to go from the south Challenger Beach landfall to other major destinations for containers. Can Main Roads indicate which road corridors are being looked at or would be most likely to be developed for that purpose?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Mr Gary Norwell will answer that question.

**Mr G. Norwell:** Main Roads has been working with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure for some time now and has been looking at two alternative corridors: Rowley Road and Anketell Road. Each road is dependent on which of the port options is determined. It has also looked at a corridor that would be suitable for

road and rail access. Because of the topography of some sections down there, we have had to go into some quite detailed design to determine the total width of the corridor for it. That is an example of Main Roads working closely with DPI in planning that access between the outer harbour and Kwinana Freeway.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Indeed, and I have read some of the fruits of that collaboration and it is very helpful. Where would the road corridor, whether it be Anketell Road or Rowley Road, go to reach a final destination at, say, Kewdale? How would it get there from its current location? Would it go up Anketell Road to Tonkin Highway, for example, or would it go north up the Kwinana Freeway?

**Mr G. Norwell:** The expectation is that it will turn north up the Kwinana Freeway and then along Roe Highway to Kewdale and other destinations.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** This is an important question to close on because it is not related to engineering matters or road planning. I refer to service 5, "Road Network Maintenance", on page 790 of the *Budget Statements*. Our committee has been getting a lot of petitions relating to the impact of road building on rare flora on the side of the road. Remnant vegetation on our road reserves is an important aspect of biological diversity in rural areas. How much money is spent on and allocated to the management of remnant vegetation? Is there a budget line item for it?

**Mr G. Norwell:** I cannot point to a specific item in the budget papers that gives an amount of money for that. Main Roads has done work on that and is putting in place those types of measures as part of the offsets for some of the work that is done that requires clearing to ensure that the amount of rehabilitation of existing road verges exceeds the amount of clearing done in a given year. Some funding has been set aside over many years to rehabilitate degraded verges, and we are keen to maintain that. Albany Highway is a classic example. Part of our public environmental reporting includes information about the amount of clearing that is done for roadworks and also the amount of rehabilitation work done by area. We see that as an offset. Although it is not a total offset, it is a way of getting some balance between the damage that is done to the native vegetation and trying to rehabilitate and restore the vegetation to some areas where it has been lost for some time.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** That is a very beautiful thing.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** I thank the parliamentary secretary, all the officers of Main Roads and the officers from the minister's office for their attendance tonight and for their quick answers. I remind members that if they have any further questions they want to place on notice, they should feel free to do so.

*Committee adjourned at 9.58 pm*

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## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION - STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

Information that is publicly available is not included in the Supplementary Information.

The information presented below appears essentially as provided to the committee.

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### **DIVISION 50: EDUCATION AND TRAINING -**

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

- 1.1 *Under the heading 'Major Initiatives for 2007/08', in Volume 3, page 914, dot point three, relating to the Numeracy and Literacy review, what timeline and funding provision has been determined to develop a plan and implement the review's findings?*

*Answer:*

The Minister hopes to release an action plan for Literacy and Numeracy within a few months. This will be a five year plan with a ten year outlook, addressing key findings of the review. It will be a carefully considered, credible and measurable strategy.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

- 1.2 *Under the heading 'Major Initiatives for 2007/08', in volume 3, page 914, dot point six, relating to support for teachers to implement the next roll out of Courses of Study (phase three), how much money will be provided, and what timeline has been set for this to occur?*

*Answer:*

For 2007, \$3.555 million in Commonwealth funds have been provided to implement and support the major structure, Teacher Development Centres. This is an on-going project which was initiated in 2005 for Phase 1. It is proposed that the Teacher Development Centres are established concurrently with the roll-out of the new courses.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

- 2.1 *Under the heading 'Significant issues and trends', in Volume 3, page 911, dot point one, reference is made to improving the outcomes for Aboriginal learners. What provision is there in the 2007/08 Budget to help improve the academic standards of Aboriginal learners this year, given the operation and success of the Follow the dream program last financial year?*

*Answer:*

In addition to mainstream funding, which assists schools with significant enrolments of Aboriginal students, a further \$19.6 million is provided annually focused specifically on improving the academic standards of Aboriginal students. The funding is provided through staff who directly assist schools and students as well as through a range of programs. These programs include the Football Academies, the Aboriginal School Based Traineeships and the ongoing support provided through the Follow the Dream program. The mainstream Getting it Right Literacy and Numeracy program, which targets schools with Aboriginal enrolments, is run at an approximate cost of \$12.2 million annually.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

- 2.2 *Under the heading 'Significant issues and trends', in Volume 3, page 911, dot point four, reference is made to staff shortages at schools and TAFE colleges. What provision is there in the 2007/08 Budget to address this issue?*

*Answer:*

Schools:

The shortage of teachers experienced at the beginning of the 2007 school year was not anticipated. Several factors contributed to the unprecedented number of vacancies including:

- increased number of teachers retiring or resigning;
- Western Australia's mining boom contributing to a State labour shortage;

- reluctance for graduates to take up appointments with the Department; and
- reduced number of applicants available for rural and remote locations.

Whilst the Department had several strategies and initiatives in place to ensure schools were staffed appropriately they did not adequately address the increased demand for teachers particularly in country locations.

As the staffing issue emerged Gerard Daniels was contracted to review teacher recruitment and workforce planning practices. The final report was released by the Minister for Education and Training on 24 May 2007 after the State Budget. The report included recommendations covering:

- governance;
- workforce planning;
- employment brand;
- recruitment process; and
- retention.

The Department has developed a number of short-term, mid-term and long-term programs to address the recommendations and is currently reviewing budgeting requirements to enable implementation.

To assist in planning for mid and long term requirements a Ministerial taskforce, Education Workforce Initiatives, has been formed to tackle education workforce supply and demand issues in Western Australia. A final report is due December 2007.

TAFE colleges:

Lecturing skills shortages are most acute in the traditional trade areas as the resources boom offers opportunities for vocationally qualified trade lecturers to return to industry. This situation is further exacerbated in regional areas.

The State Government has recently committed \$33 million to fund unprecedented additional demand for apprentices and trainees. The additional funding for apprenticeship and traineeship delivery includes a significant component to fund TAFEWA trade lecturing staff.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

3.1 *Page 941, dot point 1 -*

*What are the more flexible university requirements being considered and how have the universities responded to these?*

*Answer:*

All 50 courses may count towards university entrance whereas previously only 33 TEE subjects (including 11 languages) counted. Also, students studying stage 2 and stage 3 units in the new courses can have their scores contribute to university entrance. A 'bonus' of 15 will be available for students studying the stage 3 units to encourage the most able students to study the most challenging courses.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

4.1 *Page 941, dot point 2 -*

*What provision is provided in the budget (including strategies) to build community and teacher trust and confidence in the senior secondary school reform, particularly in relation to assessment and reporting of student achievement?*

*Answer:*

The Curriculum Council has joint responsibility with the Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Office and Association of Independent Schools WA to develop and implement the senior school reform. The Curriculum Council's role includes:

- Teacher juries
  - Conducted teacher juries in 38 courses, with further juries in the two mathematics and the eight new courses currently being implemented.
  - The juries have provided teachers with a direct say in whether courses are ready to implement, and if not, to provide advice on what needs to occur to make them ready.
  - For courses currently being implemented it will provide an opportunity for teachers who are currently teaching the new courses to comment on the appropriateness of the course and support being provided.
  - The Curriculum Council is acting directly on the advice.

- Professional development for all new courses, including specific sessions to explain assessment in the new courses and how student results will be reported.
- Consensus meetings are being held with teachers of the eight new courses introduced to Year 11 and four courses extending to Year 12 in 2007.
- Brochures and information sheets are being prepared for schools to provide general information to teachers, parents, industry and the general community.
- Negotiating format of Year 12 certificate and statement of results with employer group (CCI), parent bodies and schools.
- Assessment seminars will be held in all new courses in semester 1 next year.
- Conduct of reference groups to rewrite courses where problems were highlighted through the jury process.
- Consultation with teachers for courses that have been rewritten.
- Production of grading advice and conduct of grading consensus meetings.
- Production of item banking systems.
- Development of reporting information to students, schools and schools sectors on student performance for diagnostic and school accountability purposes.
- Sample examinations and marking guides are being prepared in all new courses.

Of the Council's total proposed allocation of \$24.2 million, approximately \$10m is to keep existing services such as the TEE and school moderation going and the balance of \$14.2 million is for the development and implementation of the senior school reform. A key part of the latter involves building community and teacher trust with a strong re-focus on more effective communication, consultation and evaluation strategies.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

*Language Programs -*

- 5.1 *Will the Caralee Language Development Centre continue to provide special programs to children from K-1? If so, for how long will this continue?*

*Answer:*

Any adjustments will be decided through District management processes and after consideration of local need and changes to enrolment numbers.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

- 5.2 *What are the names and locations of the other four language centres in the metropolitan area, and will the programs offered at these centres be reduced from K-3 to K-1, and if so, when will this occur?*

*Answer:*

The four other Language Development Centres (LDCs) are as follows:

West Coast LDC;  
North East Metropolitan LDC;  
South East Metropolitan LDC; and  
Peel Language Development School.

LDCs operate under a range of models depending on the District's determination of local need and content. Clearly LDCs have an early intervention focus. Some LDCs currently cater for students K-3. One of the LDCs has not had Year 3 students for several years. This has been a District decision in response to local need. This change has allowed for the enrolment of more students in the kindergarten and pre-primary years where research demonstrates early intensive intervention is most successful.

Again, any adjustments to the LDC cohort will be decided through District management processes and after consideration of local need and changes to enrolment numbers.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

- 5.3 *Is it intended that mainstream classroom teachers will be given assistance to deliver special language programs in mainstream classes, and that there will be a reduction of special language classes available to students with special needs?*

*Answer:*

No. Intensive and specialised language programs will remain the focus of LDCs.

Every public school across the State has access to outreach visiting teacher support through the Statewide Speech and Language Service. The focus of service is to improve speech and language outcomes for students through strengthening school and teacher capacity to plan and cater for student needs.

There will not be a reduction in overall numbers of students accessing special language programs through the LDCs.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 911 states that parental involvement in children's education is an important element in preparing young children for learning and maximising the effectiveness of schooling.*

**1.1 What budget items specifically implement and support parent involvement?**

*Answer:*

The Department has a range of strategies to support parent involvement in their child's early learning. These are budgeted from a variety of sources. The strategies include:

- Learning Begins at Home publication a free resource book for parents of young children is distributed through schools, child health centres, libraries etc.
- Enrolment information packages include resource to help parents prepare young children for kindergarten and pre-primary.
- Operational grants and professional learning opportunities are provided to Community Kindergartens to promote parent participation and choice in the provision of high quality early learning programs.
- Family Literacy Packs including games and information that parents can take home and use with their children.
- Home School Links program, a professional learning program for staff to engage hard-to-reach families. On-line resources will be available for schools to download and workshops for parents
- The Kindergarten and Pre Primary Profile is a tool that supports the involvement of parents in developing shared educational goals for their child.
- The Expo presentations including the Browns Junior Expo promotes public schools, particularly, kindergarten, pre-primary and Year 1 and provides an opportunity for trained early childhood teachers to answer parent questions and discuss early childhood education matters.
- Building Inclusive Classrooms through Learning Support Coordinators provides support for schools to develop documented plans for students requiring additional support. Parents are encouraged to be part of the development and review of documented planning for their child.
- Selected Education Support Centres and Schools provide targeted programs for kindergarten and pre-primary students. These trial programs are delivered through documented planning which involves parents at the development and review stages. In many instances parents are provided with a home program to support the school program.
- Language Development Centres provide intensive programs for children in kindergarten and pre-primary. Each child's program is tailored to their specific language needs. Parents are required to participate in all aspects of planning and reviewing these programs.
- The Centre for Inclusive Schools has a specialist Autism Intervention Team which provides direct support services to schools. In the early years this consists of facilitating planning and support provision to schools, teachers and education assistants. This team works closely with parents at all stages of its work with young children in schools.
- Hospital School Services supports children who may be away from their home school for extended periods of time due to illness. The Service either continues the home school program or else provides a targeted program according to each child's needs. Parental involvement in the development and delivery of these programs is always sought.
- Autism Units operate to develop the skills of young children with Autism to enable them to successfully continue their educational programs beyond the early years. These programs are individualised and highly structured. Parental involvement in the development and review of this planning is highly encouraged and parents are expected to support this planning at home.

- Conductive education program at Carson Street School involves early intervention for young children from the time of diagnosis. A central part of the documented planning process involves parent participation

The Department also has a range of strategies to enhance the participation of Aboriginal parents and community members in the school. These include:

- Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) provide support and assistance to Aboriginal students, their parents/carers, teachers, the school and the community through their knowledge, understanding and sharing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, language and culture. An important part of their role is establishing and maintaining community links.
- A parent participation training manual titled Walk Right In, You Can Make a Difference has been developed to increase the involvement of Aboriginal parents at the school level and improve understandings about how they can help their child succeed in school, including the importance of regular attendance.
- Aboriginal kindergartens have the specific purpose of providing education programs for three and four year old Aboriginal students, which are inclusive of their Aboriginality, culture, language and learning styles. Parent involvement is strongly encouraged at all Aboriginal kindergartens and an AIEO is placed in all Aboriginal kindergartens to increase parental involvement, to support education programs for three and four year old Aboriginal students and assist them in the transition from home to school.
- The Department of Education and Training appoints Aboriginal Education Specialist Teachers to schools to provide support in numeracy and literacy for Aboriginal students. A part of their role is to work in partnership with the AIEO to facilitate greater Aboriginal participation in the school.
- Statewide Aboriginal Education Advisory Councils have been established in each Education District. Their role is to provide Aboriginal community members an opportunity to be involved in education and training decision making processes.
- A School and Community Partnerships project commenced as a trial in six schools in 2007. This project focuses on creating cooperative partnerships between schools and their local Aboriginal community. The partnership is developed to engage the parents and local community in the school decision making process with the development of formal agreements.
- The Parent School Partnerships Initiative encourages parents of Aboriginal students, schools and the Aboriginal community to work together in partnership to address local barriers to education. The funding supplements mainstream education services and programs and may provide a mechanism for capacity building in Aboriginal communities to enhance learning outcomes,

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 911. The school leaving age will be raised again in 2008.*

*1.2 What additional costs are budgeted to accommodate the additional educational needs?*

*Answer:*

An additional \$2.1 million was provided to schools in the 2006 calendar year and \$3.1 million in calendar year 2007. These funds have been distributed in accordance with strategic directions in 'Education and Training Participation Plans', which have been developed in each education district to provide suitable programs for all young people at risk of not being engaged in education, employment and training in their 16<sup>th</sup> year.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 912 - fourth dot point:*

*1.3 What alternative methods of staffing are being investigated by the Department?*

*Answer:*

One key focus is to target key groups such as graduates and retirees. A graduate teacher attraction package has been developed with early offers currently taking place for the 2008 school year.

The package for retirees includes flexible working arrangements, increase in salary level and the option to salary package up to 100% of salary. Direct contact has been made with teachers who have recently retired and a hotline has been established.

The Department continues to source teachers through both national and international career expos.

Staffing processes and policies have been reviewed and the appointment of new teachers simplified.

Other initiatives being developed for consideration include:

- An increase in current scholarship programs.
- Identify other target groups to increase the supply of teachers through research and marketing.
- Increase the capacity to support staff to complete a Bachelor of Education conversion course.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 912 - Second dot point after the header:*

*Major achievements for 2006-2007:*

*The student retention rate to year 11 increased to 91.7%,*

*1.4 How many students were fined for leaving school before school leaving age?*

*Answer:*

To date there have been no fines imposed since the raising of the leaving age.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 912 - Second dot point after the header:*

*Major achievements for 2006-2007:*

*The student retention rate to year 11 increased to 91.7%,*

*1.5 How many incidents were addressed through penalties?*

*Answer:*

Parents are responsible for children being enrolled in an educational programme for each year of the compulsory education period for that child. This includes complying with the requirement to be participating in school or another option in their 16<sup>th</sup> (2006) and 17<sup>th</sup> (2008) year. The penalty, for the parent, for non-compliance is \$2 500.

There are currently 60 Participation Coordinators providing support to young people in their 16<sup>th</sup> year to access appropriate education, training, employment or a combination of options. This number of Participation Coordinators will increase during the remainder of 2007 and into 2008 to the Government commitment of 100 positions to provide transition brokerage for all 15 to 17 year olds in both the public and private school and training sectors.

Non-compliance with enrolment has, to date, been managed through this support mechanism.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 912 - Fourth dot after header:*

*1.6 How many of the assessed students did not reach the government set benchmarks?*

*Answer:*

The table below reports the number of students below the MCEETYA nationally agreed benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy in 2006. It is important to note that proportion of students who achieved the benchmark is calculated by an interpolation process. These numbers are a proportion of the group, rather than classifying individual students. The number of students based on these proportions should be regarded as indicative rather than the actual number of students.

Public school students not achieving benchmark						
	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Reading	7.2	1302	9.5	1748	19.0	3574
Writing	12.5	2255	17.9	3262	16.3	3213
Numeracy	12.7	2326	16.3	3015	18.6	3513

Note: % given in relation to MCEETYA nationally agreed benchmarks

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 912 – Fourth dot after header:*

- 1.7 *What strategies is the department employing to assist these students to reach the benchmarks in the coming test?*

*Answer:*

The Getting it Right –Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (GiR-LNS) is a targeted and coordinated program of additional support for public primary, district high schools and secondary high schools in Western Australia. The program provides additional specialist teaching personnel to selected schools across the public school system.

349 specialist teachers are currently working in 301 schools throughout the State. A small number of schools are now receiving support in both literacy and numeracy.

The specialist teachers have a specific focus on supporting those students who are at risk of not achieving the designated literacy and numeracy standards. The specialist teachers provide ‘in class’ support to teachers with their ongoing monitoring and assessment of student progress to help determine specific learning needs and identify strategies to assist those students whose progress is of concern.

In addition, the *Assessment for Improvement Program* provides resources and professional learning to assist schools and teachers to collect, analyse and use student performance information for improvement purposes.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 - Fourth last dot point*

- 1.8 *What was the outcome of the independent evaluation and what did it cost?*

*Answer:*

The final report of the independent evaluation conducted by Shelby Consulting/Estill & Associates is available on the Department’s website at [www.det.wa.edu.au/education/accountability/](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/accountability/) under the SAF Review menu option.

The report is being considered as part of the overall review of the School Accountability Framework including directions for the future.

The independent evaluation cost a total of \$87 074. This figure includes the payments made directly to schools and staff involved in the forums.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Fourth last dot point*

- 1.9 *What, if any, additional recommendations did this evaluation make?*

*Answer:*

The independent evaluation conducted by Shelby Consulting/Estill & Associates does not provide a specific set of recommendations. It does provide findings in relation to each of the key evaluation questions and a general conclusion.

The final report is available on the Department’s website at [www.det.wa.edu.au/education/accountability/](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/accountability/) under the SAF Review menu option.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Third last dot point*

- 1.10 *Has the Professional Standards and Conduct Division commenced work? Please provide details to budgeted costs for 2007-2008.*

*Answer:*

The Professional Standards and Conduct Division has commenced operations.

The total budgeted cost for the Division for 2007/2008 is \$2 847 000

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Third last dot point*

- 1.11 *How is this unit related to the Standards and Integrity Directorate?*

*Answer:*

The Professional Standards and Conduct Division is comprised of two Directorates:

- Standards and Integrity; and
- Audit and Risk Management.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Third last dot point*

*1.12 How many FTE is it intended will work in this unit?*

*Answer:*

The approved establishment of the Standards and Integrity Directorate is 31 FTE.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Third last dot point*

*1.13 How many FTE have already been filled?*

*Answer:*

To date 17 positions have been filled substantively with an additional four positions being filled by an Expression of Interest.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Third last dot point*

*1.14 How is the performance of this unit monitored and evaluated.*

*Answer:*

The Division reports directly to the Director General of the Department of Education and Training.

The Director General of Education and Training has a high level Governance Committee that is overseeing the establishment and operation of the Professional Standards and Conduct Division. A strategic implementation plan to address the recommendations by the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Ombudsman and the Internal Brown Report sets out Actions and Targets against which the Division reports. In addition retired Judge Mr Barry Rowland has been appointed to an oversight role and reports directly to the Minister for Education and Training.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 913 – Third last dot point*

*1.15 Will this unit deal with all complaints received by the Department?*

*Answer:*

Not all complaints will be dealt with by the Standards and Integrity Directorate. Some complaints of a minor nature and not related to criminality are to be dealt with at the local level by schools and/or districts.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – dot point 2:*

*1.16 What are replacement enterprise agreements?*

*Answer:*

In conjunction with relevant awards, general (enterprise) agreements are the primary industrial instruments for regulating pay and conditions of public sector employees. General agreements are the result of collective bargaining with relevant unions that provide for salary increases and core employment conditions. The term of these agreements normally range from two to three years - the Western Australia Industrial Relations Act prevents agreements from exceeding three years. On expiry new or replacement agreements are negotiated that provide salary increases and core employment conditions over the term of the agreement. All public sector agreements are negotiated and concluded subject to the Government's Public Sector Wages and Salary Negotiations Policy – January 2006.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – dot point 2:*

*1.17 How do they differ from usual employment contracts?*

*Answer:*

“Usual employment contracts” are used to document the start date, position, location, etc for new employees, whether ongoing or fixed term appointments.

Government policy prohibits the use of Individual employment contracts in the public sector except for senior executive service positions.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – third dot point from header:*

*Local selecting of teaching vacancies:*

*1.18 How many schools applied to be part of the scheme?*

*Answer:*

Nomination decisions are made at the local level between the Principal of the school and the relevant District Director. Nominations supported by the District Director are then forwarded to Central Office for formal endorsement.

There is no data available regarding nominating schools that did not obtain the support of the District Director.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – third dot point from header:*

*Local selecting of teaching vacancies:*

*1.19 What were the selection criteria for inclusion and who made the decision?*

*Answer:*

There is no specific selection criteria. Principals discuss their school’s preparedness for local selection with the relevant District Director. These discussions cover issues including the school’s Human Resources capability, the school culture, support from the school community and the availability of resources to support the local selection of staff.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – third dot point from header:*

*Local selecting of teaching vacancies:*

*1.20 Has the program of local selection of staff been evaluated?*

*Answer:*

Discussions are ongoing with the State School Teachers’ Union of Western Australia to undertake a joint evaluation of local selection.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – third dot point from header:*

*Local selecting of teaching vacancies:*

*1.21 What feedback has been received from the schools?*

*Answer:*

No formal review has been undertaken.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – third dot point from header:*

*Local selecting of teaching vacancies:*

*1.22 Does the Department plan to extend the program to all schools?*

*Answer:*

The rollout of local selection to schools who do not currently have the capacity has been suspended pending analysis and implementation of the recommendations from the Gerard Daniels review of teacher recruitment and workforce planning.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – third dot point from header:*

*Local selecting of teaching vacancies:*

*1.23 How are Principals trained to make these human resources decisions?*

*Answer:*

Principals and all other panel members at schools who elect to locally select teaching staff are required to participate in compulsory selection panel training. This training is conducted by specialist consultants on a regional basis and is centrally funded.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – ninth dot point from bottom of page.*

*Community Service Program for Year 10 students:*

*1.24 What financial support is provided to community associations that provide activities and projects to students?*

*Answer:*

All Western Australian schools with Year 10 students commenced implementation of the Community Service Program for the first time in February 2007. A grant has been provided to Volunteering WA to enable coordination across relevant services within the volunteering sector. This will enable all schools to access a website which give details of a wide range of volunteering opportunities in the local area. Additional grants will be made available to community groups in the 2007/2008 financial year to support the development of local partnerships between schools and services.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – ninth dot point from bottom of page.*

*Community Service Program for Year 10 students:*

*1.25 How is the supervision of these students guaranteed?*

*Answer:*

Students undertake a range of community service activities, some of which will take place on-site at the school. For community service activities that take place off-site, schools must put in place appropriate risk management plans as per the Department's Excursions: Off-Site Activities policy.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – sixth dot point:*

*Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum*

*1.26 When will the website be completed?*

*Answer:*

Phase I of the Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum website became operational in March 2007.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 914 – sixth dot point:*

*Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum*

*1.27 Will it provide resources for Kindergarten – Year 12?*

*Answer:*

Yes.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

Page 915

*Item: Halls Creek Response:*

1.28 Please provide the details as to the expenditure projection for this project.

*Answer:*

On 12 February 2007, Cabinet approved the implementation of a number of initiatives to address child protection issues in Halls Creek. Specifically this involved the provision of a hostel with the capacity to accommodate up to 18 children; an improved foster care service; a responsible parenting programme; an improved education and truancy programme; and governance and accountability measures.

The impact of this decision on the Department of Education and Training comprises an additional teacher aide to provide pastoral care, an additional teacher to provide community and after-school activities and an attendance co-ordinator. The salaries plus on-costs for the three staff were estimated to cost \$88 236 in 2006/07 (a part year cost), \$181 467 in 2007/08, \$189 003 in 2008/09, \$196 592 in 2009/10 and \$204 070 in 2010/11.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

Page 916

*Participation Rate for 15-17 year old students.*

*On 1 January 2008 the school leaving age will rise to 17 Years.*

1.29 "Why is the participation rate only projected to be 88% instead of a rate closer to 100%?"

*Answer:*

The figure 88% provided refers to the estimated average participation rate for the period 2001-2005 for Year 11 students. The participation rate for Year 11 students in 2006 (ie following implementation of the raised leaving age initiative) was 97.04%.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

Page 919

*The average cost per student curriculum hour is expected to stay the same for VET students at the level of 2005-2006, but expected to rise for secondary and primary students.*

1.30 Why is 2006-2007 budgeted with a higher rate and the target reduced for 2007-2008 and the following years to the 2005-2006 level?

*Answer:*

At the time the information was prepared for the Budget Papers, the data needed to calculate the Estimated 2006/07 cost per student curriculum hour (SCH) were not available. Therefore; it was not possible to calculate a projected cost per SCH for 2007/08. As neither estimate could be calculated, the last known value, the actual cost per SCH for 2005/06, was used as an estimate for both 2006/07 and 2007/08. The 2006/07 actual average cost per SCH has now been calculated at \$15.62, which is not significantly different to the estimated actual of \$15.57.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

Page 920

*Capital Works program*

1.31 What capital works program is budgeted for Mount Hawthorn Primary School which is expected to become amalgamated at the start of 2008?

*Answer:*

It is proposed to provide a new administration building and new toilet facilities at an estimated cost of \$2.16 million. The project is at tender at present, and scheduled for completion in July 2008.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

Page 924: Land Acquisition program is estimated \$20,704,000 with an additional \$5 million in the total estimated costs for future years.

1.32 Please provide details as to the areas where land is to be obtained.

*Answer:*

It is intended to purchase land in the following areas during 2007/08:

Ellenbrook, Hopetoun, Kalbarri, Hammond Park, Pearsall, Dawesville and West Armadale. The Land Acquisition Program is continually reviewed to ensure appropriate sites are acquired in developing areas.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 912, dot point 8*

*2.1 Has the raising of the school leaving age had any negative impacts in rural and remote areas?*

*Answer:*

Raising the school leaving age in 2006 has seen an increase in the number of 16 year olds attending school or TAFE colleges, engaged in traineeships, apprenticeships or fulltime employment in rural and remote areas. Many of these students in the past would not have continued on with their education beyond Year 10. This has meant that some of the remote community schools and district high schools now offer a limited senior school program. Additional staffing has been allocated to these schools to support the implementation of these new programs.

The 2006 participation rates for Year 11 students in the remote districts of the Pilbara, Kimberley, Goldfields and Midwest increased by 13.5% to a total of 73.9% while the participation rates for the rural districts of Albany, Bunbury, Esperance, Midlands, Narrogin and Warren-Blackwood increased by 12.3% to a total of 91.7%.

While these figures are still below the state participation rate of 97.4% there was a greater increase in these areas than the overall state average increase of 9.2%.

The creation of special senior school engagement programs, such as "Life Skills", "Work Readiness Programs", vocational programs and traineeships have helped schools to provide suitable opportunities to cater for disengaged students, students at risk and those students with poor literacy and numeracy skills.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 912, dot point 8*

*2.2 Is the DET able to provide adequate services for additional Year 11 students in these schools?*

*Answer:*

These schools, like small rural senior high schools, have been provided with additional staffing using a formula which includes a 'curriculum access' component. This 'curriculum access' component provides increased staff entitlements because of lower student numbers and the need to construct smaller classes to provide a basic program for Years 11 and 12.

Students remaining in these schools are offered a limited program for Years 11 and 12 depending on the total number of students enrolled and may include:

- A program provided and delivered by SIDE, supported and supervised by school based staff.
- A limited school based program offering a combination of Curriculum Council developed courses and endorsed programs, and often involving structured workplace learning, a traineeship or other VET programs,
- A combination of the above as a mixed mode program.

Additional funding for the repair and replacement of major Design and Technology equipment has been provided to district high schools through the school grant. The funds in this area have been doubled from \$1 697 to \$3 396 for 2007 onwards. A separate process costing \$218 150 has been implemented in June 2007 to replace some of the existing machinery in 22 district high schools across the state.

In 2007 an additional \$3.1 million has been allocated through Education and Training Participation Plans to support the provision of programs and services for senior schooling. Two staff have been appointed to the Participation Directorate to provide system level support and work in collaboration with Managers Participation and Enterprise and Vocational Education (EVE) Coordinators in districts to provide advice and resources directly to rural and remote schools.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 912, dot point 8*

*2.3 Have any issues arising with regard to accessing training providers to deliver VET?*

*Answer:*

The major issues affecting some rural and remote schools in regard to accessing training providers for VET is related to the capacity of TAFEWA to deliver the training for VET in Schools using TAFEWA profile hours for Year 10 to 12 students. In many of the rural and remote areas this has been impacted by the following restrictions:

- difficulties obtaining qualified staff (eg appropriate vocational competence and experience) to deliver courses in remote areas;
- low student numbers meant that some courses could not run;
- difficulties with travel and accommodation in some remote areas, and
- modes of delivery are limited due to the lack of relevant infrastructure in some rural and remote areas.

Many schools were able to use TAFE or private Registered Training Organisations to auspice programs being run by qualified teaching staff within their schools or pay a fee for service system to complete accredited courses. The costs associated with the auspicing of these courses were covered through funding from the Department of Education and Training.

***Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -***

**3.1 Who is implementing this physical activity in schools (ie staffing)?**

*Answer:*

The program in schools is being implemented by both generalist teachers and health and physical education specialists.

***Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -***

**3.2 Have any additional physical education teachers been appointed by the DET to implement and coordinate this programme in schools?**

*Answer:*

No additional staff have been appointed. Curriculum support materials and professional learning opportunities are being offered to teachers to further their capacity to deliver quality physical activity opportunities for their students.

***Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -***

**3.3 Do schools use external providers for their physical activity component?**

*Answer:*

Yes.

***Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -***

**3.4 Does BluEarth provide services in any schools?**

*Answer:*

Yes.

***Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -***

**3.5 Has the Government provided any funding for BluEarth?**

*Answer:*

Yes.

\$100 000 (plus indexation) per year for four years, commencing in 2006/07.

***Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -***

**3.6 Has any evaluation of BluEarth been completed? If yes, will the Minister table the evaluation? If not, why not?**

*Answer:*

The current agreement commenced in July 2006 and will run through to 30 June 2010. Under the conditions of the agreement Bluearth will:

- Conduct an agreed in-school evaluation of students, teachers and principals.
- Provide audited financial statements to the Department of Education and Training in June of each financial year.

The first audited statement to the Department is now due.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

- 4.1 *Has there been any tracking as to specific areas where the decline in student numbers in DET schools taken place? If so, what do the results reveal? If not, why not?*

*Answer:*

Enrolments at all primary and secondary schools are monitored at least twice per year. Schools with declining enrolments are identified and adjustments are made to school grants, transportable classrooms and school classification levels as required.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 913, dot point 2*

- 5.1 *Has there been a recent decision to restrict boarding facilities for country students at Perth Modern School? If so, why was the decision made?*

*Answer:*

No. A student boarding facility built on the former City Beach High School site is being utilised to provide for country students who accept places at Perth Modern School. Any vacancies are allocated to country students offered places in other metropolitan Gifted and Talented Education programs.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 913, dot point 2*

- 5.2 *What financial assistance exists for country students attending Perth Modern School?*

*Answer:*

For country students who satisfy the criteria, financial assistance is available under the Australian Government's Assistance for Isolated Children scheme, ABSTUDY scheme and Youth Allowance scheme.

Students who qualify for the Assistance for Isolated Children basic boarding allowance (currently amounting to \$6 396) also qualify for the State Boarding Away from Home Allowance (currently at \$1 155).

Country students who live too close to a local public secondary school to qualify for any of the above schemes and who qualify for the gifted and talented education program at Perth Modern School are eligible for the State Gifted and Talented Education Boarding Allowance which currently amounts to \$1 155.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 915, dot point 2*

- 6.1 *How many school psychologists were employed within the DET schools in 2004, 2005 and 2006 in each education district?*

- 6.2 *How many school psychologists are currently employed in the DET schools in each education district?*

*Answer:*

District	28/06/2007	2006*	2005*	2004*
Albany Education District	7	6	7	7
Bunbury Education District	10	11	11	11
Canning Education District	36	38	38	38
Esperance Education District	5	4	3	3
Fremantle/Peel Education District	43	55	52	44
Goldfields Education District	6	6	6	6

Kimberley Education District	4	4	5	5
Mid West Education District	11	9	9	8
Midlands Education District	6	7	6	6
Narrogin Education District	5	6	6	6
West Coast Education District	52	48	52	47
Pilbara Education District	8	7	6	7
Swan Education District	47	50	42	42
Warren-Blackwood Education District	9	8	7	7
Admin Central Office	3	3	5	5
	260	262	255	242

\* figures as at first pay in March each year

**[Supplementary Information No A1.]**

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Are the 4 000 teachers who have been consulted to develop syllabuses a broad cross-section of newly graduated, experienced, rural and metropolitan teachers?*

*Answer:*

Yes.

**[Supplementary Information No A2.]**

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

*Who with early childhood experiences developed the kindergarten and pre-primary syllabus? What is the nature of their training?*

*Answer:*

The syllabus has been developed by Early Childhood teachers currently deployed within the Department of Education and Training's (DET) Syllabus Development and Resources Directorate, and has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders.

Consultation about specific elements of the syllabus has occurred with:

- Staff of the DET Early Childhood Directorate, in particular with the Senior Policy Officer, who is an experienced Early Childhood trained teacher.
- Reference groups comprising practising Early Childhood teachers with expertise in the eight learning areas:
  - The Arts;
  - English;
  - Health and Physical Education;
  - Languages other than English;
  - Mathematics;
  - Science;
  - Society and Environment; and
  - Technology and Enterprise.
- The Early Childhood Syllabus Advisory Committee, which comprises:
  - three practising DET Early Childhood teachers, deputies and principals;
  - one representative of DET Indigenous Participation and Standards with Early Childhood expertise;
  - one Curriculum Council Curriculum Framework Officer;
  - one State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia representative, who is an Early Childhood teacher;

- one Catholic Education Office of WA representative, who is an Early Childhood teacher;
- one Association of Independent Schools of WA representative, who is an Early Childhood teacher;
- one Early Childhood Australia representative, who is a senior lecturer in Early Childhood Education at Edith Cowan University; and
- one university representative, who is a senior lecturer in Early Childhood Education at Murdoch University.

The K-10 Syllabus Management Group includes the Manager of Early Childhood Education.

The K-10 Syllabus National Advisory Panel includes an Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education from the University of South Australia.

**[Supplementary Information No A3.]**

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*In relation to DET staff numbers, how many of those employees at Central Office are seconded from classrooms?*

*Answer:*

The detailed information sought by the member is not readily available.

**[Supplementary Information No A4.]**

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*How many full-time equivalents are involved in the development of a resources package to support the policy and standards for healthy food and drink sold in school canteens and what is the time line for the completion of the package?*

*Answer:*

The task of supporting implementation of the healthy food and drinks initiative has been allocated to a number of Departmental officers working with the Western Australian School Canteen Association (WASCA). The total time spent by each officer working on this initiative combined equals one full time equivalent. WASCA has a staff of three full time and one part time officer and an additional three persons on contract. In addition to assisting with the development of the resources package, WASCA provide school and canteen staff with training and support.

The resources package supports school communities to meet the new standards. To date materials developed have included:

- Getting Started Package for schools;
- a poster;
- What's on the menu in Western Australian public schools;
- Information for Parents publications; and
- Website <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink/>.

This site contains frequently asked questions, fact sheets, sample menu planners, and other resources for use in schools. It links to the WASCA website which includes information on nutritional guidelines, a registered product database, the Canteen Cuisine recipe book, and training courses.

**DIVISION 52: CURRICULUM COUNCIL -**

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 942 - third dot point - provision of education opportunities from birth to compulsory school age is part of a national and state focus.*

*1.1 What strategies and programs does the Curriculum Council have that implement this aim?*

*Answer:*

None at this time.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 942 – total consolidated account - the total consolidated account has risen since 2005-2006 by 58%.*

1.2 *Please explain the major contributors to this increase.*

*Answer:*

Development and implementation of new senior school courses.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*1.3 For 2008-09 expenditure is expected to reduce to 2006-07 level; please explain.*

*Answer:*

Course development will be well progressed.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 943 - one of the desired outcomes is an equitable student assessment.*

1.4 *How does the Curriculum Council guarantee equity of assessment?*

*Answer:*

Through detailed syllabuses, clear assessment guidelines and a comprehensive moderation strategy.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 943 - Outcomes and key effectiveness indicators.*

1.5 *How does the Department measure the ‘acceptance by stakeholders’?*

*Answer:*

Through survey data.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*1.6 What agencies were consulted and how many students and teachers were consulted?*

*Answer:*

Respondents to the customer focus survey were teacher, school administrator, professional association, professional development provider, university staff, Department of Education and Training, TAFE/VET provider and parent/community member. A total of 2597 responses were received.

A separate survey of separate of teachers and students related to Year 11 and 12 courses and assessments.

	Number responded	
	Teachers	Students
Year 11 Relevance	697	16975
Year 12 Relevance	135	9683
Year 11 Comparability	698	16601
Year 12 Comparability	134	9491

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.7 *Who conducted this evaluation?*

*Answer:*

Questions sent out from Curriculum Council. Surveys returned were independently completed by and to Easymark. Data analysis and report completed by Easymark. The Year 11 and Year 12 students and teachers survey was completed by Council.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 946 - First dot point under Header Major Initiatives 2007-2008: “Teacher Jury Feedback” will be included into course development.*

1.8 *How will teachers be selected to sit on such jury, what are the selection criteria?*

*Answer:*

Random selection undertaken by the states Electoral Commission of Western Australia.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.9 *Will teachers continue teaching while involved in the teacher's jury?*

*Answer:*

Yes, meetings held after school hours.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.10 *What remuneration is to be paid to these teachers?*

*Answer:*

\$400 contract payment with travel and accommodation paid for country participants.

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Page 950 – Income Services – Cost of services*

*Expenses – Supplies and Services:*

2.1 *Why has there been such an increase in this figure (2005 – 2007/08)?*

*Answer:*

The increase reflects the State Government's increased funding support for the implementation of the senior secondary school reform over these years.

Item 98 Net amount appropriated to deliver services on Page 941 shows the rise in funding.

The appropriations from the State cover costs for the implementation of the senior secondary school reform, including:

- Development of courses.
- Development of examinations and moderation strategies for courses to be included in the new Western Australian Certificate of Education.

Expenditure relating to the above development costs includes:

- Payment of Teacher Relief to the Department of Education and Training and private schools.
- Travel costs for trainees and trainers.
- Hiring of venues for training and meeting sessions.
- Catering of refreshments/meals.

The above costs are captured in the category of expenditure called Supplies and Services in the Department of Treasury and Finance's TIMS used for the preparation of the State Budget document.

Employee Benefits:

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

2.2 *How many officers are currently employed at the Curriculum Council?*

*Answer:*

165

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

2.3 *How many officers were employed in the Curriculum Council in 2004, 2005 and 2006?*

*Answer:*

2004 - 102; 2005 - 102; 2006 - 131

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

2.4 *How many officers currently employed at the Curriculum Council hold permanent status?*

*Answer:*

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

2.5 *How many officers currently employed at the Curriculum Council are seconded for a period of time?*

*Answer:*

4

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

2.6 *How many officers resigned from the Curriculum Council in 2004, 2005 and 2006?*

*Answer:*

2004 - 8; 2005 - 5; 2006 - 11

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

*Page 944, dot point 1, Major Achievements for 2006/07:*

*Integration of national statements of learning into State curriculum materials will be completed to meet national requirements for curriculum consistency by end of 2007.*

3.1 *Will these national statements take into consideration the age difference between states in children in the pre-school years?*

*Answer:*

No, because they are not relevant to the pre-school years.

In Western Australia children can enter the kindergarten program in the year they turn four by July 1, and Western Australia has a kindergarten program and a pre-primary program. New South Wales kindergarten programs are in the year children turn 5 (as in W.A. pre-primary year).

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

3.2 *Is there a guarantee that age appropriate programs only will become nationally consistent?*

*Answer:*

No.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

3.3 *As this is the first time Australia will be looking at a nationally consistent curriculum for kindergarten children, will there be community consultation and parent consultation phase?*

*Answer:*

At this stage national statements of learning relate to Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, not kindergarten.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

3.4 *How would you respond to parents who believe that kindergarten programs are becoming "formal" and constrained to indoor activity?*

*Answer:*

Not relevant to the Curriculum Council legislation, more a question of each provider's policies and procedures.

**[Supplementary Information No B1.]**

**Question: Hon Peter Collier asked -**

*Has there been any up-front moderation for the courses? Have there been any consensus meeting to this stage?*

*Answer:*

Yes. Assessment seminars were held in six of the eight new courses. Not needed in Aviation and not held in Physical Education, as yet. Grading consensus meetings held in seven of the eight courses. Scheduled for Physical Education in mid-term 3 following consultation with school systems.

**[Supplementary Information No B2.]**

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

*Refer to major achievements for 2006-07 listed on page 944. The first dot point -*

*Integration of national statements of learning into State curriculum materials will be completed to meet national requirements for curriculum consistency by the end of 2007.*

- (1) *Will there be community and parent consultation on this matter?*

*Answer:*

No.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

- (2) *What community and parent input will be available?*

*Answer:*

Input from the community and parent representatives on Curriculum Council committees.

**DIVISION 38: HOUSING AND WORKS -**

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 683, Key Effectiveness indicator:*

*The Department's effectiveness in delivering and maintaining government buildings to an agreed standard has been assessed over several years now at 75%.*

- (1) *How is the delivery evaluated and by what organisation?*  
(2) *What agencies provided feedback to the Department?*

*Answer:*

Each year the Department arranges for senior personnel in client agencies for whom services are provided to be surveyed to determine their levels of satisfaction. They were surveyed in relation to departmental services for capital works delivery, maintenance and minor works delivery, lease administration, tenancy management and support for Strategic Asset Management.

The survey is carried out by an independent market research firm. The surveys from 2003/04 to 2006/07 were carried out by the same firm, Market Equity, although the firm changed its trading name to Synovate leading up to the 2006/07 survey.

The following agencies were surveyed:

Botanical Gardens & Parks Authority  
Country High School Hostels Authority  
Department of Agriculture and Food  
Department of the Attorney General  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
Department of Community Development  
Department of Consumer and Employment Protection  
Department of Corrective Services  
Department of Culture and the Arts  
Department of Education and Training  
Department of Fisheries  
Department of Health  
Department of Indigenous Affairs  
Department of Industry and Resources  
Department of Local Government and Regional Development  
Department for Planning and Infrastructure  
Department of the Premier & Cabinet  
Department of Sport & Recreation  
Department of Treasury and Finance  
Disability Services Commission

Fire and Emergency Services Authority  
 LotteryWest  
 Main Roads WA  
 Metropolitan Cemeteries Board  
 Midland Redevelopment Authority  
 Parliament of Western Australia  
 Rottnest Island Authority  
 WA Meat Industry Authority  
 Western Australia Police  
 WA Sports Centre Trust

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 684, fourth dot point: The number of apprentices is anticipated to be 80 in early 2008.*

- (3) *What is the total number of employees working for the Department?*
- (4) *What percentage of these are apprentices?*

*Answer:*

The Department does not employ apprentices directly, as its day labour workforce was outsourced in the early 1990s. Therefore there is no percentage relationship between Department employees and Department apprentices. However, the Department has an apprenticeship scheme that facilitates construction industry apprentices and trainees, through third party arrangements with 5 Group Training Providers. These apprentices and trainees are placed with the Department's contractors for on-the-job training. As at 28 June 2007, the Department's Apprenticeship Scheme numbers for apprentices and trainees is as follows:

Metropolitan	61 apprentices
Hedland	3 trainees
Halls Creek	3 apprentices, 8 trainees
Albany	1 Apprentice
Total	65 Apprentices, 11 Trainees

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 684, second last dot point: Sustainability standards and Building Greenhouse ratings.*

- (5) *Is the department aiming to reach 4.5 Star Australian Building Greenhouse Rating and 5 star Green Star sustainability rating for all its building projects, such as schools, police and hospitals projects?*
- (6) *If yes, by when?*
- (7) *If no, why not?*

*Answer:*

An ABGR (Australian Building Greenhouse Rating) is currently applicable only to offices or where there is an office component. The Government has adopted an office accommodation policy requiring that Government owned and leased office accommodation should achieve an ABGR rating of a minimum of 4.5 stars. ABGR is mainly useful for measuring energy consumed in existing buildings but can be used to model projected energy use at the design stage of a building.

The Department has not as yet generally adopted the Green Star standards for new buildings, but may do so in the future after consultation with Department of Treasury and Finance and client agencies. Any consideration of Green Star standards would have to be on a project by project basis to ensure appropriate sustainability initiatives are specified that take into account costs and benefits.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach, but one important initiative is that the design consultants for Fiona Stanley Hospital have been asked to design to a 4 Star Green Star rating level.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 685 -*

- (8) *In the 2007-2008 "Fixing our Schools" project, of the budgeted \$8.9 million, what expenditure is planned for the North Metropolitan Region?*

*Answer:*

The planned expenditure in 2007-08 for the North Metropolitan Region, namely the West Coast and Swan Districts, is \$2.182m.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 686 - third dot point*

- (9) *What expenditure is budgeted to address sustainability and access for people with disabilities?*

*Answer:*

The costs for sustainability and access for people with disabilities form part of the complete accommodation costs. These costs are met by the occupying agency and are not a separately budgeted item.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

- (10) *The Ford Review suggested (Recommendation 8) that the forthcoming review of the Department of Housing and Works considers which Department should have a role in supporting people in public housing tenancies, in circumstances where, if they were evicted, they would become homeless.*

*Please report on the progress of the review and what amount is budgeted for its implementation in 2007/08.*

*Answer:*

The Department of Housing and Works' Review into Housing Service Delivery has looked into the issues of tenancy support for tenants who are being evicted. This has included consideration of recommendation 8 of the Ford Report.

The recommendations of the Department's Review are being finalised.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 695*

- (1) *What "increased industry options" is the Department referring to in its first sentence of the chapter on home ownership?*

*Answer:*

Several banks and other financiers are now offering low deposit loans and in some circumstances not requiring mortgage insurance or a demonstrated savings history. This has broadened the options available to the market which was previously the domain of Keystart.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 695*

- (2) *Information on outcomes and key effectiveness indicators seems to be missing. Missing information includes:*

*i) How many dwellings does the Housing Authority have in total?*

*Answer:*

The Authority's estimated closing stock for 2006/07 is 42,477 dwellings. This includes Public Housing and Joint Venture dwellings, Community Housing and Crisis Accommodation dwellings, Indigenous Communities dwellings and Government Regional Officers' dwellings.

*ii) How many were sold in the past year?*

*Answer:*

The Department of Housing and Works advises that final sales figures for 2006/07 are expected to be approximately 280 properties.

*iii) How many are budgeted to be sold in the coming year?*

*Answer:*

480 properties are budgeted for sale and replacement in 2007/08.

*iv) How many are to be purchased?*

*Answer:*

The Authority is planning for 922 social housing dwellings in 2007/08 through a combination of spot purchases and construction. This does not include remote indigenous housing or Government Regional Officers' Housing.

**Question:** Hon Giz Watson asked -

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(3) Why is this chapter of the budget not structured as for the other authorities?

**Answer:**

The Housing Authority is a Statutory Authority and not a Government agency. Generally the Authority receives only capital appropriations and these are reported within the budget papers.

**[Supplementary Information No C1.]**

**Question:**

Hon Ray Halligan referred to the second last dot point on page 684 of the Budget Statements, and asked the Minister to indicate the cost to Government of the 22,000 square metres of office accommodation it has committed to occupy at 140 William Street.

**Answer:**

The commencing rent for the 22,000m<sup>2</sup> of office accommodation the Government has committed to occupy at 140 William Street is \$345m<sup>2</sup> per annum.

**[Supplementary Information No C2.]**

**Question:**

Hon Robyn McSweeney referred to the first dot point on page 684 of the Budget Statements, and advised that the Department was building two houses in her street and inquired why they were not being built using bricks and mortar and cement.

**Answer:**

While the majority of the housing built by the Department is brick and tile, alternative housing construction materials are used in some circumstances including soil and site conditions and the availability and supply of labour and materials. Alternative forms of construction materials can often deliver reductions in costs - including ongoing costs, through lower maintenance and management costs and improved energy efficiency - and timeframes.

The Department is currently building 4 houses with steel frames and external fibre-cement cladding on sites in Bridgetown due to the slopes and soil conditions. The slopes on these sites range between 3.5 and 5.5 metres with the housing elevated to avoid alterations to natural ground levels.

**[Supplementary Information No C3.]**

**Question:**

Hon George Cash referred to the maintenance of government buildings on page 683 of the Budget Statements, and asked the Minister to provide the exact contract value for Spotless's Facility Management contract.

**Answer:**

As of June 2007, the Department has five current service arranger contracts with Spotless Group Ltd, one of which is valid until July 2008 and four of which are valid until July 2009.

During 2006-07 Spotless Group Ltd charges for services provided in 2006-07 totalled approximately \$3m (GST exclusive).

## **DIVISION 19: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT -estimates committee - supplementary information**

**Question:** Hon Bruce Donaldson asked -

*The 2007-08 Budget Estimates show expenditure of \$45.686 million. The 2006-2007 Budget was \$42.504 million.*

*Estimates Actual 2006-2007 shows \$29.767 million. Forward Estimate 2010-2011 shows \$17.204 million.*

1.1 What are the reasons for the wide discrepancies?

1.2 Will the Actual Expenditure for 2006-2007 match the 2006-2007 Budget figure?

1.3 *If not, what is the reason for the shortfall?*

1.4 *What is the reason for the forward estimate for 2010-2011 being only \$17,204 million?*

*Answer:*

1.1 to 1.4

The change in appropriation funding between the 2006-2007 Original Budget (\$42,504m) and 2006-2007 Estimated Actual (\$29,767m) is significantly due to a realignment of cash flows associated with the Regional Investment Fund (RIF) funding.

Realignment of cash flows are due to the following reasons:-

- delays in significant lead times required to establish Financial Assistance Agreements with successful grant applicants prior to the grants being paid;
- delays caused by escalating costs in regional areas;
- time lags in obtaining funds from other sources; and
- obtaining the services of contractors in the regions.

The increase between the 2006-2007 Estimated Actual (\$29,767m) and 2007-2008 Budget Estimate (\$45,686m) represents the adjustment of funding for the realignment of cash flows from 2006-2007 which was due to delays caused by:-

- the establishment of Financial Assistance Agreements with successful grant applicants prior to the grants being paid;
- escalating costs in regional areas;
- obtaining funds from other sources; and
- obtaining the services of contractors in the regions.

In addition is the inclusion of \$1,800,000 in 2007-08 for the Wittenoom Relocation funding program.

The decrease between the 2007-2008 Budget Estimate (\$45,686m) and 2008-2009 Forward Estimate (\$38,370m) is significantly the adjustment of funding for the realignment of cash flows from 2007-2008 which is due to delays caused by:-

- the establishment of Financial Assistance Agreements with successful grant applicants prior to the grants being paid;
- escalating costs in regional areas;
- obtaining funds from other sources; and
- obtaining the services of contractors in the regions.

Also included in the change of funding is the impact of the finite funding to 2007-2008 of the following grant programs:-

- Outer Metropolitan Fund (-\$1,000,000); and
- Active Aging Initiative (-\$450,000).

In addition is the inclusion of \$400,000 in 2008-2009 for the Wittenoom Relocation Funding Program.

The decrease in funding between 2009-2010 Forward Estimate (\$38,962m) and 2010-2011 Forward Estimate (\$17,204m) is the expected completion of RIF phase 2 in 2009-2010 and the figures represent the last funding round for RIF phase 2.

**[Supplementary Information No D1.]**

**Question: Hon Paul Llewellyn asked -**

*There is a bucket of money available in the Regional Investment Fund and the Regional Headworks Program, yet the Minister is saying that they are unable to spend it or meet the obligations to spend it. Can the Minister give us an example of an actual project that has failed to spend its money?*

*Answer:*

The following table gives an indication of some of the problems faced by applicants who have been approved for RIF funding.

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**SAMPLE OF RIF PROJECTS APPROVED - FUNDS NOT YET RELEASED**

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SCHEME	ORGANISATION	PROJECT	GRANT AMOUNT \$	STATUS
Regional Infrastructure Funding Program	Shire of Roebourne	Development of the historic town of Cossack: assist with upgrading services and renovating buildings.	1,300,000	Project approved 3/2/03. Shire currently resolving issues with Water Corp before commencing the project. Unlikely to proceed over the cyclone season.
	Shire of Collie	Collie Entrance Tourism Precinct including Collie Visitor Centre, establishment of an Art Gallery and Cultural Centre, improving parking facilities, toilet, park, barbecue facilities and entrance precinct.	500,000	Approved 3/2/03. Fed Govt and local industry support funds not yet secured. Original project cost increased and project changed to accommodate funding that may be available.
	Carnarvon Heritage Group Inc	Assist with construction of Carnarvon One Mile Jetty Interpretive Centre	300,000	Approved 19/1/06. Delays occurred in obtaining drawings for the centre and relevant costings due to shortage of skilled staff in the region.
	Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale	Assist with developing and establishing the Jarrahdale Heritage Park.	500,000	Approved 19/1/06. Dept awaiting provision of Business Plan and evidence of other secured funds for project. Delays experienced in tender process. Project Manager also left which may have led to a lack of coordination for a time. New Project Manager now appointed.
Regional Headworks Program	Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale	Assistance with eligible headworks costs, Jarrahdale Heritage Park.	128,200	Approved 29/11/05. Project experienced some time without an appointed Manager - new manager now in place.
	Shire of Murray	Commonage Industrial Park, Pinjarra. 40 lots being developed for light & general industry.	250,000	Approved 19/1/06. Shire of Murray advised Dept of delays due to environmental issues, now resolved. Stage 1-17 due to commence after initial development works commencing June 07.
Indigenous Regional Development Program	Kunawarritji Aboriginal Corporation	Store - Roadhouse	150,000	Approved 1/12/05. Project has been delayed due to the community being placed under administration. Resolving governance issues causing delays.

**[Supplementary Information No D2.]****Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

I refer to page 1046 of volume 3. The Roebourne enhancement scheme was budgeted in 2006-07 to have \$961 000 expended. The estimated actual figure for 2006-07 is nil. The budget for 2007-08 is \$961 000, to be spent in a year to be completed in 2007-08. Will this project be completed in 2007-08 after the delay in the project?

**Answer:**

The remaining funds for the Roebourne Enhancement Scheme have been allocated to 3 key projects. The Commission in conjunction with the Shire of Roebourne and other key stakeholders identified that the projects would not be able to be progressed in the 06/07 financial year. This was predominantly due to the tenders for the projects being higher than the budgeted amount and therefore more time was needed to source additional funds due to a lack of available contractors in the region. Agreements are in place to ensure that the funds will be expended in the 07/08 financial year, and the expected completion date of the project is April 2008.

**[Supplementary Information No D3.]****Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

Unlike the other development commissions, the Gascoyne Development Commission is providing more detail on its spending in the regional investment fund. In 2006-07, it made payments of \$230 000 to government agencies. In 2007-08, the budget was increased to \$400 000. What are the other agencies and what is the money being used for?

*Answer:*

The GDC has increased expenditure in regard to grants to government in the budget with the expectation that calls will be made on funds in 2007/08 to complete projects previously approved. Grant payments are made in stages, as milestones within each project are completed and it is anticipated that final portions of grant money relating to ten current works in progress, which were approved in prior years, will be dispersed in the 2007/08 financial year.

## DIVISION 68: CHILD PROTECTION -

**Question: Hon Robyn McSweeney asked -**

1. *Major Initiatives for 2007-08 (P.1180, dot point 2)*
  - (1.1) *What criteria was used to decide what the ages would be for each hostel?*
  - (1.2) *Would the Government consider that 0-10 years and 10-15 years would be more suitable given the problems these children have been through?*
  - (1.3) *What role will Aboriginal people have in the running of these hostels?*
  - (1.4) *Will parents be able to see their children and under what conditions given that the children will be placed in the hostel for their own safety?*
  - (1.5) *Which model will the Government use for the hostels?*
  - (1.6) *Given that there are many children in the area who are being neglected, what criteria will be used to place at risk children in the hostel?*
  - (1.7) *Who will run the hostel?*

*Answer:*

- (1.1) The split between the hostels was based the level of development of the children (e.g. preschool and school age). There will be some flexibility based on the individual child's maturity, needs and siblings as well as the mix of population in both units.
- (1.2) The most vulnerable children are the younger ones and research evidence and experience has demonstrated that newborn babies, children with failure to thrive and often sick younger children are more vulnerable than some of the older children. Older children present risks because they may have developed behavioural issues, associated with their environment, and may become violent and/or display inappropriate sexualised behaviours that could potentially place younger children at risk. The current split is seen as the most appropriate way to manage this. The 6-15 years unit will also have living areas that can be used to segregate groups of children as required.
- (1.3) They will be staffed predominately by local Aboriginal people. It is envisaged that a management committee will be formed from representatives of the local communities. This committee will oversight and ensure culturally appropriate care.
- (1.4) Parents will be encouraged to visit their children. The nature of the contact will be assessed on a case by case basis and it is envisaged that contact will be supervised unless this is not required under the case plan.
- (1.5) The service delivery model will involve a twenty four hour staffed rotational roster. When both units are operating there will be 3 staff between both units over night.
- (1.6) The Department will investigate all referrals made to it. The investigation involves the assessment of the child and the ability of parents or relatives to provide safe care. The hostel will be used to accommodate children in an emergency situation or when other forms of care (relatives) are not available or appropriate.
- (1.7) Initially both units will be run by the Department. Once established the operations and management of the 6-15 yr olds unit will be made available for tender to an appropriate not for profit organisation. The Department will retain management responsibility for the 0-6 yrs Unit.

**Question: Hon Robyn McSweeney asked -**

2. *Significant Issues and Trends (P.1175)*

- (2.1) *What procedures does the Department have in place to prevent more of the State's children entering care?*
- (2.2) *What is the most effective program that the Department has in place in providing intervention?*
- (2.3) *What increased number of caseworkers has been employed since June 2006?*
- (2.4) *Of the 300 child protection workers that the Government have been advertising for, have any more than 36 been employed to date?*
- (2.5) *What is the Department doing in the short term to ensure that this need for increased education and training of staff is being met?*
- (2.6) *How many child protection workers have had staff training since January 2007?*
- (2.7) *How many courses is the department running this year?*
- (2.8) *What duration are these start up training courses?*
- (2.9) *What is the content of these training courses for departmental employees?*
- (2.10) *How much time is given to child protection training and training to detect child abuse?*

*Answer:*

- (2.1) Children at risk of entering care come to the attention of the Department for a variety of reasons. As a general rule the Department will work in the first instance to identify the strengths and risks within the family and to reinforce the skills and capacities of parents as the primary caregivers.

The Department provides programs and funds a range of non government services to provide programs and supports. These include intensive parenting skill courses, and specialist services, such as counselling services, which address the particular needs of family members.

When the Department becomes aware a family is struggling to care for their children, it must assess what supports and services can be provided to support parents in their role.

The first response is to meet with family members through home visits and family meetings to assess the family's needs and develop a plan which includes addressing the immediate safety needs of the child.

A second step may be the immediate engagement of the Department's own services, such as the following programs: Best Start, Best Beginnings, Parent Link Home visiting Service, the Early Years Program and the Responsible Parenting Initiative. The Best Beginnings program is a joint initiative with the Department of Health and provides a specialised case management response to individual need.

The Responsible Parenting Initiative addresses school refusal and associated antisocial behaviours. The Department may work closely with the Justice, Education and Health departments to provide counselling, mentoring and other support services to young people placing themselves at risk. The young person may be engaged with non government community based services to support their social skills and recreational/ developmental needs.

Thirdly, a coordinated approach will be developed with other government departments, which have a responsibility to provide services to support children. This may take the form of referral to and liaison with other agencies or the more formal Strong Families response.

If placement of a child becomes necessary, the Department will identify whether a placement can be negotiated with family members: it is only as a last resort that the Department will consider applying for a Protection Order on the grounds that the child is in need of protection.

A Protection Order Supervision will be considered which allows the child to stay with their family while conditions are met.

- (2.2) Evaluation has shown that the most effective program in providing early identification of parents who will require significant input into their parenting is Best Beginnings. It promotes the development of a sound supportive relationship on a voluntary basis, through which other services can be provided via referral and support.

Best Beginnings is a preventative home visiting service provided to families whose infants are assessed as being 'at risk' of poor life outcomes because of child, family or environmental factors. These include:

- first time parenting
- parent aged less than 20 years of age
- post natal depression

- low income
- financial stress
- low education level
- social isolation
- domestic violence
- intra-familial violence
- mental health problems
- childhood abuse of either parent
- drug or alcohol abuse

Best Beginnings is a voluntary strengths based program based on research evidence and is provided in a non-threatening manner. Professionals including nurses, teachers, social workers, and psychologists provide the service. The relationship of trust between the worker and the parent underpins the program.

Referrals need to occur antenatally or before the baby is three months of age, and visits can continue until the child is two years of age. Referral is usually from professionals but self-referral or community referral is possible.

The structured program is provided in a flexible manner according to individual needs. Outcome objectives are child health and wellbeing, parent and family functioning and social support networks.

The Department for Child Protection and the Department of Health work together in partnership at a variety of levels to enhance the capacity of the program. For example in some sites child health nurses deliver the program as part of their practice.

Visits commence on a weekly basis until the baby is seven weeks of age then reduce in frequency to fortnightly, monthly and in the second year to bi-monthly visits. Flexibility within the program allows for more frequent visits where appropriate.

The service ceases when the baby turns two years of age, or earlier if the family decides to cease Best Beginnings contact or moves out of the area. At this time the family may be linked into other community based resources; if the Department has concerns around the protectiveness of the parent(s) the family may become actively case managed by the Department for Child Protection.

- (2.3) The Department has employed an additional 149 caseworkers providing a direct service to children and families since June 2006.
- (2.4) The Department has employed an additional 149 caseworkers providing a direct service to children and families since June 2006. A further 96 caseworkers are in the final stages of being recruited as a result of the advertising.
- (2.5) All new fieldworkers are being provided with sound entry level training by being equipped with the tools for child protection best practice through a 12 week training process. This training composes of on the job and off the job elements ensuring that staff are equipped with the necessary tools to provide best practice. New inexperienced caseworkers cannot undertake casework until they have completed the first four weeks of the entry level training program following which their casework is supervised on a weekly basis by their Team Leader.

The essential criteria for fieldwork positions include a tertiary qualification in social work, psychology or relevant human services. An exemption to this is allowed for candidates with Indigenous skills and experience or those willing to work in rural remote areas. In the last pool of 96 recruited, 93 had a relevant tertiary qualification and three met the exemption criteria.

Since November 2006 the Department's commitment to training new staff has included the following:

- five Start Up Training programs for Field Workers with three more programs scheduled until December 2007. This training is inclusive of all aspects of the Department's work including (but not limited to) identifying children at risk; children in care; family and domestic violence; alcohol and drug issues; mental health issues; communication with children; interviewing and investigating allegations of child abuse; and working with internal stakeholders and external agencies.
- developing a new, competency based model for the Start Up Program that integrates both on and off job training. The new model provides for 12 weeks of training to staff and will allow for staff to work towards Certificate IV in Protective Care. This will be implemented for the July 2007 intake of Field Workers on the Program.
- developing a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Pathway to enable workers with existing competencies and experience to have their skills and knowledge recognised. This is an assessment only pathway, through which the same competencies are assessed as those trained and assessed in

the Field Worker Induction Start Up Program, through a rigorous process of documentation, interview and observation in the workplace. This process will be piloted with 4 Units of Competency from June-December and extended to all units in Start Up in 2008.

- developing a number of strategies to support the learning development of Departmental Staff including the Field Worker Induction Strategy, Recognition of Prior Learning Strategy Team Leader Learning Development Strategy; and the Family Resource Worker Learning Strategy.
- establishing scholarships for up to 20 staff per annum to attend a Post Graduate Certificate in Child Protection at UWA.
- providing Leadership training to a number of managers and team leaders.

(2.6) Table 1: Start Up Courses from Jan 2007 (as at June 12, 2007)

Course Name	Field Worker Start Up	Family Resource Worker Training	Legislation Training	Gordon Inquiry Field Worker Induction	TOTALS for all Induction Courses
Number of Staff Attended (to date)	72	156	78	8	314

(2.7) Table 2 below identifies training courses provided by the Department from January 2007 to June 2007 (Semester 1). The Department can only provide an estimation for training courses to be provided in Semester 2 (July 2007 to December 2007) as planning is still in progress. However, 10 Start-up courses have been scheduled for the second half of the year and it is estimated that a further 37 courses will be provided in a range of areas, including but not limited to Domestic Violence, Legislation Training, Identifying and responding to Child Abuse, Child Safety Assessment Framework, Child Assessment Interview Training (including Child Development).

Table 2: All Staff Training Semester 1 2007 (as at 12 June2007)

Total Course Names	Number of Courses
CALD forum	1
Child Abuse for Social Work Students	1
Children's Services Officers Seminar	1
Conflict Resolution Skills	1
Critical Incident Response	1
CSTC Online Moodle Training	2
Dealing with Aggressive and challenging Clients	1
Emotional Intelligence	1
Family Violence from an Indigenous Perspective	1
Identify and respond to Child Abuse/Children and Youth at Risk of Harm	2
Impact of Mental health on the Family for Social Work Students	1
Increasing Youth Motivation	1
Interviewing Children for Social Work Students	1
Interviewing Skills – The Fundamentals	1
Issues for Children in Care for Social Work Students	1
Mediation Skills	2
Mentoring	1
Milestones for Child Development – What a Worker can do if a Child needs support	1
Motivational Interviewing Techniques	1
Protective Behaviours- teaching concepts to parents and caregivers	2
Protective Behaviours – disclosures Training Workshop	1
Report Writing for ITPSS	1
Response Ability Pathways (RAP)	1

Strong families Professional development Program	1
Supervision Workshop	1
Train the trainer	1
Understanding Drug Issues for Social Work Students	1
Working in Partnership with Aboriginal People for Social Work Students	1
Working with Cultural Diversity	1
Working with people with diverse sexuality and gender identity	1
Writing objective and effective client notes	1
Young people and substance misuse	1
Total Inductions/Startup training Jan – June 07	18
Total all training Jan – June 07	54

(2.8) Table 3: Duration of Induction/Start Up Courses

Course Name	Duration
Field Workers Start Up (Current Model)	28 Days Course Contact *
Field Workers Start Up (New Model – From July 07)	60 Days**
Family Resource Worker Training	7 days
Legislation Training	1 or 2 days***
Gordon Enquiry Field Worker Induction	3 days

\* including 5 days in the workplace

\*\* 4 weeks in the classroom and 8 weeks in the workplace

\*\*\* 3 of Legislation courses are 1 day only, the Legislation for Supervisors is 2 days (the 1 day courses were each run once, and the 2 day course was run twice January – June 2007)

(2.9) **Content for the Field Worker Induction - Start Up Process  
(Current Model completing July 5, 2007)**

Day 1

Welcome and Program Outline

DCD Public Sector Standards, DCD Mission

Ethical Decision Making

Guide to Practice in Child Protection

Day 2 and 3

Legislation Training

Day 4 and 5

Communicating with Children,

Young People and Families at Risk

Day 6

Quality Recording

Day 7

Family Engagement Model

Ecomaps and Genograms

Day 8

Working with CALD Clients and Co-Workers

Working in Partnerships with Aboriginal children and families

Day 9

Working with Resistance

Day 10-14

Work Based Assessment

Day 15

CCSS Training – Module 1

Day 16

CCSS Training – Module 2

Day 17

Child Focused Practice

Orientation to Child Protection  
Confidentiality  
Day 18  
Identifying and Responding to Child Abuse  
Day 19  
Child Safety Assessment Framework  
Day 20  
Application of CSAF  
Finalising Your Investigation  
Day 21  
Impact of Alcohol and Drugs when working with Children and Families  
Day 22  
Domestic Violence and Impact on children  
Day 23  
Interviewing Children  
Legislation and Legal Services  
Day 24  
Impact of Children in Care  
Relative Career Assessment,  
Day 25  
Assessment Panning System  
CREATE Foundation  
Day 26  
Resourcing the care plan  
Contact with family  
Legal issues  
Working with Internal and External Stakeholders  
Day 27  
Working with Internal and External Stakeholders  
Working Towards Reunification  
Supervision and You  
Day 28  
OHS and Worker Safety  
Course Review and Assessment  
Graduation

**Content for the Field Worker Induction – Start Up Process  
(New Model to be implemented July 2007)**

Weeks 1 and 2: Structured Work Based Orientation

Competency/s

CHCOHS301A Participate in workplace safety procedures

Topics

Introduction to workplace and workplace structures

Job role and environment (includes pay structures, employment conditions etc)

Networks and resources

OHS in the workplace – On Line Induction program

Weeks 3 and 4: Competency Based Training (in class)

Competency/s

CHCCOM3C Utilise specialist communication skills to build strong relationships

CHCCS405A Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers

CHCCHILD1C Identify and respond to children and young people at risk of harm

CHCCS401A Facilitate Cooperative Behaviour

Topics

Information System Training

Work within a Legal & Ethical Framework (Legislation training + working within a statutory environment)

Identify and respond to children and young people at risk of harm

Utilise specialist communication skills to build strong relationships

Child Safety Assessment Framework (CSAF)

Weeks 5 - 8: Structured Work Based/Case Related Training

Continue training in the workplace as a co-worker on selected cases (at the discretion of the Team Leader), reinforcing the learning from the classroom block/s.

Field Workers will be assessed against the co-case work they undertake in this on job training, as part of the case management unit of competency.

**Weeks 9 and 10: Competency Based Training at CSTC**

**Competency/s**

CHCCS301A Work within a legal and ethical framework

CHCCCHILD5A Orientation to child protection and out of home care for children and young people

CHCCM6A Undertake case management in a child protection framework

CHCProt9C Provide primary/residential care

**Topics**

Content in this training is guided by the competency requirements and the context of the workplace. District Offices will be consulted to ensure that the proposed content is appropriate to the range of workplace needs.

**Competency**

CHCCS301A Work within a legal and ethical framework

**Topics**

Legislation and common law relevant to work role

DCD policies and practices

Working ethically

Projecting client's rights & responsibilities

**Competency**

CHCCCHILD5A Orientation to child protection and out of home care for children and young people

**Topics**

Key issues related to work in the Child Protection environment

Your commitment to quality care for children and young people

Ethical work practices in working with children & young people

**Competency**

CHCCM6A Undertake case management in a child protection framework

**Topics**

This unit will build upon the work that is done in weeks 3 & 4 in the CSAF.

Client needs & risks

Develop, review & evaluate case management plans

Review & evaluation systems

Case conferencing

Working with other agencies

Closing cases

**Competency/s**

CHCProt9C Provide primary/residential care

**Topics**

Placement

Domestic support

Providing client education, support and development

Reintegration of client following placement

**Weeks 11 and 12: Work Based Completion of Assessment for Competency**

This final workplace training and assessment will consolidate the units from weeks 9 and 10 in the classroom environment with workbased projects that will include application of the competencies to work they will undertake as part of daily activities. This will be structured in association with the team leader, and assessed as part of the final decision on achievement of competency by CSTC Trainers and Assessors.

At the conclusion of the 12 weeks of training a field worker who has achieved competency will be competent to manage less complex cases under broad supervision and guidance.

**Content for the Gordon Induction Program**

Aim: To equip recruits who will work in the Gordon program with underpinning skills and knowledge to be effective in their roles

Outcome:

At the end of the program participants will be able to discuss and implement how their enhanced skills and knowledge will contribute to the reduction of Child Abuse & Family violence in Aboriginal communities

**Day One**

Session Number: 1

Session Title: "The Journey Begins"

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Describe their spiritual place of significance and how this place influences their world view as a Gordon recruit/worker

Discuss the background of Gordon and their relationship to the Gordon unit

Session Number: 2

Session Title: Values

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Discuss how their values influence their role

Identify situations when their values may need to be suspended

Session Number: 3 and 4

Session Title: Gordon and the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Discuss how legislation underpins recommendations of the Gordon report

Articulate sections of the legislation and how they impact on their roles

**Day Two**

Session Number: 5 and 6

Session Title: Specialist Skills of Communicating

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Demonstrate a range of appropriate communication strategies with Aboriginal families and communities

Session Number: 7

Session Title: Identifying Child Abuse

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Identify what is child abuse

Describe the five types of signs of abuse or neglect

Session Number: 8

Session Title: The Impact of Family Violence on Children

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Discuss societal attitudes of violence

Describe the impact of family violence on children

**Day Three**

Session Number 9 and 10

Session Title: Working in Teams

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Discuss the value of Team work

Describe how the strengths of the Team Leader and Gordon roles protect children and facilitate change with their families and community

Session 11 and 12

Session Title: Self Care

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

Participants will be able to:

Discuss professional and cultural strategies of self care to implement into their everyday practice

**Content for the Family and Resource Worker Training**

Phase 1: Days 1 and 2 (delivered Semester 1, 2007)

Aim: To induct newly appointed Family resource Workers to the role and responsibilities for the position.

Outcomes:

Demonstrate knowledge of the C and CS Act 2004 and its relevance to the FRW role.

Demonstrate active listening skills

State factors that contribute to effective communication between FRW's, Children, caseworkers and parents

Describe OSH issues specific to the FRW role

State OSH procedures following a critical incident  
Demonstrate objective report writing skills  
State the recommended response to a child's disclosure of abuse  
Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the adherence to maintaining professional boundaries

Phase 2: Days 3 and 4 (to be delivered Semester 2, 2007)

- Child Development
- Identifying Child Abuse
- Working with Aboriginal People
- Maintaining Professional Boundaries
- Confidentiality

Phase 3: Days 5, 6 and 7 (to be delivered Semester 2, 2007)

- Drugs and Alcohol
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health

### **Content for Family Violence and Related Courses**

Child Abuse for Social Work Students

Aim: To provide knowledge about perceptions of child abuse and how that can affect a worker's judgement and subsequent action.

Outcomes:

Participants will have discussed the complex responses children may have to abusive experiences.  
Examined their own views about child abuse and begun a process of identifying how these may impact upon their practice.

Identified some issues facing non-offending parents.

Identified their assumptions about the perpetrators of abuse.

### **Family Resource Worker Preparation training**

Aim: To induct newly appointed Family Resource Workers to the roles and responsibilities of the position.

Outcomes:

Demonstrate knowledge of the C and CS Act and its relevance to the FRW role

Demonstrate active listening skills

State factors that contribute to effective communication skills between FRWs, Children, Caseworkers and Parents

Describe OSH issues specific to FRW role

State OSH procedures following a Critical Incident

Demonstrate objective report writing skills

State the recommended response to a child's disclosure of abuse

Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the adherence to maintaining professional boundaries

### **Family Violence from an Indigenous Perspective**

Aim: This course discusses the specific nature of family violence in Aboriginal Families. It discusses various skills to address these issues in a culturally appropriate manner.

Outcomes:

An understanding of the cycle of domestic violence

A discussion of the historical developments since the arrival of white races, and how this has adversely impacted on Aboriginal communities

An outline of the family and kinship organisation of Aboriginal communities

A discussion on the development of strategies for the containment of Family Violence

### **Interviewing Children for Social Work Students**

Aim: To introduce students to current interviewing practice frameworks.

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to identify current interview practice frameworks as they apply to interviewing children.

Participants will develop an understanding of the context of interviewing children in the Department for Community Development.

### **Identify and Respond to Child Abuse**

Aim: To provide an overview of child protection indicators and the role Fieldworkers play in relation to evidence of child protection issues.

Outcomes:

Discuss historical and cultural context of child abuse

Identify values, attitudes and beliefs that influence views about child abuse

Identify relevant sections of the Children and Community Services Act 2004

Identify indicators of harm, neglect, abuse or risk of harm including for children and young people

Discuss the role of DCD and the referral process

Discuss the dilemmas of working with children and young people to protect them from harm

Apply the learning

### **Issues for Children in Care for Social Work Students**

Aim: To familiarise participants with issues faced by children who are placed in care by the Department.

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to identify key issues experienced by children in care.

Participants will be familiar with a range of tools and strategies for working with children in care.

### **Legislation (Customised)**

Aim: Provide entry level legislation training on the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

Outcomes:

By the end of the course learners should be able to:

Recognise where parts of the Children and Community Services Act affect their role

Understand their legal responsibilities

Understand the rights of clients whilst delivering services

### **Legislation for Supervisors**

Aim: Participants will have sound knowledge of the Children and Community Services Act and will be able to convey this knowledge to field staff under their supervision.

Outcomes:

Be able to articulate a sound understanding of the Continuum of Wellbeing (Legislation) and this relationship to case practice

Be able to convey key messages about the legislation to staff under their supervision

Demonstrate an understanding of a competency-based approach to training and the Recognition of Prior Learning process

Have capacity to exercise future on-line learning opportunities through the use of a Team Leader 'chat room'

### **Legislation Refresher**

Aim: To provide a one day review of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

Outcomes:

By the end of the course learners should be able to:

Increase their knowledge of key aspects of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

Identify where the legislation applies to specific case scenarios

Recognise how the legislation might impact their own cases

### **Legislation Training and the Court Process**

Aim: To enhance staff skills within the legal framework of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*

Outcomes:

To review participants understanding of the Act

To understand the range of courts workers may be called to attend

To understand their responsibilities in these courts

To ensure appropriate and effective communication between Legal Practice Services and Field workers

To practice the collection of information for legal proceedings

To ensure that legal documents are prepared to acceptable standards eg statements and affidavits

To ensure client and family are prepared for court appearance

To describe proceedings and procedures in children's court

To increase confidence in witnessing skills, giving an understanding of courtroom behaviour and methods of cross examining witnesses

### **Protective Behaviours - Teaching Concepts to Parents and Caregivers**

Aim: Learn to assist parents and care-givers to provide children with the skills and strategies they require to keep themselves safe.

Outcomes:

Gain a knowledge of the content, themes, core concepts and strategies of the Protective Behaviours Program.

Develop problem solving and assertiveness skills in children and adults.

Learn to educate adults and caregivers in the issues of abuse and abuse prevention

Learn to assist parents and caregivers with simple practical teaching activities designed to increase their child's/children's and client's personal safety.

### **Protective Behaviours- Disclosures Training Workshop**

Aim: This workshop aims to equip service providers with the essential knowledge required for dealing with disclosures and or suspicions of child abuse and neglect.

Outcomes:

Discuss the issues of abuse and abuse prevention and the vital role you play in its prevention and detection.

Develop a knowledge of the content, themes, core concepts and strategies of the Protective Behaviours Program.

Understand the secrecy involved with abuse and the reasons why children don't disclose.

Gain the essential knowledge on responding to a disclosure and how to best support the individual making the disclosure.

Understand your legal responsibilities and protections when dealing with disclosures.

### **Response Ability Pathways ( RAP Training)**

Aim: Assist young people to take responsibility through:

Responding to respectful communication from adults; Expressing pain in positive ways; Connecting with caring adults; Clarifying problems and strengths; Making amends and restoring social bonds and Choosing positive pathways which strengthen belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

Outcomes:

RAP foundations: foundation concepts, Circle of Courage and resilience science, rivers of pain, fighting pain with pain

CONNECTING: RAP introduction, disconnected kids, brain science on connecting, strategies for connecting

CLARIFYING: coping with challenges, private logic: the inside kid, thinking errors, CLEAR thinking

RESTORING: Instilling responsibility, cultivating respect, restoring social bonds, choosing new pathways

### **Strong Families Professional Development Program**

Aim: To continue developing the strong family program by contributing to policy and development of practice procedures.

Outcomes:

To implement practice and policy procedures into their everyday practice.

### **Content for the Drug and Alcohol Related Training**

#### **Motivational Interviewing Techniques**

Aim: Explore the theory and techniques behind Motivational Interviewing and learn to apply the techniques to assist clients to explore and resolve their ambivalence about behaviour change.

Outcomes:

Develop an understanding of the goals, principles, and methods of Motivational Interviewing.

Identify the uses of Motivational Interviewing within your current practice.

Develop awareness and understanding in relation to the concepts of ambivalence, readiness to change and resistance.

### **Understanding Drug Issues for Social Work Students**

Aim: To enable participants to gain knowledge of current drug trends and issues and identify key models and concepts used in working with drug use issues.

Outcomes:

Identify drug classification and current trends

Describe key models and concepts used in the assessment of clients with AOD issues

### **Young People and Substance Misuse**

Aim: To enhance participants' understanding of background factors and the change process in relation to young people's substance misuse

Outcomes:

Explore beliefs and values around substance use in young people.

Enhance participant's ability to work with young people who use substances who are at various stages of the change process

Develop positive ways of communicating with young people about drug related issues

Develop strategies/interventions to work effectively with young people.

Content for the Mental Health Related Programs

### **Impact of Mental Illness on the Family for Social Work Students**

Aim: To familiarise participants with the key issues involved for families who are impacted by mental illness.

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to identify the role of the WA COPMI Project.

Participants will be able to identify some of the impacts of mental illness on family members, particularly children.

(2.10) Table 4: Training in Child Protection/Detection of Child Abuse, January 2007 – 12 June 2007

Course	Number of courses	Number of staff attended	Hours of Training in per course	Total Hours for period**
Field Workers Start Up (Current Model)*	4	72	184	13 248
Family Resource Worker Training*	8	156	16	2 496
Legislation Training*	5	78	48	3 744
Gordon Enquiry Field Worker Induction	1	8	16	128
<b>SUBTOTAL – START UP TRAINING COURSES</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>19 616</b>
Other Related Courses				
Child Abuse for Social Work Students	1	13	8	104
Identify and Respond to Child Abuse	2	37	16	592
Interviewing Children for Social Work Students	1	14	8	112
Issues for Children in Care for Social Work Students	1	11	8	88
Protective Behaviours – Teaching Concepts to Parents & Caregivers	2	2	8	16
Protective Behaviours – Disclosures Training Workshop	1	5	8	40
RAP Training	1	5	16	80
Strong Families Professional Development Program	1	14	30	420
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>21 068</b>

\* All Induction/Start Up training focussed on Child Protection/Detection of Child Abuse

\*\* January 1- 12 June 2007. Total hours calculated = hours per course x number of participants (hours per course calculated on the basis of an 8 hour training day)

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

3. Page 1176, dot point 4

(3.1) At what stage is the Working with Children checks and what is the predicted annual cost for:

(a) the phasing in period; and

(b) once the system is established.

*Answer:*

- (3.1) Working with Children (WWC) checks began on 1 January 2006 and the scheme is nearly 18 months into operation. During this period a total of more than 53,000 WWC Applications have been received. A 5 year staged process for phasing-in currently in place through regulations. The phasing-in is by calendar year from 2006 to the end of 2010.
- Year 1 from 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2006. 22374 WWC applications were received from categories of child related work that included self employed persons, volunteers with children 0-7 years old and certain new employees.
  - Year 2 from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2007. By 31 May 2007, 31 159 WWC applications had been received over 5 months with approximately 6000 predicted for June. The significant increase in demand in Year 2 reflects the major categories of child-related work now phased-in namely child-care, education and training and health; also other new employees as well as significantly more volunteers in scope working with children aged 8-12 years of age.

Staff from the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health have been co-located and undertaken certain WWC screening functions for their sectors under the supervision and management of the WWC Screening Unit. This has provided opportunity to trial the best system for responding to the large health and education and training sectors.

Each calendar year phasing-in stage spans two financial years and the pattern of applications depends on the type of work and whether people are new or existing workers. Because there are no reliable statistics available (eg such information is not available through ABS), prediction is difficult.

(a-b)

The budget that has been allocated to date is as follows:

- 2005/06 (6 months of yr 1 phasing-in plus set up costs = \$3,875,000)
- 2006/07 (6 months each of year 1 and year 2 phasing-in) = \$3,485,000 plus expected income of \$1,884,000 (DET \$303,000 and DOH \$523,000)  
2007/08 (6 months each of yr 2 and Yr 3 phasing-in) = \$ 3,711,000 plus expected income of \$1,100,000 (DET \$694,000 and DOH \$523,000).
- Cost from 2008 is dependent on a review of the demand; the most effective WWC process for the large education/training and health sectors and possible changes to phasing-in currently being considered for earlier screening of some categories of child-related work.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1178, Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators*

*The proportion of placements of Indigenous children made in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Child Placement Principle is expected to be 85%.*

- 1.1 *How many children of Aboriginal or Torres Straits Islander background are currently in the care of the Department and how many children are in the care of non-Aboriginal people?*

*Answer:*

As at 31 May 2007 there were 1085 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children in the care of the CEO. There were 356 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children placed with non-Aboriginal carers.

Please note that if the intention is to compare these figures with the performance indicator target, neither figure is relevant to the calculation. This is because some of the children are in placements (such as independent living) to which the Aboriginal Placement Principle does not logically apply, and so they are normally excluded from the calculation. Also a number of children are placed with non-Aboriginal relatives, which is consistent with the Principle. The actual percentage calculated for compliance with the Principle, as at 31 May, was 79.6%.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

- 1.2 *Does the target figure include transitional or relief care arrangements?*

*Answer:*

The usual placement of the child, rather than any respite placement, is the basis of the calculation for this indicator.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***Page 1178, Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators**The percentage of customers who report that their needs were met as a result of using the service is reported as being 97%.*

- 1.3 *How is this measured?*
- 1.4 *Who are included as customers?*
- 1.5 *How many customers were included in the evaluation?*
- 1.6 *How many of these were parents?*

*Answer:*

This is measured by an annual customer survey. Survey forms are sent to services provided directly by the Department and to non-government organisations funded by the Department. During the survey period the coordinators are asked to hand a form and reply-paid envelope to each customer whom they judge as having had significant contact with their agency. Customers who complete the forms are asked to forward them in the reply paid envelope to the Department.

Customers are those who the coordinator assesses as having had significant contact with the agency/service.

There were 2,925 respondents to the survey question.

Information about how many were parents is not collected in the survey.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***Page 1179 – Service 1 – Total cost of service and reason for significant variation:**The Ford Review recommended the ‘development of new placement options for children in care’.*

- 1.7 *Please provide details of the funds allocated for implementation of this recommendation within the additional \$18 million allocated.*

*Answer:*

In 2007-08, additional recurrent funding has been allocated for the following Ford Review recommendations:

<u>Approved</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Carer Subsidies (part) (Recommendation 47)	\$'000 3,300
Respite Carers (Recommendation 50)	1,600
Intensive Therapeutic Unit (Recommendation 56)	275
Training of Aboriginal Carers for Children (Recommendation 44)	250
First Level Residential Care Facilities (part) (Recommendation 53 & 54)	800
Foster and Relative Carer Training (Recommendation 49)	200
Second Level Residential Care Facilities (part) (Recommendation 55)	750
Specialist Investigative Unit (Recommendation 32)	150
Aboriginal Reference Group (Recommendation 9)	100
<b>Approved Subtotal</b>	<b>7,425</b>
<b>Provisional</b>	
Attraction and Retention Benefit (Recommendation 25)	7,000
Carer Subsidies (part) (Recommendation 47)	100
Establish Department for Child Protection (Recommendation 1)	450
<b>Provisional Subtotal</b>	<b>7,550</b>
<b>Total Appropriation from the Ford Recommendations</b>	<b>14,975</b>

The above amounts have been spread across all three services.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***Footnoted under the first table and to other tables, services 2 and 3:**Additional funding provision through the Department of Treasury can be allocated after making a business case for it.*

- 1.8 *How much in total has been allocated by Treasury?*
  - 1.9 *What business cases does the Department anticipate making?*
- Please provide details of each service.*

*Answer:*

- As a result of the Ford Review recommendations, the Department for Child Protection received additional funding of \$99.985 million over the years 2007-08 to 2010-11. Of this amount \$65.350 million is a provisional allocation, which require business cases to be submitted for the funding to be released.
- A detailed business case is to be presented outlining the expenditure requirements for the establishment of two new departments. The total amount to be requested (sum held in the provision account at Treasury) is \$450,000 in 2007-08 for the Department for Child Protection.
- A business case has been prepared for an Attraction and Retention Benefit (ARB) aimed at attracting and retaining field staff. The total amounts to be released from the provision account at Treasury are \$14.4 million over two years to the Department for Child Protection.
- A detailed business case is to be presented for first and second level residential care facilities. This will include the collection of data to assist with planning and the identification of suitable sites for locating the facilities. The total amounts to be requested from the provision account are \$47.6 million over three years to the Department for Child Protection.
- Finally, there is an amount of \$2.9 million held in the provision account at Treasury for the balance of additional funding allocated towards increased carer subsidies (note: \$22.2 million over four years has already been allocated directly to the Department for Child Protection). The Department has been requested to provide evidence to support the increase in numbers of children coming into care.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1179*

*1.10 Please provide details of financial costs for the development of the family reunification policy?*

*Answer:*

The family reunification policy was developed within existing staff resources. There were no additional financial costs incurred.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1178, Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators, 4<sup>th</sup> dot point*

*1.11 Please provide information on the progress of the work of the Department's Duty of Care unit.*

*Answer:*

The Duty of Care Unit continues to address issues relating to abuse in care, including managing notifications through the Register, quality assuring notifications and outcome reports, providing advice to District Office staff regarding allegations of abuse in care and investigations, liaising with Legal Aid, State Solicitor's office, the Public Trustee and private solicitors. In addition the Unit currently manages approximately 200 Criminal Injury Compensation applications and any inheritance claims for children in the CEO's care. The Department's Abuse in Care Unit's recent achievements include:

- establishment of more permanent staffing positions including -
  - the creation of a permanent Director's position and appointment of an Acting Director
  - the appointment of a new legal officer position
  - recruitment and employment of 3 Special Investigations Officers in line with the Ford report to respond to allegations of abuse in care, and development of this role and function within the Department
- development of a draft of the Unit's policy and practice guidelines, currently being circulated
- streamlining of briefing and audit processes to progress referrals for independent legal advice in a more timely manner
- re-scoping Duty of Care matters reported to DOCU to align with the Bennett Principle and ensuring that all matters assessed as causing serious harm, injury, loss or damage are referred to independent legal advice.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

1.12 *How many cases has this unit handled since inception?*

*Answer:*

The definition of case is unclear. Therefore, the figures provided are the number of notifications of allegations of abuse in care (by category) to the Duty of Care Unit since its inception in 2003.

Allegations of Abuse in Care	1214
Allegations of Abuse in a Child Care Service	111
Allegations of Abuse made after leaving care	102
Critical Incidents	1491
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2918</b>

The term 'critical incident' covers a range of events in a child's life which results in significant loss, harm or injury and that does not meet the definition of Abuse in Care.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

*Page 1178, Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators, 7<sup>th</sup> dot point*

1.13 *Please provide details of Aboriginal involvement in the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultation and Placement Model.*

*Answer:*

The development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultation and Placement Model has its origins in the work which occurred in 2003 reviewing key aspects of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles. A forum involving a large number of Aboriginal individuals, representatives from Aboriginal organisations and Department for Community Development staff members was held. As a result of the forum the Principle was incorporated into the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

In mid 2005 a departmental reference group led by the Indigenous Policy Directorate commenced the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultation and Placement Model (ATSIICCPM) for the purposes of Section 81 (1) and (2) of the Act.

Consultation was undertaken with Metropolitan and Country Senior Officer Aboriginal Services and the Senior Advisor Aboriginal Services, the Department's most senior Aboriginal staff employed in the districts across the State. In addition comprehensive consultation also occurred with non government agencies in particular Yorganop Aboriginal Childcare Corporation and Djooraminda, Centrecare.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

1.14 *How will the implementation of this model be monitored and evaluated?*

*Answer:*

The Aboriginal Reference Group is currently being established in line with Recommendation 9 in the Ford Review Report. The Aboriginal Reference Group will provide advice to the Director General and Executive about the Department's existing policies, practices and future policy development. It will have a key role in monitoring and evaluating the ATSI Community Consultation and Placement Model.

The ATSI Community Consultation and Placement Model is integral to Reform Priority 3 of the Department's Strategic Plan. The key objective of this reform is to address the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a client group. Six monthly reports will occur to determine the effectiveness of measures related to this reform.

The model will be monitored and evaluated through the implementation of Section 81(1,2) of the Act. The Aboriginal Engagement and Coordination Directorate has responsibility for all aspects of monitoring compliance of S81, supporting and training staff, recruiting more approved agencies under S81 (2) and maintaining the on-call after hours Indigenous staff roster according to S81 (1).

Yorganop and Armadale Noongar Council are the current approved agencies and between them are providing quality and relevant consultation to the Department enabling the best possible placement for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child to occur. The Department has regular meetings with these agencies to obtain feedback.

Consultation with key Departmental Aboriginal staff across the districts has taken place in recent months to identify Aboriginal agencies in country areas of the State that would be suitable to meet the requirements of S81 (2). Recruitment of six more approved agencies is anticipated to occur by December 2008.

The Department has just completed a review of the model. The review resulted in streamlining the processes within the Department for complying with Section 81. Training has commenced across the State to assist the districts understand the process changes and to support effective case practice application with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

*1.15 What Aboriginal input was provided in prioritising the recommendations of the Ford Review Report?*

*Answer:*

Prudence Ford consulted widely across the State with departmental staff, government agencies, non-government organisations and individuals. Aboriginal people were included in consultations.

Ninety seven submissions from public organisations and members of the public were received. The Department does not have access to these submissions so cannot provide information about how many Aboriginal people contributed to or provided submissions.

One of the five members of the advisory group for the Review of the Department for Community Development was Aboriginal. There are two Aboriginal members of the Ministerial Advisory Group advising the Minister on the implementation of the Ford Review recommendations.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

*Page 1180, 2<sup>nd</sup> dot point*

*1.16 How are Aboriginal people involved in the Halls Creek Initiative?*

*Answer:*

The Department has consulted with the Aboriginal community and the provision of accommodation for children in need of protection is a part of the community's view of the solution. This was seen as the initial step to provide a safe environment for children in the short term.

The staff of the residential units will be predominately Aboriginal people.

The Department is seeking input from the Community Reference Group. This group is made up of Aboriginal leaders in Halls Creek and is a part of the Project Management Committee for the entire Halls Creek initiative. The Community Reference Group is currently considering how they can support the culturally appropriate care for children in the facility and have recommended that Aboriginal people to be involved in the selection of workers and to advise on the make up of a Management Committee that will support the ongoing operation of the residential facility.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

*Page 1180, 4<sup>th</sup> dot point*

*1.17 How many children in the care of the Department are currently assessed as high need?*

*Answer:*

During the 2006-2007 financial year 304 children and young people in the care of the Department were assessed as high need. These children have intellectual or physical disabilities or with challenging behaviours. These children require additional funding support for their care.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

*1.18 What is the projection for 2007-2008?*

*Answer:*

It is projected that the number of children in the care of the Department who are assessed as high need will continue to remain at approximately 10-12% of the total population of children who are in the care of the Department.

***Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -***

*Page 1180, 5<sup>th</sup> dot point*

*1.19 What community consultation with Aboriginal people has informed the final policy?*

*Answer:*

The policy on children and young people leaving the Chief Executive Officer's care will be finalised during 2007-08. Preparation of the draft policy is almost complete and has involved Aboriginal staff within the Department for Child Protection. It is intended that the following Aboriginal organisations will be consulted on the draft policy: the Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, Yorganop Child Care Agency, Centrecare Djooraminda and the Western Australian Indigenous Women's Congress.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.20 *What support is currently provided to children and young people?*

*Answer:*

The *Children and Community Services Act 2004* provides that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department for Child Protection must ensure that an eligible young person aged between 15 and 25 years who is leaving, or who has left, the Chief Executive Officer's care is provided with any social services considered appropriate, having regard to their needs as identified in the care plan. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a young person who qualifies for assistance is provided with services to assist with one or more of the following:

- obtain accommodation
- undertake education and training
- obtain employment and advice
- access health and counselling services.

The Chief Executive Officer may also provide financial assistance as a contribution to accommodation, education and training expenses.

A young person leaving the Chief Executive Officer's care has the right to the possession, free of charge, of any personal material held by the Department or by any person or organisation which has provided care to the young person under a placement arrangement.

The Department funds the Ida Curtois Awards and Scholarships which are awarded annually to support young people who have left or are preparing to leave the care of the Chief Executive Officer and are enrolled in the first year of post-secondary study.

In response to the State Homelessness Taskforce three Preparation for Leaving and Aftercare Services for young people were funded and began operations in mid-2003. Young people aged 14 to 25 who are currently in, or who have been in, the care of the Chief Executive Officer for a minimum of six months are eligible. Through the Commonwealth/State Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, the Department funds the metropolitan Transitional Support Service which provides support to young people aged 14 to 25 years who are leaving care or long-term periods of supported accommodation, or have done so in recent years. Total funding for the four services in 2006-07 is \$929,922.

Two pilot intensive support programs in Perth and Albany to assist young people (including those in the Chief Executive Officer's care) in transitional accommodation to prepare for independent living through education and training opportunities are funded through the Commonwealth/State Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Innovation and Investment Fund which forms part of the SAAP V Bilateral Agreement between the Australian and Western Australian Governments.

The CREATE Foundation, funded by the Department delivers a number of programs to provide young people in the CEO's care with a wide range of skills. One program, CREATing Your Community provides independent living skills for young people aged 15 to 19 and includes a series of three workshops on health and wellbeing, employment and training and financial planning and budgeting.

The Care for Children and Young People Advisory Committee (CCYPAC) has provided funding for a Leaving Care Guide which will be a single source of information to assist young people in the CEO's care moving to independent living. The project is being undertaken by two of the leaving care service providers.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1181, Second last dot point:*

1.21 *How are Aboriginal people and people of culturally and linguistically diverse background involved or consulted in the independent evaluation of the Specialist Child Interviewing Unit?*

*Answer:*

The independent evaluation was completed in December 2006 by an independent consultation group, including one Aboriginal member. The consulting group selected children and families for interview balancing Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal interviewees, male and female, disclosure and no disclosure.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.22 *How many FTE are working in this unit?*

*Answer:*

There are 8.5 FTE working in the unit. 1 permanent member of staff is Aboriginal and is involved in all cases involving Aboriginal children.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.23 *Is this service available to rural and remote communities?*

*Answer:*

Yes. Trained interviewers from Police and Department Child Protection are available across the State. Each District Office of the Department for Child Protection has at least one trained interviewer.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1183*

1.24 *Please provide details of the Responsible Parenting Initiative.*

*Answer:*

The purpose of the Responsible Parenting Initiative is to promote the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children do not engage in anti-social, truanting or offending behaviour. It provides appropriate assistance and support so that parents can meet this responsibility.

The Responsible Parenting Initiative was introduced in 2004 by the Government in response to growing community concern about the involvement of young people – including children under the age of 10 – in anti-social and criminal behaviour.

ParentSupport, the targeted parenting service and service arm of Responsible Parenting Initiative, became fully operational in April 2005 in the South East Metropolitan Police District, followed by the East Metropolitan Police District in June 2006.

ParentSupport will soon be launched in the Peel/South Metro (Rockingham and Kwinana) region. Development is commencing to establish a program in the Kimberley for Kununurra and Halls Creek.

ParentSupport is a specialist intensive outreach service. Its operations are based on evidence for best practice with families in the “hard to reach/difficult to engage” category. Its objectives are to:

- increase capacity to parent;
- improve the socialisation of children;
- improve school attendance;
- reduce anti social behaviour; and
- reduce crime.

The priorities for 2007-2008 are:

1. Peel and South Metropolitan Roll Out: Peel is at the establishment stage, staff are being selected and trained, offices furnished, relationships developed and referrals will commence from mid 2007.
2. Kimberley Roll Out: Kimberley is at the exploration stage. Initial information meetings are occurring, extensive consultations will take place to ensure the service, which is scheduled to commence in 2008, will be culturally and contextually relevant.
3. Families that are Hard To Reach: Ensure the sustainability of already established services in the East and South East Metropolitan Districts. The process of continual improvement is occurring, including learning from experience, reviewing evaluating and potentially putting in place the legislation with its implications.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.25 *How is the Initiative promoted to parents with limited English speaking background?*

*Answer:*

The Responsible Parenting Initiative is a referral based service, with the main agencies being Department of Education and Training, the Department for Child Protection, Department of Health's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and Department of Corrective Services.

Additionally, specific programs are developed for new refugees and other CALD migrants, such as the current service developed in collaboration with Mirrabooka Migrant Resource Centre.

Consultants have been commissioned to undertake community consultation in the Kimberley to design the ParentSupport service specifically to meet the needs of the Indigenous community.

Currently an officer is employed to assist with encouraging better practice and increased referrals with Indigenous families.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.26 *How many parents of Aboriginal or Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have taken part?*

*Answer:*

Approximately 50 families during 2006/07.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.27 *Are parts of the programme provided in other languages than English?*

*Answer:*

Yes. A case-specific bi-cultural worker is employed who speaks the language of the family.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.28 *If yes, in what languages?*

*Answer:*

- Spanish
- Sudanese and a variety of other African languages, including Kuku/Bari
- Farsi
- Burmese/Karen

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1184, First dot point*

1.29 *How many young people are expected to connect with the Helping Young People Engage (HYPE) program?*

*Answer:*

The HYPE program is initiated when a community (which includes local agencies and business) identifies an issue in relation to young people and view HYPE as the solution to divert young people from anti-social activities. The success of the program relies on a combination of the commitment from community and the recruitment of local skilled staff to run the program.

Statistical data regarding the number of young people who have contact with the Hype program is not kept, but it is anticipated that the numbers of young people who have contact with the HYPE program across the State would collectively be in the hundreds. Essentially the program targets the young people who are in public places, engaging in anti-social behaviour in order to divert them into a safe or more appropriate place. Therefore, the number of young people involved with HYPE varies from community to community and the nature of the issue.

The Department is involved with and funds HYPE in:

- Wyndham
- Kununurra
- Halls Creek
- Derby

A number of sites have been developed and supported with DCP involvement but their funding to operate is obtained from local business and non-government sources. These include:

- Whitfords
- Clarkson
- Northbridge
- Kalgoorlie
- Joondalup (initial stages)
- Broome
- South Hedland

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1184, 7<sup>th</sup> dot point:*

*1.30 What additional demand for refuges is recognised and unmet in WA?*

*Answer:*

The latest published data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) *Demand for SAAP assistance by homeless people 2004–05* report shows that in Western Australia the overall unmet demand for agencies targeting women escaping domestic violence was 4.5%.

On an average day 132 people (not including children with their parent) either requested accommodation or were already accommodated in SAAP agencies for women escaping domestic violence. Of this total:

- 6 made a request for immediate accommodation and did not obtain SAAP accommodation by the end of the day;
- 13 were newly accommodated that day; and
- 113 were continuing their accommodation from the previous day and into the next day.

Expressed as a daily turn away rate, 32 % of people (again, not including children) approaching agencies targeting women escaping domestic violence, were turned away on any given day.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*1.31 What strategies does the Department use to establish the demand in WA for refuges?*

*Answer:*

The strategies include analysis of data, population growth and consideration of emerging needs. The main source of data on the provision of services through joint Commonwealth/State Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is the SAAP National Data Collection which is managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) National Data Collection Agency (NDCA).

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1184, 4th last dot point:*

*1.32 Please provide more details on the initiatives to implement the cultural diversity policy.*

*Answer:*

Work has been undertaken with the Burmese community to recruit and train carers for Burmese unaccompanied minors, to ensure culturally appropriate placements are available. Activities included forums with the Burmese community to recruit carers, and strategies to support and train assessed carers.

The Department has recently been the key participant in a scoping study led by Murdoch University that focused on CaLD residents that have settled in Western Australia over the last five years under the Australia's humanitarian skilled and family migration programs. This study focused on the local government areas of Joondalup and Wanneroo and its findings will inform future decisions in relation to service provision to this client group.

The Department's Corporate Induction Program includes segments on the importance of cultural diversity and different ways of working with guest speakers from Indigenous and from culturally diverse backgrounds. It

provides an introduction for new employees to the concepts of cultural diversity and challenges participants to think about their own way of thinking about diversity.

Additionally, Start-Up Training for new departmental Field Officers includes a cultural and linguistic diversity component.

Senior Cultural Diversity Officers provide advice and consultation on an ongoing basis to Field Officers, and other departmental staff in relation to cases or other matters involving people or communities from a CaLD background.

Language Service Guidelines for Working with CaLD Customers are being developed to assist Department staff to identify and assess the need for working with interpreters.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Third last dot point:*

1.33 *Please provide details on the “broad accountability framework” for the Department.*

*Answer:*

The Department for Child Protection’s accountability framework brings together a number of existing policy, planning and reporting frameworks. These include:

**The Strategic Plan** – the strategic plan sets out the Department’s mission, vision, values and goals.

**The Operational Plans** – operational plans, developed annually, translate the Department’s strategic plan into action. Planning for each year’s plan begins in December of the previous year. Plans are endorsed in June and formal follow up reports are lodged in January and July, providing six and 12 month updates on progress.

**The Financial Management Framework** – the budget specifies how Department initiatives will be financed. Progress reports on the budget are reported monthly to the Director General and the Corporate Executive of the Department showing key variances with respect to operational plans.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Major Initiatives for 2007-2008:*

1.34 *Who is going to evaluate the responsible Parenting Initiative and on what criteria?*

*Answer:*

Not Answered.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1188, Employee benefits expenses*

1.35 *How many staff (FTE) are budgeted to dealing with complaints?*

*Answer:*

The Department has 1.5 permanent FTE (1 Level 7 Manager and a 0.5 Level 5 Officer) and 1 temporary FTE (1 Level 6 officer funded to June 2008) in its Consumer Advocacy Service. This is the main unit currently budgeted for the specific purposes of dealing with complaints about service delivery.

The Advocate for Children in Care (1 permanent Level 7 Officer) also handles complaints from or on behalf of children in the care of the CEO.

The resources required for implementing Recommendation 30 of the Ford Report from January 2008, in respect of complaints management, are currently being assessed.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

1.36 *Has the Department’s complaints management policy been completed and implemented?*

*Answer:*

The Department's advocacy and complaints management services relating to service delivery operate under existing policies that are available via the Department's web-site ([www.childprotection.wa.gov.au](http://www.childprotection.wa.gov.au)). The 3-Tier system recommended in the Ford Report is currently being developed by the Department.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1190, Cash flows from Operating Activities/ User charges and fees*

1.37 Please explain the increase of fees from \$783,000 estimated in 2006-2007 to \$1,223,000.

*Answer:*

The increase in fees and charges relates to an anticipated increase in fees for the Working with Children Screening Unit due to the continued phasing-in of the legislation requiring certain groups of people to have a Working with Children Check.

[*Supplementary Information No E1.*]

**Question: Hon Robyn McSweeney asked -**

*For the qualifications and membership of the Adoption Applications Committee.*

*Answer:*

The qualifications for the Adoption Applications Committee members as at 30 June 2006:

Independent Members

Margaret van Keppel	Master of Psychology
Deborah Foster Gaitskel	Master of Psychology
Annette Moloney	Mothercraft Nurse (Ngala), Bachelor of Business (Marketing and Professional Communications)

Department for Child Protection members

Leah Bonson	Bachelor of Social Work
Colin Keogh	Bachelor of Social Work, Master Arts and Public Policy
Leena Bakshi	Master of Arts (Sociology)
Han Willem van Hall	Master of Psychology

[*Supplementary Information No E2.*]

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*For more information about the planned review of sample cases of Indigenous children under 6 years old who have experienced multiple placements referred to under Major Initiatives for 2007/08 on page 1180: How many cases will be reviewed? What percentage is that of the total number of children in that category? How many children under six years old have had multiple placements in the past financial year? In the past financial year how many children have been taken away from their birth mother within the first few days after birth? How will Aboriginal people be involved in the case review?*

*Answer:*

12 cases have been identified for inclusion in the review. Another 8 are being considered for inclusion depending upon whether they meet the criteria for the review.

The sample included in the review will represent between 28% and 46% of Indigenous children of all ages entering care with multiple placements in the reference year (1 June 2005 to 31 May 2006).

In the financial year to 2005/06 there were 22 Indigenous children under 6 years of age who had four or more placements within 12 months.

In the 2005-06 financial year there were 7 Indigenous children who were apprehended or taken into provisional protection and care within the first seven days after their birth.

It is planned to establish a reference group prior to the reviews commencing. This reference group will include Indigenous staff and also at least one Indigenous community representative. The role of the reference group will be to oversee the quality of the reviews and also provide policy and practice advice to the reviewer. The reviewer will be an Indigenous person.

Indigenous people will be included in the review process for each case. Community stakeholders such as Indigenous Elders and non government organisations especially placement agencies will be consulted during the review process. Indigenous staff within Districts will also be extensively involved throughout the review process.

**[Supplementary Information No E3.]**

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*For details of available intensive support services referred to at the top of page 1181 referring to Service 2: Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse.*

*Answer:*

The Department for Child Protection provides intensive family support services directly through the district offices and also fund non-government organisations to provide specific services.

Non-government intensive family support services funded by the Department for Child Protection have the primary aim of preventing children coming into care by providing intensive services to reduce the risk to the children and enhance safety in the family. The Department funds the following intensive family support services:

- a. Aboriginal Tertiary Family Preservation Service - Metro provided by Centrecare Inc – Djooraminda. The 2007-08 annual funding level is \$342,765;
- b. Mofflyn Tertiary Family Preservation Service (Building Strengths) provided by UnitingCare West – Mofflyn. The 2007-08 annual funding level is \$299,413;
- c. Wanslea Tertiary Family Preservation Service provided by Wanslea Family Services. The 2007-08 annual funding level is \$567,774; and
- d. Mofflyn Reunification Service (Family Connections) provided by UnitingCare West – Mofflyn. The 2007-08 annual funding level is \$507,714.

The total annual funding level for these non-government services is \$1,717,666 for 2007-08.

In addition to the above non-government services, the Department's district offices directly provide intensive family support services. These services are aimed at preventing children from entering care, reunifying children with their family, or treatment of harm from maltreatment. These services include counselling services, therapeutic treatment and psychological services. This includes the majority of work done by departmental Psychological and Treatment Support Teams.

**DIVISION 69: COMMUNITIES -**

**Question: Hon Donna Faragher asked -**

1. *Children and Youth Major Initiatives for 2007-08 (p. 1203, Service 3):*

- 1.1 *What is the expected total cost, including all production costs, of the “resource for young people containing contacts and information across key areas”?*

*Answer:*

1.1 The estimated total cost is \$10,000.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

2. *Page 1193, dot point 3*

- 2.1 *What is the current status of the community consultation, who has been consulted and who is intended to be consulted?*

*Answer:*

2.1 The new Department for Communities was established on 1 May 2007 and will be operative on the 1 July 2007. The Minister established a Community Advisory Group to advise on the implementation of the Ford Review Report, which recommended the establishment of the Department for Communities. The Community Advisory Group has met fortnightly since 5 April 2007 and comprises representatives from WACOSS, Indigenous leaders, the Foster Care Association of WA, the Alliance for Children at Risk, and CREATE.

The Department is committed to undertaking extensive community consultation with key stakeholders regarding its future direction.

To deliver this commitment a high level strategic directions project under the direction of the Director General will be undertaken in the second half of 2007. Preparation for this project is underway with the identification of key stakeholders relating to the operation of the new Department.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

3. Day Care (p.1198)
  - 3.1 How many long day care centres are there in the State?
  - 3.2 How many of these centres had annual visits from the Child Care Licensing Unit in:
    - (a) 2005
    - (b) 2006and what is the target for
    - (c) 2007
    - (d) 2008
  - 3.3 How many staff will be needed for these annual visits?
  - 3.4 How many full time and part time staff currently work in the Child Care Licensing Unit?

*Answer:*

- 3.1 As at 11 June 2007 there were 558 long day care centres licensed in Western Australia.
- 3.2 For long day care services licensed as at 11 June 2007, the number of services where at least one visit occurred in the previous year are:
  - (a) 320
  - (b) 343
  - (c-d) The number of services where at least one visit was undertaken from 1 January 2007 to 11 June 2007 is 237. The target for the 12 month period commencing 1 July 2007 and beyond is for all licensed services to receive at least one visit per year.
- 3.3 A total of 32 licensing and investigations staff will be needed to conduct and support annual visits.
- 3.4 The Child Care Licensing and Standards Unit has up until recently been funded to employ 26 full time equivalent positions. In the 2007 State Budget funding has been provided for a further 13 full time equivalent positions to be employed in the Unit. That funding, totalling \$5.2 million over 5 years, has been made available to enable annual visits to be conducted by the Unit.  
The Department is currently recruiting the additional staff and appointments are being progressively made through those processes.  
All staff employed in the Unit, except one, are employed full time.

**Questions: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Page 1194, last dot point*

- 1.1 What strategies does the Department employ to maintain an across-government focus on multicultural issues?

*Major Policy Decisions*

*Ford Review Recommendation, the funding is currently held in the Department of Treasury.*

- 1.2 What business case does the department anticipating in making to obtain funding held by Treasury?
- 1.3 What total additional funds does Treasury hold for the implementation of the Ford Review?
- 1.4 What funds have been transferred to the Department in 2006-2007?

*Page 1195 – Resource Agreement*

*The services show two strategic policy and coordination units, one focussing on children's issues and one focussing on youth issues.*

- 1.5 How are the units coordinating their work?
- 1.6 Will the Department have two separate units or will one unit provide both services?

*Page 1196*

*Outcomes and Key Effectiveness indicators*

*Customer Satisfaction is target to be 95% for 2007-08*

- 1.7 *How will the satisfaction rate be established?*
- 1.8 *Which customers will be included in this assessment?*
- 1.9 *Who will conduct the assessment?*

*Stakeholder satisfaction with the Policy and Coordination unit*

- 1.10 *How will the satisfaction rate be established?*
- 1.11 *Which stakeholders will be included in this assessment?*
- 1.12 *Who will conduct the assessment?*

*Page 1196*

*The extent to which policies and practices of multiculturalism are accepted and practised in WA.*

- 1.13 *How is the department deciding whether principles of multiculturalism are accepted and practiced?*
- 1.14 *What components inform this assessment?*
- 1.15 *What other government agencies or non-for profit agencies and academics are involved in the process?*

*Page 1203*

*Children and Youth – second dot point*

- 1.16 *How many stakeholders were involved in the process?*
- 1.17 *How many represented Aboriginal children and youth?*
- 1.18 *How many represented youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?*

*Page 1210*

*Details of controlled grants*

- 1.19 *Please explain the significant reduction in total controlled grants between estimated 2006-2007 and budgeted 2007-2008.*

*Answer:*

- 1.1 The Department annually undertakes initiatives promoting multiculturalism specifically focused on Community (CaLD and general) and the Public Sector. Work is also undertaken annually in the areas of major policy and research. Community initiatives are supported by a grants program. These foregoing are measured efficiency indicators and are reported annually.

The Office of Multicultural Interests' (OMI) current organisational structure is based on the two operational functions the Policy section and the Communications and Community Education section.

The Office is involved in a number of initiatives with a range of Government agencies including the Equal Opportunity Commission (Substantive Equality Program which covers all Departments), Department of Employment and Training, Department of Health, Department of Sport and Recreation, Department of Culture and the Arts, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Police Service, Department of Housing and Works, Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, Small Business Development Commission and the Department of Child Protection.

- 1.2 A business case needs to be made to the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) to release funds which have been allocated in the 2007-08 Budget for the set up costs of the Department for Communities. The funds are currently under the administration of the Department of the Treasury and Finance, and are detailed in the answer to question 1.3. The business case process is intended to ensure appropriate accountability for the use of these allocated funds as part of the implementation process.
- 1.3 In the 2007-08 Budget, the following amounts were allocated over the forward estimates period for the establishment costs of the Department for Communities:

2007-08 - \$1,350,000 (comprising \$1,150,000 in operating expenditure and \$200,000 in capital expenditure)
2008-09 - \$570,000
2009-10 - \$590,000
2010-11 - \$610,000

The higher allocation in 2007-08 reflects the need to fund once-off establishment costs, such as adjustments to information systems in response to the separation of functions between the two departments, and establishment costs for the Director General's office. Of the \$1,150,000 in additional operating expenditure in 2007-08, \$550,000 is a recurrent allocation to fund the employment of an additional 5 staff, including the Director General of the Department for Communities.

- 1.4 No specific funding allocation was made to the Department for Communities in 2006-07. While the Department was established on 1 May 2007, the transfer of functions to the new Department occurred on 1 July 2007. Implementation costs incurred in 2006-07 have been met from within the approved expenditure of the Department for Child Protection for that year.
- 1.5-1.6 Under the service structure approved for the Department for Communities and included in the Budget Statements for the first time, service 3 refers to strategic policy and coordination. The description of this service is found on page 1199 of the 2007-08 Budget Statements as "the provision of policy coordination, programs, policy advice, analysis and information to support and strengthen the Western Australian community." This service is not an organisational group as such, but provides an overarching framework for the work undertaken by a number of organisational units within the Department for Communities, namely, the Office of Seniors' Interests and Volunteering, Office of Children and Youth, Family and Domestic Violence Unit, and the Office for Women's Policy.

The table at the foot of page 1195 of the 2007-08 Budget Statements aligns services with Ministerial portfolios. The two references to strategic policy and coordination in that table reflect the fact that there is a separate Ministerial portfolio for youth. All other components of service 3 are responsible to the Minister for Communities; Women's Interests; and Seniors and Volunteering.

- 1.7 A customer survey will be developed to report on this indicator for the new department.
- 1.8 It is anticipated that the survey will include customers who have significant contact with the services.
- 1.9 This will depend on the methodology chosen and who is selected to conduct the survey.
- 1.10 Please note the effectiveness indicator is for stakeholder satisfaction with policy and coordination projects not for the unit per se.  
A stakeholder survey will be developed to report on this indicator for the new department.
- 1.11 It is anticipated the stakeholder survey will seek feedback from external stakeholders who have been involved in projects run by the Department.
- 1.12 This will depend on the methodology chosen and who is selected to conduct the survey.
- 1.13 The Department conducts a survey annually of its Public Sector and CaLD clients to support its Effectiveness Indicators. The Effectiveness Indicators and survey instrument were professionally developed by Prime Focus Consulting and the survey has been administered under contract by Estill and Associates for the past three years.
- 1.14 The focus of the current survey is on the work undertaken by the Office of Multicultural Interests and concentrates on OMI's Key Performance Indicators which are as follows:  
KPI 1: The extent to which culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities in Western Australia experience the multicultural principles of civic values, fairness, equity and participation in their dealings with the Public Sector ; and  
KPI 2: The extent to which the policies and practices of public sector agencies reflect the principles of multiculturalism.  
The survey employs both quantitative and qualitative research techniques.
- 1.15 OMI provides two lists for the purpose of the survey. The first being the CaLD survey population which is defined as community groups and associations with which OMI interacted during the year under review. 317 contacts were provided, 216 were used as a potential database and 157 clients responded in 2006/07. The second list is the Public Sector survey population which is defined as the State Public Sector agencies with which OMI has interacted with during the year in the delivery of its initiatives, programs and activities. 131 Public Sector Agency contacts were provided, 122 were used as as a potential database and 78 agencies responded in 2006/07.  
Therefore, there is a representative cross section of Government, not-for- profit agencies and academics incorporated into the survey from OMI's client data-base.
- 1.16-1.18 The questions relate to the second dot point on page 1203, which are major initiatives for 2007-08. As such, these questions cannot be answered as the projects have not yet been undertaken.

- 1.19 The reasons for the decrease in the quantum of controlled grants and subsidies in 2007-08 and over the forward estimates period compared to prior years in the table on page 1210 of the Budget Statements are as follows:
- Volunteering grants – commencing in 2007-08, 15 Volunteer Resource Centres (VRCs) that previously received annual grant funding totalling \$400,000 per annum will be placed on three year funding arrangements. This means that this resource will continue to be available to the VRCs, but will no longer be identified as an annual grant in this table of the Budget Statements.
  - Positive ageing grants – the decline in the quantum of positive ageing grants over prior years reflects the time-limited nature of funding allocated for the Active Ageing Strategy (funding ceases in 2008-09) and the re-direction of some of the funding previously allocated through grants to research and special projects.
  - Youth grants – annual funding of \$437,000 for the Youth Grants WA program has been omitted from the table.
  - Multicultural interests – the budgeted and estimated actual expenditure in 2006-07 was higher than usual as a result of the inclusion of funding allocated as part of the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security which had been carried over from 2005-06.

**Questions: Hon Donna Faragher asked -**

*Page 1201 – Major Achievements, and specifically the Community Service Grant Programme, please provide:*

- 2.1 *A list of all organisations which applied for a grant under this programme in 2006-07 and the amount of funding requested;*
- 2.2. *Of those referred to in 2.1, will the Minister provide a list of those organisations which had funding approved (including the funding received) and what funding, if any, did they receive in 2004-05 and 2005-06?*

*Page 1201 - Major Achievements, and specifically Youth Grants WA. Will the Minister please provide:*

- 2.3. *A list of all organisations who applied for these grants, including sponsorships and special project grants categories, in 2006-07?*
- 2.4. *Of those referred to in 2.3, will the Minister provide a list of those organisations which had funding approved and the funding received?*

*Answer:*

- 2.1 The following organisations received grant funding under the Community Service Grant Programme in 2006-07:

Amanda Young Foundation	\$6,101.34
Anglican Youth Ministry	\$9,762.14
Australia Day Council of WA	\$55,721.71
The Boy's Brigade of WA	\$23,288.68
BoysTown Kids Help Line	\$26,237.39
Churches Commission on Education	\$58,221.71
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	\$84,966.37
Eastern Goldfields YMCA	\$23,288.68
Fairbridge WA	\$23,288.68
The Girl's Brigade of WA	\$23,288.68
Guides WA	\$233,661.75
Joint Commonwealth Societies Council of WA	\$2,440.54
Leeuwin Ocean Adventure	\$69,866.07
Salvation Army	\$9,762.14
Scouts Association of WA	\$233,661.75
Scripture Union	\$9,762.14
The Uniting Church Youth Council	\$9,762.14

WA Federation of Rural Youth	\$14,643.20
YMCA of Perth	\$9,762.14
Young Achievement Australia	\$58,221.71
Young Christian Students' Movement	\$9,762.14
Youth Affairs Council of WA	\$151,376.48
Youth Focus	\$136,655.95

2.2 Of the organisations listed above, the following were successful in securing funding following a comprehensive review process:

Organisation	2005-06	2004-05
Amanda Young Foundation	\$13,932	\$13,125
Anglican Youth Ministry	\$22,292	\$21,012
Australia Day Council of WA	\$55,730	\$52,531
The Boy's Brigade of WA	\$22,292	\$21,012
BoysTown Kids Help Line	\$33,438	\$31,518
Churches Commission on Education	\$55,730	\$52,531
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	\$89,168	\$84,050
Eastern Goldfields YMCA	\$22,292	\$21,012
Fairbridge	\$22,292	\$21,012
The Girl's Brigade of WA	\$22,292	\$21,012
Guides WA	\$234,067	\$220,631
Joint Commonwealth Societies Council of WA	\$5,573	\$5,250
Leeuwin Ocean Adventure	\$66,876	\$63,037
Salvation Army	\$22,292	\$21,012
The Scout Association of Australia (WA Branch)	\$234,067	\$220,631
Scripture Union	\$22,292	\$21,012
The Uniting Church Youth Council	\$22,292	\$21,012
WA Federation of Rural Youth	\$33,348	\$31,518
YMCA of Perth	\$22,292	\$21,012
Young Achievement Australia	\$55,730	\$52,531
Youth Affairs Council of WA	\$144,898	\$136,581
Young Christian Students' Movement	\$22,292	\$21,012
Youth Focus	\$116,810	\$110,105

2.3 In relation to the Youth Grants WA program, the following organisations applied for Small Grants, Sponsorships and Special Project Grants in the 2006-07 financial year:

Shire of Boyup Brook - Youth Advisory Council	\$5,000.00
City of Stirling	\$4,382.00
Foundations Care	\$4,392.00
Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation	\$5,000.00
Shire of Roebourne	\$5,000.00
Young Womens' Christian Association of Perth	\$5,000.00
City of Joondalup	\$4,490.00
World Impact Centre - Global Young Adults	\$2,000.00
Northcliffe Youth Voice	\$4,990.00
Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc	\$5,000.00
Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku	\$3,600.00
Shire of Dardanup	\$2,144.52
The Shack	\$2,105.00

Waroona Youth Advisory Council	\$3,127.50
The Shire of Nannup	\$5,000.00
Mullewa Youth Coordinating Network	\$4,340.00
Savannah Australia	\$5,000.00
Tammin Youth Activity Centre	\$3,055.00
Troy Buswell MLA, Member for Vasse	\$4,000.00
Town of Northam	\$5,000.00
Hillside Church Inc	\$5,000.00
Carnarvon Heritage Group Inc	\$5,000.00
Denmark Local Drug Action Group	\$2,000.00
Town of Kwinana	\$3,950.00
City of South Perth	\$5,000.00
Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc	\$5,000.00
Carmarvon Family Support Service Inc	\$5,000.00
City of Perth - Youth Advisory Council	\$5,000.00
The Shire of Augusta-Margaret River YAC	\$5,000.00
Shire of Ngaanyatarraku	\$5,000.00
City of Gosnells	\$2,090.00
Shire of Katanning	\$2,583.00
Ballajura Youth & Community Venture Inc	\$2,500.00
The Joint Commonwealth Societies Council in WA	\$5,000.00
Wakakirri Association	\$5,000.00
Collie Welfare Council	\$4,475.00
Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley	\$5,000.00
Waroona Community Centre - Youth Support	\$3,615.00
Cultural Infusion Ltd	\$4,500.00
Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee	\$5,000.00
Youth Media Society of WA Inc	\$4,728.00
Brighton Estate Residents' Association	\$3,000.00
Secret Harbour Residents' Association	\$3,000.00
Shire of Mt Marshall	\$3,366.20
Ausdance WA Inc	\$5,000.00
City of South Perth Youth Advisory Council	\$5,000.00
Karingal Neighbourhood Centre	\$5,000.00
Fairbridge WA Inc	\$5,000.00
Kalamunda Youth Theatre Company	\$2,000.00
The Great Southern Youth Committee	\$5,000.00
The Carers Association of Western Australia	\$5,000.00
Manjimup Family Centre Inc	\$3,500.00
Eastgate Christian Centre	\$4,000.00
Bullsbrook Y.Com's (Young Community)	\$2,700.00
City of Swan	\$3,000.00
Jain Community of WA Inc	\$1,000.00
Shire of Mount Magnet	\$5,000.00
Australian Red Cross	\$2,680.00
The Youth Affairs Council of WA	\$2,485.00
Perth Young Christian Students Movement	\$5,000.00
Community First Inc	\$3,500.00
Geraldton Senior College	\$5,000.00
Mirrabooka Primary School	\$4,400.00

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Tom Price Youth Support Association	\$5,000.00
Merredin Residential College	\$5,000.00
Shire of Wongan-Ballidu	\$5,000.00
YMCA of Perth and Community Services	\$10,000.00
Amanda Young Foundation	\$10,000.00
The Carers Association of WA	\$10,000.00
Dungeon Youth Centre	\$35,000.00
Youth Legal Service	\$33,553.00
Youth Involvement Council	\$1,000.00
Wakathuni Youth Group	\$1,000.00
Katanning Youth Group	\$940.00
Shire of Dardanup	\$1,000.00
Broome Youth Support Group	\$1,000.00
Burdekin - Youth in Action	\$1,000.00
City of Wanneroo	\$1,000.00
Albany PCYC	\$1,000.00
Shire of Nannup	\$1,000.00
Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku	\$1,000.00
Shire of Roebourne	\$1,000.00
Parkerville Children and Youth Care	\$1,000.00
City of Mandurah Library	\$1,000.00
City of Canning	\$1,000.00
Kulin Telecentre	\$703.15
City of Geraldton	\$1,000.00
Bayswater Waves and Lead On Bayswater	\$909.09
The Escape Youth Centre (Harvey)	\$1,000.00
The Escape Youth Centre (Australind)	\$1,000.00
Western Australian Association of the Deaf	\$1,000.00
City of Belmont	\$1,000.00
Pilbara Community Drug Service Team	\$900.00
City of Albany YAC	\$1,000.00
City of Rockingham	\$1,000.00
Lage Grace YAC	\$1,000.00
City of Stirling	\$909.00
United Eritrean Association of WA	\$1,000.00
Kalumburu Aboriginal Corporation	\$1,000.00
The Escape Youth Centre (Yarloop)	\$110.00
Shire of Morawa	\$1,000.00
Shire of Mullewa	\$1,000.00
Town of Victoria Park	\$1,000.00
City of Fremantle Community Youth Services	\$1,000.00
Boddington Youth Centre	\$1,000.00
Stand By Me Youth Service	\$1,000.00
WA Vibewire Inc.	\$1,000.00
Lead On Kalamunda	\$1,000.00
South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre	\$795.00
The Town of Mosman Park	\$1,000.00
Hepatitis Council of WA	\$1,000.00
Shire of Waroona	\$1,000.00
Town of Kwinana	\$1,000.00

Town of Vincent	\$1,000.00
Step 1 - Street Work Program / Anglicare	\$620.80
ARAFMI	\$1,000.00
Bullsbrook Neighbourhood Centre	\$900.00
PCYC Geraldton	\$1,000.00
Shire of Wyalkatchem	\$1,000.00
Shire of Moora	\$1,000.00
YMCA Mobile Youth Centre	\$820.00
Shire of Ashburton-Onslow	\$1,000.00
City of Swan (Ellenbrook)	\$500.00
Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale	\$1,000.00
Harvey Recreation and Cultural Centre	\$1,000.00
Town of Claremont YAC	\$1,000.00
Shire of Manjimup YAC	\$1,000.00
Latin American Association of WA	\$1,000.00
Albany Worklink	\$1,000.00
City of Swan (Hyper Youth Festival Team)	\$1,000.00
Pemberton Community Telecentre	\$1,000.00
Shire of Goomalling	\$1,000.00
City of Nedlands	\$1,000.00
Jobs South West	\$950.00
Helena College	\$1,000.00
Serpentine PCYC	\$847.80
Shire of Ashburton-Pannawonica	\$1,000.00
Bassendean Youth Services	\$800.00
Vipers Roller Hockey Club	\$720.00
City of Mandurah	\$1,000.00
Shire of Coolgardie	\$1,000.00
St Andrews Grammar	\$1,000.00
City of Gosnells	\$1,000.00
Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation	\$1,000.00

2.4 Of those organisation listed in 2.3 above, the following were successful in securing funding:

Coodanup Community College	\$3,000.00
Shire of Boyup Brook - Youth Advisory Council	\$3,500.00
Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation	\$5,000.00
Shire of Roebourne	\$5,000.00
Young Womens' Christian Association of Perth	\$3,000.00
City of Joondalup	\$3,000.00
Northcliffe Youth Voice	\$4,990.00
Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc	\$3,500.00
Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku	\$3,600.00
The Shack	\$2,105.00
Mullewa Youth Coordinating Network	\$3,500.00
Savannah Australia	\$5,000.00
Tammin Youth Activity Centre	\$3,055.00
Town of Northam	\$3,000.00
Carnarvon Heritage Group Inc	\$3,056.00
Denmark Local Drug Action Group	\$2,000.00
Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc	\$2,000.00

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Carnarvon Family Support Service Inc	\$5,000.00
City of Perth - Youth Advisory Council	\$2,500.00
Shire of Ngaanyatarraku	\$5,000.00
City of Gosnells	\$2,090.00
Shire of Katanning	\$2,583.00
Ballajura Youth & Community Venture Incorporated	\$2,500.00
The Joint Commonwealth Societies Council in WA	\$5,000.00
Wakakirri Association	\$5,000.00
Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley	\$5,000.00
Waroona Community Centre - Youth Support	\$3,500.00
Cultural Infusion Ltd	\$3,500.00
Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee	\$3,500.00
Brighton Estate Residents' Association	\$3,000.00
Secret Harbour Residents' Association	\$3,000.00
Shire of Mt Marshall	\$3,366.20
City of South Perth Youth Advisory Council	\$3,500.00
Karingal Neighbourhood Centre	\$3,000.00
The Great Southern Youth Committee	\$5,000.00
Manjimup Family Centre Inc	\$3,500.00
Eastgate Christian Centre	\$4,000.00
Bullsbrook Y.Com's (Young Community)	\$2,500.00
City of Swan	\$3,000.00
Australian Red Cross	\$2,680.00
YMCA of Perth and Community Services	\$10,000.00
Amanda Young Foundation	\$10,000.00
The Carers Association of WA	\$10,000.00
Dungeon Youth Centre	\$35,000.00
Youth Legal Service	\$33,553.00
Youth Involvement Council	\$1,000.00
Wakathuni Youth Group	\$1,000.00
Katanning Youth Group	\$940.00
Shire of Dardanup	\$1,000.00
Broome Youth Support Group	\$600.00
Burdekin - Youth in Action	\$600.00
City of Wanneroo	\$1,000.00
Shire of Nannup	\$1,000.00
Shire of Ngaanyatarraku	\$1,000.00
Shire of Roebourne	\$1,000.00
Parkerville Children and Youth Care	\$1,000.00
City of Mandurah Library	\$1,000.00
City of Canning	\$1,000.00
Kulin Telecentre	\$703.15
City of Geraldton	\$1,000.00
Bayswater Waves and Lead On Bayswater	\$500.00
The Escape Youth Centre (Harvey)	\$1,000
The Escape Youth Centre (Australind)	\$600.00
Western Australian Association of the Deaf	\$1,000.00
City of Belmont	\$1,000.00
Pilbara Community Drug Service Team	\$900.00
City of Albany YAC	\$1,000.00

City of Rockingham	\$1,000.00
City of Stirling	\$909.00
United Eritrean Association of WA	\$1,000.00
Kalumburu Aboriginal Corporation	\$1,000.00
The Escape Youth Centre (Yarloop)	\$110.00
Shire of Morawa	\$1,000.00
Shire of Mullewa	\$1,000.00
Town of Victoria Park	\$1,000.00
City of Fremantle Community Youth Services	\$1,000.00
Boddington Youth Centre	\$1,000.00
Stand By Me Youth Service	\$600.00
WA Vibewire Inc.	\$1,000.00
Lead On Kalamunda	\$1,000.00
South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre	\$795.00
The Town of Mosman Park	\$1,000.00
Hepatitis Council of WA	\$1,000.00
Shire of Waroona	\$1,000.00
Town of Kwinana	\$1,000.00
Town of Vincent	\$1,000.00
Step 1 - Street Work Program / Anglicare	\$620.80
ARAFMI	\$1,000.00
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PCYC Geraldton	\$1,000.00
Shire of Wyalkatchem	\$1,000.00
Shire of Moora	\$1,000.00
YMCA Mobile Youth Centre	\$820.00
Shire of Ashburton-Onslow	\$1,000.00
City of Swan (Ellenbrook)	\$500.00
Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale	\$1,000.00
Harvey Recreation and Cultural Centre	\$1,000.00
Town of Claremont YAC	\$1,000.00
Shire of Manjimup YAC	\$1,000.00
Latin American Association of WA	\$1,000.00
Albany Worklink	\$1,000.00
City of Swan (Hyper Youth Festival Team)	\$1,000.00
Shire of Goomalling	\$1,000.00
Jobs South West	\$950.00
Serpentine PCYC	\$500.00
City of Mandurah	\$1,000.00
Shire of Coolgardie	\$1,000.00
City of Gosnells	\$1,000.00
Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation	\$1,000.00

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER -*****Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -****Mission: Highest and best use of West Australian water resource**1.1 How does the Department define "highest" use?**Answer:*

The “highest” and best use of water relates to the allocation of water to the use which has the greatest environmental social and economic value. One of the challenges is to match water quality and quantity to the

most appropriate use. It is important to note that environmental water provisions in statutory water plans have primacy over other uses.

**Question: Hon Giz Watson asked -**

*Gnangara Sustainability Strategy*

1.2 *Why are the estimated costs reduced for 2007-08?*

*Answer:*

The estimated costs are less for 2007/08 than for 2008/09 due to the fact that in the first year of the Gnangara Sustainability Strategy it will take time to employ staff and put processes in place necessary to begin the projects. Consultants will be engaged to begin work early in the first financial year, however, the majority of payments of their invoices will be made in the following year after key milestones have been met.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

*Page 443, Investigation and Assessment of Water Resources*

2.1 *What are the sources of the income referred to in the table on page 443?*

*Answer:*

Variations between 2006-07 budget and 2006-07 estimated actual income for Service 2 (Investigation and Assessment of Water Resources) are mainly associated with reduced estimated funding expected to be received from external bodies.

Income funding is received from Catchment Councils, National Heritage Trust (NHT) and National Action Plan (NAP) which is specific to the delivery of individual services. Also included is general revenue (Tree Annuity) which is re-allocated across the entity.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

2.2 *What is the explanation for the apparent reduction in income from the budget amount for 2006-07 to the estimated actual for 2006-07?*

*Answer:*

Variation between 2006-07 budget and 2006-07 estimated actual is mainly due to movements in overheads associated with movement in FTEs.

There has been a reduction in budgeted revenue from Catchment Councils, National Heritage Trust (NHT) and National Action Plan (NAP) as a result of carryovers from prior years.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

*Page 444, Water Licensing and Regulation*

*Referring to the income provisions in this heading and noting the dramatic rise in licence fees for 2007-08 -*

2.3 *What are the sources of these fees?*

*Answer:*

The National Water Initiative obliges all State Government to move towards cost recovery for water resource management. The Government has introduced the Water Licence Administration Fees to recover the costs associated with the assessment of applications, checking compliance with licence conditions, maintaining licensing databases, management of appeals and community awareness.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

2.4 *Have sources of these fees changed from 2006-07?*

*Answer:*

Yes. Previous to the introduction of Water Licence Administration Fees introduced from 1 July 2007, the Department of Water (DoW) collected Surface Water Licences Fees Relating to Licences and Permits Registration of Instruments in the Register and Access to the Register.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

2.5 *By what amount have fees changed for 2007-08 compared to fees charged in 2006-07?*

*Answer:*

Fees and Charges collected by the DoW in 2006-07 and previous years amounted to approximately \$75,000. These fees have now been incorporated into the Water Licence Administration Fees (\$5.799m).

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

2.6 *Are these fees based on volume used or are they a fee for licences?*

*Answer:*

The introduction of water licence administration fees is to recover the costs associated with the assessment of applications, checking compliance with licence conditions, maintaining licensing databases, management of appeals and community awareness. The annual fee structure was determined from the amount of effort required to administer licences with different water entitlements. The reason for the sliding scale is because it is more complex and time consuming to manage a water licence with a large water entitlement than a smaller one and the range of fees reflects this.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

*Page 450-451. Water Licensing and Regulation*

*Referring to the line item 'Land Acquisition' -*

2.7 *What land is to be purchased and for what purpose?*

*Answer:*

- a) The DoW intends to use these funds to purchase key identified areas of land at most risk situated in Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSAs). Currently, the DoW is negotiating for land in PDWSAs in the South West.
- b) To protect the water sources from inappropriate land uses and provide the highest level of protection for each drinking water source.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

*Referring to the line item 'Regulatory fees and charges' -*

2.8 *What is the explanation for the apparent dramatic rise in this line item for 2007-08 from 2006-07 levels?*

*Answer:*

The increase in income from Regulatory fees and charges is due to the introduction of Water Licence Administration Fees from 1 July 2007.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

2.9 *What are fines levied for and what is the anticipated income from this source?*

*Answer:*

The DoW has the ability to levy fines but only after extensive investigations. It does not anticipate raising any significant revenue from this source.

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

*Referring to the line item 'Grants and subsidies' -*

2.10 *What are the grants and subsidies referred to?*

*Answer:*

Grants and Subsidies relate mainly to grants and subsidies received from various Catchment Councils and Commonwealth funding programs like National Heritage Trust (NHT) and National Action Plan (NAP).

**Question: Hon Ken Baston asked -**

2.11 *What is the explanation for the rise in this item from 2006-07 levels?*

*Answer:*

The significant increase in funding associated with Grants and Subsidies relates mainly to funding received (\$25m) associated with the Collie Wellington Salinity Recovery Project.

**Question: Hon Paul Llewellyn asked -**

3.1 *In response to a question asked by the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on 8 September 2006, the Water Corporation indicated that it had been working with the CSIRO to model the supply and demand options for the Integrated Water Supply System and that a draft report on the findings was completed in August 2006. Has the Department of Water received a copy of the final report, and if so, can it be tabled?*

*Answer:*

The DoW has discussed the Integrated Water Supply Demand Planning (ISDP) Model report with the Water Corporation and CSIRO. The study associated with the report was undertaken by CSIRO's Water for a Healthy Country Program for the Corporation. The original model was developed for Sydney NSW. The DoW understands the study's objective was to test model capabilities within the context of Perth's water supply and was conducted as a trial to test model capabilities and was undertaken for illustrative purposes only. The DoW has not received a copy of the draft report.

**[Supplementary Information No G1.]**

**Question: Hon Norman Moore asked -**

*I refer to the major achievements for 2006-07 at page 442. The sixth dot point refers to five projects totalling \$3.1M that were successfully funded from the second round of the Premier's Water Foundation. Five projects were successful out of 56 expressions of interest received. Perhaps the Minister will take this on notice rather than worrying about it now. Can the Minister provide me with a list of the five successful applicants and what they were about? Perhaps I can be provided on notice with a list of those who were unsuccessful in receiving a grant.*

*Answer:*

56 Expression of interest totalling over \$21 million in grant requests were received in the 2nd funding round of the Premier's Water Foundation and 10 applicants were short-listed to provide full applications. Five of the short-listed projects were selected to receive funding. The successful applicants were:

Applicant:	CSIRO Land and Water
Project:	Wastewater purification and reuse: mineral-based adsorbents for contaminant removal
Grant:	\$450,000 towards total project cost of \$1,258,000
Applicant:	CSIRO
Project:	Hydrological Controls on Managed Aquifer Recharge in Perth's Coastal Aquifer
Grant:	\$600,000 towards total project cost of \$1,500,000
Applicant:	CSIRO Land and Water
Project:	Aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) of potable water in the Leederville aquifer
Grant:	\$481,000 towards total project cost of \$4,237,800
Applicant:	CSIRO Land and Water
Project:	Vegetation dynamics and water yield under changing climate and management
Grant:	\$899,046 towards total project cost of \$3,286,688
Applicant:	School of Population Health, University of Western Australia
Project:	Assessing the Public Health Impacts of Recycled Water Use
Grant:	\$700,000 towards total project cost of \$1,969,000

Total grants approved with the Premier's Water Foundation Round 2: \$3,130,046, leveraging \$12,251,488 in research and development projects.

List of unsuccessful applicants – Round 2 Premier's Water Foundation:

Note: the last 5 applicants were short-listed for a full application, but unsuccessful.

**PREMIER'S WATER FOUNDATION**

**ROUND 2 - UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS**

Applicant Name	Town
Cald Pty Ltd T/as Save Water Pool Wise	Pinjarra
Shire of Mt Marshall	Bencubbin
Waterwise Systems	Abbotsford
Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines P/L	Kalgoorlie
Green Skills Inc	Bull Creek
Diversity Sustainable Development Consultants P/L	South Fremantle
CSIRO	Wembley
CSIRO Land and Water	Wembley
Oceanica Consulting Pty Ltd	Nedlands
Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines P/L	Kalgoorlie
Gascoyne Water Cooperative Limited	Carnarvon
5 EOIs from The University of Western Australia	Crawley
UWA Business School	Crawley
3 EOIs from Curtin University of Technology	Perth
WA Horticulture and Environmental Science Skills Centre of Challenger TAFE	Canning Vale
Edith Cowan University - School of Natural Sciences	Joondalup
Ferngrove Vineyards Ltd	South Perth
Reeve Jones Pty Ltd	Donnybrook
5 EOIs from Murdoch University	Murdoch
School of Environmental Science, Murdoch University	Murdoch
Syrinx Environmental Pty Ltd	Perth
Flyash Australia Ltd	Belmont
Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA	Perth
LionOre Australia (Avalon) Pty Ltd	West Perth
Sinclair Knight Merz	Perth
Western Australian Fruit Growers' Association Inc	Canning Vale
Romteck Pty Ltd	Osborne Park
CRC for Plant-based Management of Dryland Salinity	Crawley
Wallatin Wildlife and Landcare Inc	Kellerberrin
AgWater Research Pty Ltd	West Leederville
Edith Cowan University	Joondalup
TCI	Balcatta
CSIRO Land and Water	Wembley
Monash University	Clayton
Kings Park and Botanic Gardens (BGPA)	West Perth
Green Skills Inc	Albany
Desaln8 Pty Ltd	Darlington
CSIRO - Division of Mathematical and Information Sciences	Wembley
Curtin University of Technology	Perth
CSIRO Land and Water	Wembley
Great Southern Grammar School Inc	Albany

**DIVISION 63: ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION -**

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

1. *Page 1094, dot point 6*

1.1 *Is the area burnt by wildfires or any other fires not deliberately lit included in figures for total area burnt in any departmental analysis of fire reduction burning?*

*Answer:*

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) publishes each year in its Annual Report the area of prescribed burns and the area burnt by wildfires on DEC-managed lands. These figures are reported separately.

In developing its future programs of prescribed burning each year, DEC develops a three-year indicative program and an annual program. These programs take into account the location and extent of wildfires that have occurred in previous years as well as past prescribed burning.

- 1.2 *How many complaints has the Department received about fuel reduction burns, including complaints about smoke haze or damage?*

*Answer:*

Complaints can be made in a variety of forms, including verbally to individual officers in a range of circumstances, and records of total numbers of all such complaints are not kept. However, during 2006 DEC's Director General and the Minister for the Environment received 13 separate written complaints about prescribed burns, including complaints about smoke haze. From 1 January 2007 to 1 June 2007 five written complaints were received.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

2. *Page 1094, dot point 8*

*How much is allocated for control of weeds and feral animals on unallocated crown land, measured as a total cost and per hectare or square kilometre?*

*Answer:*

DEC's predecessor received an annual budget increase of \$950,000 in 2003/04 when it was given responsibility, commencing in July 2003, for the control of feral animals and weeds as well as fire preparedness on 89 million hectares of unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves. Out of this the allocation to feral animal control and weed control is \$450,000, which equates to 50 cents per square kilometre. Additional resources are being drawn from the two-year, \$15 million Saving Our Species biodiversity conservation initiative.

Total DEC expenditure in 2006/07 across all lands, including national parks, nature reserves, State forest and unallocated Crown land, is approximately \$3.1 million for weed control and \$6.7 million for feral animal control. Because programs are often integrated across land tenures, separate figures for individual categories of land are not readily available, however the total expenditure on unallocated Crown land in 2006/07 will be around \$870,000. Total expenditure across all lands for 2007/08 is anticipated to be in the order of \$8.1 million.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

3. *Page 1094, dot point 20 (3<sup>rd</sup> last)*

*Have the Keating review recommendations altered the way the department measures the time taken in the approvals process, and if so do they make the time taken appear shorter than if they were measured by the mechanisms in place prior to the Keating recommendations?*

*Answer:*

No, the Keating recommendations have not altered the way that time taken in the approvals process is measured.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

4. *Page 1094, dot point 22 (last)*

*How does the average time and range of times taken in processing clearing permit applications in 2006 compare with times taken prior to Labor taking power in 2000?*

*Answer:*

Prior to July 2004, clearing was regulated under the Soil and Land Conservation Regulations 1992 administered by the then Department of Agriculture. There was no approvals process under this legislation and as a result there were no timeframes. Clearing in excess of one hectare that resulted in a

change of land use had to be notified to the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation at least 90 days prior to the commencement of clearing. If the Commissioner considered that land degradation would result if clearing proceeded, the Commissioner could impose a Soil Conservation Notice under section 30B of the Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945.

**Question:** Hon Nigel Hallett asked -

5. *Page 1101, Major Achievements in 2006/07, dot point 3, and page 1104 Major Initiatives 2008, dot point 1*

- 5.1 *How many national, regional or conservation parks, conservation reserves, nature reserves, marine reserves or catchment areas do not have management plans?*

*Answer:*

The area covered by management plans under the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 to 30 June 2006 is shown in the table below.

Area Covered by Management Plans*			
Tenure classification	Area covered by management plan (ha)	Total tenure area (ha)	Percent covered
National Park	1 751 553	5 593 536	31.3
Nature Reserve	361 956	10 860 832	3.3
Marine Park/Reserve	1 489 461	1 536 551	96.9
Other Recreation/Conservation Reserves	94 110	990 195	9.5
Total	3 473 080	18 981 114	18.3

\* Figures exclude (a) some regional park management plan areas and (b) the area covered by the Forest Management Plan except those reserves with specific area management plans.

DEC is responsible for managing 97 national parks and several hundred other reserves (nature reserves, conservation parks, regional parks, marine parks, marine management areas and marine nature reserves). There are currently 57 final management plans with a further 23 plans in preparation. Management plans may cover individual or multiple parks/reserves.

- 5.2 *How many conservation areas added to the state reserve system as a result of the stopping of old growth logging policy do not have management plans?*

*Answer:*

Draft management plans have been prepared for St Johns Brook and Jarrahwood Conservation Parks, Walpole Wilderness and Adjacent Parks and Reserves (Mt Frankland North, Mt Frankland South, Mt Lindesay, Mt Roe, Boyndaminup National Parks), and Wellington National Park and Westralia Conservation Park.

Draft management plans in preparation include Parks of the Leeuwin Ridge, Scott National Park and Gingilup Swamps Nature Reserve (which includes Bramley, Forest Grove and Yelverton National Parks), Lane Poole Reserve, and Greater Kingston National Park and Tone-Perup Nature Reserves.

All other conservation areas identified as part of Protecting our old-growth forests policy are on the Department's priority list for preparing management plans.

None of the conservation areas added to the reserve system as a result of the Protecting our old-growth forests policy have final management plans. However, all new national parks, conservation parks and nature reserves created as a result of the Government's policy to stop logging of old-growth forests are covered by the general prescriptions of the Forest Management Plan.

- 5.3 *How have you funded these management plans so that they are fully implemented?*

*Answer:*

The Government approved extra funding under the Protecting our old-growth forests policy for the establishment and management of new national parks and conservation parks, including preparation of management plans. Additional recurrent funding of \$2.504 million in 2001/02 and \$4.504 million ongoing was provided. Additional capital funding of \$9.67 million over four years was approved, commencing in 2001/02.

5.4 *How have you measured the success of this management?*

*Answer:*

DEC and the Conservation Commission of Western Australia have developed an outcome-based auditing system for parks and reserves. This involves the development of Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of the objectives outlined in management plans. Adoption of this process has greatly assisted the statutory, independent auditing role of the Conservation Commission.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

6. *Page 1102, Service 4 – Parks and Visitor Services*

6.1 *In relation to total cost of service – why is there only a 3.4% increase from 2006-07 to 2007-08?*

*Answer:*

The 3.4 % increase in the total cost for Parks and Visitor Services reflects inflation in input costs for the service together with adjustments for funding for joint management under the Miriuwung Gajerrong Agreement (+\$1.003 million), and the Burrup Maitland Industrial Estate Agreement for a conservation reserve on the northern Burrup Peninsula (+\$570,000).

6.2 *What measure has the Government used for inflation in the 2007-08 budget?*

*Answer:*

The Government used a measure of 3.0 percent for consumer price index growth for 2007-08.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

7. *Page 1107, Major Initiatives 2007-08, dot point 1*

7.1 *How much will be spent on the wood heater buyback program?*

*Answer:*

An allocation of \$300,000 is included in the 2007/08 budget.

7.2 *Which suburbs will be eligible, and which will be excluded, and why?*

*Answer:*

The current wood heater replacement program is funded under the Perth Air Quality Management Plan. Both the Plan and the wood heater replacement program at present focus on the community, amenity and health impact of smoke from domestic sources on the Perth metropolitan area. All homes in suburbs within the Perth metropolitan area are eligible to participate in the program.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

8. *Page 1107, Service 7 – Regulation of discharges to the Environment, Line – Total Cost of Service*

8.1 *Given the Government spent \$16.7 million in 05-06 and only budgeted \$16.2 million in 06-07, why was it unable to spend that amount (estimated actual less than \$14 million)?*

*Answer:*

The apparent decline in expenditure of approximately \$2.2 million is due to the transfer of expenditure previously included in this service to another service. Approximately \$2.5 million for Native Vegetation Protection was transferred to the Nature Conservation Service as part of forming DEC.

8.2 *Why has there been only \$500,000 increase in the budget this year, given the failures of the Government in this area?*

*Answer:*

The increase in expenditure of approximately \$2.7 million from the 2006/07 Estimated Actual to the 2007/08 Budget Estimate is due to an increase in available funding for this function derived from industry regulation fees which were approved in the 2007-08 budget process

8.3 *Would the unspent two million dollars have saved the people of Esperance from exposure to risk if it had been directed into proper monitoring?*

*Answer:*

As indicated in the response to question 8.1, the \$2 million referred to was allocated to the regulation of native vegetation clearing. Monitoring requirements are imposed on industry as a condition of licence and as such the cost is borne by licence fees. As indicated in the response to question 8.2, funding is being increased for the Department's industry regulation function through increased fees.

8.4 *Could this money have been used to properly monitor Midland Brick when the then Minister allowed a five-fold increase in hydrogen fluoride emission levels?*

*Answer:*

Monitoring of Midland Brick's emissions is required to be conducted as a condition of the company's licence. The company has been fined for failure to comply with its licence conditions. DEC is also commencing a 12 month ambient air quality monitoring program in the Midland area funded in service 6 (Air Quality Management Plans and Air Quality Monitoring).

8.5 *Has the previous maximum fine for environmental discharge of one million dollars ever been imposed, and if not is the proposal to increase the maximum fine to five million dollars a political farce? (also dot point 4, Major Initiatives 07-08, p. 1108).*

*Answer:*

The imposition of fines for offences under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 is solely at the discretion of the courts, not the Department. The maximum of \$1 million has not yet been imposed by the courts. Increasing penalties is part of an updating of the Act to make it more comparable with legislation in other jurisdictions. It is also intended to provide an increased deterrent to industry for breaching the Environmental Protection Act 1986.

**Question: Hon Barbara Scott asked -**

9. *Page 1093, dot point 1*

9.1 *How is the Department increasing community awareness and what is the cost of this?*

*Answer:*

Increasing community awareness of climate change is integral to DEC's climate change program and is specifically being addressed through the following initiatives:

- Act Now for the Future initiative;
- Indian Ocean Climate Initiative and Adaptation Program; and
- Household Sustainability Audit and Education Program.

The Act Now for the Future initiative is a public awareness program and includes a one-stop virtual shop to provide information to help Western Australians live more sustainably, including providing easy access to more than \$10 million in State Government energy and water-saving rebates. The Act Now for the Future website is being promoted through a series of advertisements that illustrate how small changes in the choices people make can have a dramatic effect on the environment. In the 2007/08 financial year \$650,000 has been allocated to the Act Now for the Future campaign.

The Indian Ocean Climate Initiative and Adaptation Program aims to increase scientific and community knowledge of the impacts of climate change on Western Australia and to apply this knowledge to develop adaptation strategies in partnership with community, industry and the Commonwealth Government. Funding of \$125,000 has been allocated for the provision of advice on the impacts of climate change on communities and sectors of the Western Australian economy, with a particular focus on the south-west and north-west of the State.

The Household Sustainability Audit and Education Program will be delivered by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure under a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Environment and Conservation. This program will provide an integrated education and information program addressing a range of climate change factors including, energy, water, waste and transport. The program will focus on what members of the public can do to reduce emissions at the household level. The program aims to reach 10,000 households over two years, delivering a total estimated emissions reduction of 487,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases. Funding of \$750,000 has been allocated in 2007/08.

Community awareness will also be raised through DEC's community education branch, which delivers behavioural change programs such as WasteWise and TravelSmart. DEC will continue to raise awareness about climate change issues through its website, publications, media statements, schools programs and events.

9.2 *What are the Department's predicted outcomes of climate change for Western Australia?*

*Answer:*

Detailed information on the outcomes of climate change for Western Australia is currently being assessed as part of phase 3 of the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative.

The Government has allocated \$500,000 in 2006/07, \$1.0 million in 2007/08, \$1.0 million in 2008/09, \$1.0 million in 2009/10 and \$500,000 in 2010/2011, totalling \$4.0 million, over 5 years for this initiative.

Detailed scenarios on the impacts of climate change on the south-west and north-west of the State will be prepared at a scale that is applicable to regional scale planning. This information will be based on down-scaling of the latest national and global knowledge of climate change impacts as outlined in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Information from the Indian Ocean Initiative phases 1 and 2 is publicly available from the website [www.ioci.org.au](http://www.ioci.org.au).

**Question: Hon Paul Llewellyn asked -**

*Page 1095, Service Appropriation Summary, Service 2, Sustainable Forest Management.*

- 1.1     *What proportion of this allocation is spent on management of production forests?*

*Answer:*

The Budget Statements describes the appropriation for the Sustainable Forest Management Service as being for "The sustainable management of State forest and timber reserves...", which is production forest in that one of its purposes for management is timber harvesting on a sustained yield basis. Therefore, at the broadest level all of the appropriation is for the management of production forests.

The appropriation also covers the indirect costs of management of production forest such as centralised financial and human resources, buildings, mapping and research.

**Question: Hon Paul Llewellyn asked -**

*Page 1095, Service Appropriation Summary, Service 2, Sustainable Forest Management.*

- 1.2     *What is the cost recovery program for this expenditure?*

*Answer:*

The cost recovery mechanism involves two parts. Firstly there is an annual contribution of \$0.9M to implementation of the *Forest Management Plan 2004-2013* which is required to be paid by the Forest Products Commission (FPC). Secondly, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) performs works on production forest for the FPC. These works are to the value of \$7.6M per annum and commencing in 2006/07 these funds are provided to DEC through an appropriation rather than have DEC invoice the FPC.

Additionally, other external parties such as Alcoa provide funds to DEC for rehabilitation and protection works. Mining compensation revenue for 2007/08 is estimated at \$3.9 million.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

2.     *On page 1093 the total appropriation provided to deliver services - forward estimates - is*

*2008/09 - \$190,397,  
2009/10 - \$190,293,  
2010/11 - \$197,534.*

- 2.1     *How does the environment budget of Western Australia compare to other States?*

*Answer:*

Interstate comparison of environment budgets poses difficulties as each State organises its agency functions and classifies expenditure in different ways. There is, however, a national exercise to compare expenditure across States in various categories. This is done by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which publishes some comparative information per capita for each State. For example, Commonwealth Grants Commission data for 2005-06 for "National Parks and Wildlife Services". There are no equivalent data available from the Commonwealth Grants Commission that would allow reliable comparison between States in respect of environmental Protection budgets.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

*Page 1094, dot point 9, continued emphasis on delivering partnership with non government sector in providing tourism and recreation services and facilities.*

**2.2     *What partnerships have been formed? Explain general working.***

*Answer:*

DEC has a range of partnerships with the private sector to assist with the provision of tourism and recreation services and facilities on the lands and waters that it manages.

The *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* allows DEC to enter into leases and licences for commercial operations, and many of the tourism and recreation services and facilities on DEC-managed lands and waters are provided through these types of agreements. Commercial operations licence conditions, especially those for specific activities in environmentally sensitive areas, as well as lease requirements, are often structured in a way that encourages the commercial operator to assume some management responsibilities and adopt a “stewardship” approach to the park in which they operate. An example of a lease that adopts this approach is the lease to the Gumala Aboriginal Corporation for the Savannah Campground in Karijini National Park. The Savannah Campground lease is for a term of 21 years, with an option for a further 21 year term. The development includes a \$3.5million capital investment, with requirements for the lessee to meet sustainability key performance indicators, including social outcomes such as employment and training opportunities for local Aboriginal people. The rental is a percentage of gross turnover, with the lease containing development options that can be exercised at the lessee’s discretion subject to the success of the operation.

Examples of licences are the semi-permanent safari camp operations and also the provision of helicopter tours in Purnululu National Park. Provisions similar to the above-mentioned Savannah Campground lease conditions apply to these operations and have resulted in measurable environmental best practice goals as well as enabling the operators to meet the increasing market expectations of their clients.

Other partnerships with the private sector include Landbank, which is a project led by Tourism WA in which Tourism WA and DEC are identifying and assessing potential tourism development sites on DEC-managed lands that meet environmental, social and tourism criteria. It is intended to identify five or six potential low impact development sites that have preliminary development approval and make them available for eco-tourism by 2010. Resulting development proposals will still be required to undergo normal approvals and agreements will be structured to encourage a partnership approach.

DEC has also entered into partnerships with a range of non-government organisations through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). DEC has MOUs with:

- Leave No Trace Australia, to work cooperatively on educating the public about minimal impact visitor behaviour;
- Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) and Rio Tinto Future Fund, to facilitate the “Future Volunteers” funding agreement between CVA and Rio Tinto Future Fund, which funds volunteer projects primarily carried out on DEC-managed lands;
- Bibbulmun Track Foundation, to facilitate cooperative arrangements in relation to management and maintenance of the Bibbulmun Track (long distance walking track); and
- WA 4WD Association and Track Care WA, to promote the responsible use of DEC-managed lands by four wheel drivers and motorised recreational visitors, including working cooperatively on track stabilisation, clean-up projects and other environment care initiatives.

DEC will also be seeking to formalise its relationship with the Munda Biddi Foundation through a MOU in relation to cooperative arrangements for management and maintenance of the Munda Biddi Trail (long distance cycle trail).

DEC is also providing financial assistance to the State’s peak outdoor recreation body, Outdoors WA, to assist with the implementation of its business plan for the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme.

***Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -***

*Page 1094, dot point 19, Air Quality Management.*

**2.3     *Could you give your opinion of the LIDAR Report that is in place as a comparison to previous testing and explain any differences in Alcoa’s air monitoring testing program?***

*Answer:*

The results of the 2006 LIDAR study showed that emissions or plumes from the Wagerup alumina refinery extended several kilometres from the refinery remaining close to the ground, under specific meteorological conditions.

The Doppler LIDAR system deployed under contract from the Arizona State University was the first system of its kind used to study atmospheric wind fields and industrial plume movements in the Wagerup area. This

system relies on backscatter of an eye-safe laser beam from airborne dust particles which are always present to varying degrees in the atmosphere. The movement of air masses (i.e. winds) at different heights can therefore be observed by this technique.

The study of the wind fields over the Wagerup region was a primary aim of using this system as knowledge of these wind fields is central to understanding the movement and distribution of airborne refinery emissions over the general area and to facilitate more accurate modeling of such dispersion, which is a major point of consideration in the approvals process for Alcoa's proposed Wagerup Stage III expansion submissions.

Plumes from the Wagerup alumina refinery generally contain a higher concentration of dust particles than the atmosphere, hence these plumes can be identified and tracked by this LIDAR system. The tracking of these plumes to observe their movement, location, residence time and dispersion or break-up were also primary objectives of the LIDAR study.

DEC's air quality studies at Wagerup are being done separately from Alcoa's studies, but DEC maintains liaison with Alcoa, to share data and information where appropriate, and ensure that respective studies compliment each other. Alcoa's air monitoring testing program has generally been focused on:

- direct monitoring of stack emissions by in-stack testing;
- dust monitoring by high volume air sampling equipment, especially around the residue disposal areas;
- fixed location monitoring by instruments for meteorology and specific gases such as sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, benzene, etc; and
- passive and active sampling programs for gases using a range of technologies in various locations;

and more recently an intensive monitoring program during 2006/2007 in response to conditions imposed on the proposed Wagerup III expansion submissions, which included:

- daily radiosonde releases to gather vertical profiles of meteorological parameters such as winds, temperature and relative humidity;
- a monitoring study by CSIRO; and
- odour assessment testing.

***Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -***

*Page 1098, State Cane toad Eradication programmes.*

***2.4 Update and how successful.***

*Answer:*

The cane toad campaign budget is \$900,000 for each of 2006/07, 2007/08 and the outyears.

The breakdown of funding in 2006/07 is:

- \$795,000 for funding of the DEC cane toad team based in Kununurra, undertaking surveillance in the Northern Territory, front-line cane toad trapping and capture, and liaison with Stop the Toad Foundation (STTF) and Kimberley Toadbusters (KTB); Department of Agriculture and Food additional staff at the Kununurra border checkpoint; and communications, newsletters, brochures and advertising.
- \$105,000 for funding of the DEC all cane toad initiative coordinator, assistance to the STTF regional officer in Kununurra, assistance to KTB and special projects.

Further to the above internal reallocations have resulted in an additional State contribution of \$36,000 being provided to each of KTB and STTF in 2007 to assist their ongoing operations, with a further \$16,000 to STTF for a fencing trial in the Northern Territory.

An external review of the cane toad programs of STTF, KTB and DEC is currently underway, being undertaken by the national Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, with an expected cost of approximately \$16,000. This review will be completed in the next month or so and will set the way forward for operations in the 2007 late dry season and thereafter. This follows a review of the DEC cane toad efforts conducted in 2006 that concluded that the campaign to keep cane toads out of Western Australia was worth continuing while cautioning that the dramatic wet seasons that the east Kimberley region can experience pose real threats for the effectiveness of any control programs.

***Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -***

***2.5 What is the latest prediction for toads entering Western Australia?***

*Answer:*

The State is committed to delaying the arrival of cane toads for as long as possible and to keep them out if we possibly can. Nevertheless, given the rate of westward movement of cane toads over the last couple of wet seasons, there is a real risk that cane toads could reach Western Australia within 1 to 3 years.

**Question: Hon Nigel Hallett asked -**

*Page 1094, dot point 6*

**2.6 What is the budget for fuel reduction burning in 2007/08, 2006/07 and 2005/06?**

*Answer:*

The budgets for prescribed burning operations undertaken by the Department for all regions are: 2005/06 - \$7.725 million; 2006/07 - \$8.581 million; 2007/08 - \$8.630 million.

**[Supplementary Information No H1.]**

**Question: Hon Simon O'Brien asked -**

*Whether we could have a breakdown of which parks will be engaging the benefit of the Parks Improvement Fund and for what amounts.*

*Answer:*

The Park Improvement Fund will provide \$2 million towards maintenance of existing visitor facilities on lands managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation throughout the State and \$5.2 million for the replacement or provision of new visitor facilities as listed below.

**Parks and Visitor Services (PVS) Capital Work Projects in Parks, Reserves and State Forest Areas: 2007-2008**

Project/project description	Local Govt	Total Project Budget \$'
<b>Kimberley Region</b>		
Rowley Shoals Marine Park - install public moorings to prevent the ongoing degradation of the fragile coral reef system from vessel anchoring.	Derby – West Kimberley	\$70,000
Geikie Gorge National Park - design shade shelters for visitors in the day use area around the gazebo and picnic table.	Derby – West Kimberley	\$10,000
Purnululu National Park - World Heritage Area - reposition car park, facilities and walktrails at Piccaninny Gorge, which are impacting on a culturally sensitive area and also improve visitor experiences.	Wyndham - East Kimberley	\$60,000
Wolfe Creek and Purnululu - with volunteers stabilise walk trail to improve visitor safety.	Wyndham - East Kimberley	\$7,000
Windjana/Silent Grove and Geike Gorge National Parks - with volunteers revegetate day use areas to minimise dust and improve appearance.	Derby – West Kimberley	\$6,000
<b>Pilbara Region</b>		
Cape Range National Park - provide visitor information, new toilets and shade, shelter at Yardie Creek.	Exmouth	\$150,000
Cape Range National Park - upgrade pedestrian access, protect heritage areas and provide a quality interpretive experience for visitors to the Oyster Stacks.	Exmouth	\$53,000
Cape Range National Park - Milyering Visitor Centre – install hybrid/solar power supply at visitor centre, workshop, ranger's house and visitor accommodation.	Exmouth	\$150,000
Pilbara Parks - continue to maintain visitor facilities and park infrastructure across the region.	Ashburton	\$170,000
<b>Midwest Region</b>		
Nambung National Park - Pinnacles Desert Interpretive Centre – complete the construction of a visitor precinct to		

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cater for in excess of 300,000 visitors a year. Includes, toilets, car and coach parking, hybrid power generation, water and waste treatment, interpretive centre and improved pedestrian access to the Pinnacles.	Dandaragan	\$750,000
Kennedy Range National Park - finalise concept development plan for all recreation sites in the park and prepare site development plans for new Temple Gorge campground, new walk trails and redevelopment of four day use sites.	Upper Gascoyne	\$50,000
Shark Bay World Heritage Area - replace section of corroded lookout substructure at Eagle Bluff Boardwalk overlooking the marine park and treat all steel. Replace corroded handrails with stainless steel, and warped timber decking with recycled plastic along the 200m boardwalk.	Shark Bay	\$320,000
Kalbarri National Park - construct shade shelter at Natural Bridge.	Kalbarri	\$90,000
Lesueur National Park - construct toilets at two recreation sites along the new tourist drive to complement recent and proposed developments of lookouts, walk trails, picnic facilities and visitor interpretation.	Dandaragan	\$350,000
Kalbarri Parks - continue to maintain park visitor infrastructure and facilities in Kalbarri parks.	Kalbarri	\$70,000
Moora District - continue to maintain park visitor infrastructure and facilities in the district.	Dandaragan	\$109,000
Shark Bay District - continue to maintain park infrastructure and facilities in the district.	Shark Bay	\$70,000
<b>Swan Region</b>		
Swan Coastal District - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure	Rockingham and Wanneroo	\$205,000
Perth Hills District - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure	Armadale, Mundaring, Murray	\$205,000
Perth Hills National Park centre - renewal and replacement of the buildings and equipment to maximize the life of the facility.	Armadale, Mundaring, Murray	\$25,000
<b>South West Region</b>		
Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park - upgrade and redevelop pedestrian areas and beach access at the southern and northern carparks at Hamelin Bay.	Augusta -Margaret River	\$200,000
Wellington National Park - Honeymoon Pool day use area - complete site works to information shelter, access paths from carpark to river deck and landscaping.	Collie	\$80,000
Blackwood River National Park - redevelop Sues Bridge campground and day use area to increase capacity and create safer and improved river access for visitors.	Nannup	\$120,000
Southwest Region - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure.	Augusta -Margaret River, Nannup, Collie	\$27,000
Blackwood District - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure.	Augusta -Margaret River, Nannup	\$100,000
Wellington District - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure.	Collie	\$100,000
D'Entrecasteaux National Park - develop 4WD camping area, jetty for lake and install interpretation at Lake Yeagerup to cater for increasing visitor numbers.	Manjimup	\$45,000
Walpole Nornalup National Park - redesign and upgrade the Mt Frankland arrival space site, including shelter, interpretation and universal pedestrian access.	Manjimup	\$65,000

Walpole Nornalup National Park - design and develop universal access, boardwalk and a new wilderness view lookout at Mt Frankland.	Manjimup	\$500,000
Walpole Nornalup National Park - protect eroded boat ramp and jetty area by constructing a revetment wall at Coalmine Jetty in line with geomorphology study and recommendations.	Manjimup	\$50,000
Walpole Nornalup National Park - complete toilets, picnic areas, pedestrian access redevelopment of Coalmine Beach and Channels area.	Manjimup	\$35,000
Donnelly District - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure	Manjimup	\$100,000
Frankland District - maintain parks, forests and reserves recreation infrastructure.	Manjimup	\$100,000
Porongurup National Park - plan, design and develop a new viewing platform for Castle Rock, to replace the existing lookout, which has safety concerns.	Plantagenet	\$500,000
Torndirrup National Park - redesign lookouts and paths at the Gap and Natural Bridge to cater for increasing visitor numbers and ensure visitor safety.	Albany	\$140,000
Parks in the South Coast Region - replace outdated, weld mesh BBQ's with Gas BBQ's	Albany, Ravensthorpe, Jerramungup	\$60,000
Gull Rock National Park - commence the planning for facilities upgrade at this reserve and improve the maintenance.	Albany	\$50,000
Cape Arid National Park - Shire Reserve 518 Thomas River - provide an information shelter incorporating interpretation and self registration fee paying facilities at the DEC-managed Shire recreation reserve which is an enclave within the park .	Esperance	\$35,000
Esperance National Parks - continue to maintain park visitor facilities and infrastructure across the district.	Esperance	\$100,000
Albany National Parks - continue to maintain park visitor facilities and infrastructure across the district.	Albany, Ravensthorpe, Jerramungup	\$130,000
<b>Wheatbelt Region</b>		
Williams Nature Reserve - define and develop a day use area to protect biodiversity values of reserve by managing degradation caused by human impacts, increasing appreciation of reserve values and involving local community.	Williams	\$60,000
Great Southern District reserves - maintain and improve visitor facilities and experience.	Williams	\$35,000
Yilgarn District - undertake general maintenance of recreation facilities across reserves to ensure visitors can enjoy the safe use.	Yilgarn	\$8,000
Avon-Mortlock District - undertake maintenance of facilities across reserves to ensure visitors can enjoy the safe use of high standard facilities.	Lake Grace, Dumbleyung	\$8,000
<b>Goldfields Region</b>		
Wallaroo Rocks Conservation Park - Wallaroo Rock site development - Realign road, develop day use and camping areas, sealed vault toilets, and provide some picnic facilities and signage in first year. Second stage-interpretation shelter and panels and final roadwork.	Menzies	\$90,000
Goldfields parks and reserves -maintain recreation and tourist infrastructure across the region.	Coolgardie	\$100,000

**Regional Parks**

Canning River Regional Park - construct an Eco Education Centre that will provide environmental education services to the schools and community of the Canning region and interpretive information on Canning River Regional Park.

Canning \$1,000,000

All Regional Parks - maintain trails, lookouts, information, interpretation, signs, picnic areas, access, boat ramps.

Cockburn \$100,000

**PVS Division (corporate)**

South West and Warren Regions - Munda Biddi Trail – complete construction of second half of Stage 2, between Nannup and Northcliffe (passing through Manjimup, Quinnyup and Pemberton). Plan for Stage 3 through to Albany.

Manjimup, Nannup \$200,000

Swan, South West, Warren and South Coast Regions – Long Trails Maintenance - Ongoing maintenance of long trails, including Bibbulmun Track, Munda Biddi Trail and Cape to Cape walk trail.

Various \$60,000

PVS Division - RECDATA - provide the information needed to make informed decisions on recreational upgrades through the improvement of the VISTAT program.

Statewide \$42,500

Statewide - Volunteer projects - provide the opportunity for Regions to create new volunteer projects and enhance other DEC projects which use volunteers to support tasks otherwise not possible.

Statewide \$30,000

*[Supplementary Information No H2.]*

**Question: Hon Simon O'Brien asked -**

*What is the success rate of rehabilitation of seagrass meadows by Cockburn Cement?*

*Answer:*

Under the approval for the long-term dredging of shellsand in Owen Anchorage, Cockburn Cement is required to conduct research into transplanting and rehabilitating seagrass meadows, and to apply the findings to its operation.

Transplanting trials are in the early stages and to date have demonstrated little long-term success. The 2006 Annual Compliance Report states that about 50% of transplanted units survive the first year, but only 10% have survived in older plots. The findings of this research are being used to improve transplant techniques.

**DIVISION 44: COMMISSIONER OF MAIN ROADS -**

**Question: Hon Norman Moore asked -**

*Capital Works Program (p.793-795):*

*There are a number of lines in respect of which the Estimated Total Cost is greater than the total to be expended by the end of 2007/08 (i.e. works in progress which will presumably be completed at a later date) -*

1.1 *Can the Government provide a table showing the out-years in which these individual works will be progressed and ultimately finalised?*

1.2 *What are the specific works to be carried out under the general headings:*

- a) *Buildings and equipment;*
- b) *Minor Works (includes Black Spot and Urgent Minor Works);*
- c) *Operational costs;*
- d) *Safer Roads Program – Various Road Safety Initiatives;*

- e) Various local roads – Railway Crossings – Improvements; and  
f) Marble Bar Road – Coongan Gorge – Construct Re-alignment.

1.3 What is the complete timetable for expenditure (i.e. for each year until completion) on the various works involved in constructing the New Perth-Bunbury Highway?

*Answer:*

1.1 The table below shows the approved project funding for the budget year 2007/08 and forward estimates to 2010/11. The balance of the funding required for each project is shown in the column headed "Outyear Estimate 2011/18". These amounts still require further assessment through future Budget processes.

	Estimated Cost \$'000	Estimated Expenditure to 30/06/07 \$'000	Budget Estimate 2007/08 \$'000	Forward Estimate 2008/09 \$'000	Forward Estimate 2009/10 \$'000	Forward Estimate 2010/11 \$'000	Outyear Estimate 2011/18 \$'000
Brookton Highway - Corrigin to Hyden - Widen	22,450	15,219	2,360	2,864		2,007	
Broome Cape Leveque Road - Various Improvements	35,591	15,153	1,757	1,700	2,000	1,481	13,500
Carnarvon - Mullewa Road	34,070	20,722	3,348			3,948	6,052
Cervantes Greenhead Road	153,227	7,546	24,509				121,172
Derby Highway - Derby Spur	18,662	13,141	2,046	1,162			2,313
Eyre Highway:							
Balladonia East	37,954	23,609	14,190	10	145		
Caiguna East / Balladonia	45,760	44,570	746	224	5	215	
Heartbreak Ridge	53,307	4,800	24,086	21,740	2,671	10	
Geraldton Southern Transport Corridor - Stage 2	63,329	583	250	10,057	24,525	26,284	1,630
Gibb River Road	28,591	13,514	1,700	964	1,875	2,676	7,862
Goldfields Highway							
Lake Raeside Section	18,055	1,205	16,350	500			
Wiluna to Meekatharra	174,419	8,889	241				165,289
Great Central Road	25,716	8,241	1,495	1,500	1,495	1,495	11,490
Great Eastern Highway							
Hines Hill to Merredin	19,678	17,297	1,490	761	130		
Roe Highway	69,583	4,089	1,250				64,244
Sawyers Valley to The Lakes	50,477	49,427	950	100			
Walgoolan to Southern Cross	117,905	2,140	860		25,954	31,996	56,955
Wooroloo to Northam	8,495	3,502	62			1,338	3,593
Great Northern Highway							
Bindoon Hill to New Norcia	42,035	1,974	5,000	23,000	5,000		7,061
Bow River Section	27,668	597	1,204	14,672	10,245	488	462
Elvire to Sandy Creek	34,757	221	1,320	20,328	11,754	553	581
Great Northern Highway							
Fitzroy Crossing to Gogo	60,590	1,365	2,188	20,000	36,500	537	
Mucha to Bindoon	20,873	4,634	9,850	688			5,701
Mucha to Wubin	15,494	4,674	4,230	6,590			
New Norcia to Walebing	25,246	1,872	7,630	2,220			13,524
Roe Highway to Muchea	68,272	17,793	10,662	12,100	16,717	11,000	
Waddington to Miling Karratha -Tom Price Link Road - Stage 2	50,952	317	8,723	7,546	16,900	900	16,566
Milyeannup Coast Road	1,177	650	250	277			
Mitchell Freeway – Hodges Drive to Burns Beach Road	171,500	68,065	71,500	31,935			
Mowen Road - Rosa Brook Road	20,335	5,566	3,631	3,588	1,500	3,500	2,550
Muir's Road - Nyamup to Strachan	12,904	6,735	2,172	3,997			

New Perth Bunbury Highway	631,346	101,172	218,657	206,505	100,493	4,519	
Old Coast Road - Australind to Eaton	17,418	1,149	1,003	6,266	7,342	1,658	
Queen Victoria Street - Fremantle Traffic Bridge	70,453	1,191	826	5,000	10,000	30,000	23,436
Safer Roads Program							
Reid Highway - West Swan Road to Great Northern Hwy	75,175	1,550	4,951	50,598	12,431	5,645	
Various Road Safety Initiatives	57,520	13,539	18,000	25,981			
Tanami Road	10,399	7,199	1,100	1,100	1,000		
Tonkin Highway - Mills Road West to Thomas Road	155,030	147,730	3,300			4,000	
Various Local Roads - Railway Crossing Improvements	64,721	25,825	3,400	3,415	3,185	3,424	25,472
Victoria Highway - Kununurra Bypass	121,177	1,290	2,300	3,563	32,229	27,711	54,084
Yaluba Ravensthorpe Nickel Project							
Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun Road	1,419	1,116	103	200			
South Coast Highway	9,440	6,118	1,936	1,386			
Marble Bar Road - Coongan Gorge	21,046	116	1,494				19,436

- 1.2      a) The buildings program amounts to \$1.510M and these funds will be used to commence works on a replacement office at Albany. The remaining funds will be used to purchase road plant (0.6M) and replacement office equipment and furniture (2.114M).

          b) The following summary is a break-down of the specific types of works that the approved funding will be spent on during 2007/08:

The minor works to be undertaken during 2007/08 are:

\$M

- Construction and improvement works component of Grants to Local Government Authorities for roadworks on the local road network that is portion of the funds to be provided under the State Road Funds To Local Governments Agreement. 25.3
  - Grants for Construction and improvement works on local roads that either provide access to or are internal roads within remote aboriginal communities, which is also portion of the funds to be provided under the State Road Funds To Local Governments Agreement. 1.5
  - State Black Spot Program initiatives that target road locations where crashes are occurring to reduce the effects of road trauma and are aimed at saving the community many times the cost of the relatively minor road improvements on;

## State Highways & Main Roads Networks Local Governments Road Network

10.0

10.0

- Commonwealth National Blackspot Programme has been introduced as part of the Federal Government's commitment to reduce crashes on Australian roads. The program targets those road locations where crashes are occurring.
  - Traffic management and Road Safety Improvements (including roadmarking, traffic control signals, signs, railway crossings and traffic improvements):

## State Highways & Main Roads Networks Local Governments Road Network

23.8

1.2

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| • Other Minor Works                               |            |
| Road improvement works                            | 14.2       |
| • Strategic and Technical Support for Local Roads | <u>1.3</u> |
|   | 92.3       |

- c) Main Roads has four operational directorates being:
- Infrastructure Delivery
  - Regional Services
  - Road Network Services
  - Technology and Environment

The indirect costs of these directorates are allocated on a percentage basis to road works in line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Indirect costs are those amounts that are not charged directly to road works. The allocation is based on total road expenditures, which includes those projects included in the Capital Works Program and maintenance. Within the Capital Works Program this allocation is shown as a lump sum and is not allocated to individual projects, which show only the direct cost of the works. The amount shown in the Income Statement (refer Budget Papers p.796) as Extraordinary Items is the amount of expenditure on roadworks that is capitalised including the relevant allocation of operational costs. This amount is transferred to the Balance Sheet (refer Budget Papers p.797) as Roads Network.

- d) The projects for which the \$28 million in Safer Roads program funding will be allocated in 2007-08 have not yet been finalised. Those details will be available before 30 June 2007 and will be tabled for the member before that date.
- e) The specific Level Crossing projects have not yet formally been finalised or approved. It is expected that those details will be finalised by the end of the current financial year.
- f) Preconstruction funding for a future realignment of Marble Bar Road at Coongan Gorge.

1.3 The timetable for expenditure on this program is as follows:

	\$'000
PRE 2005/06	28,133
2006/07	73,039
2007/08	218,657
2008/09	206,505
2009/10	100,493
2010/11	4,519
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>631,346</b>

**Question: Hon Norman Moore asked -**

*Controlled Grants and Subsidies (p.801)*

2.1 In each year displayed in the budget papers (i.e. 2005/06 to 2010/11):

- a) what is the source of funds; and
- b) what is the percentage share of funding from vehicle registrations?

*Answer:*

2.1 a)

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Actual \$'000	Estimated Actual \$'000	Budget Estimate \$'000	Forward Estimate \$'000	Forward Estimate \$'000	Forward Estimate \$'000
Vehicle Licence Fees	90,957	100,170	108,367	113,869	119,947	126,094
Natural Disaster Relief		9,908				
Funds carried over from previous year	7,796	12,951				
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>98,753</b>	<b>123,029</b>	<b>108,367</b>	<b>113,869</b>	<b>119,947</b>	<b>126,094</b>

- b) On an annual basis, the share of State Road Funds to be allocated on Local Government roads will be 27% of vehicle licence fees for that year, refer "State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement 2005/2006 to 2009/2010".

**Question: Hon Simon O'Brien asked -**

New MetroRail Project (p.787)

- 3.1 *What sums have been paid or will be paid to Main Roads for re-imbursement of works undertaken by Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA) as part of the New MetroRail Project and for what specific works?*
- 3.2 *Where do these amounts appear in the Budget papers?*
- 3.3 *Did MRWA provide cost estimates of the works it has undertaken for this project?*
- 3.4 *Was MRWA required to submit competitive tender prices for any aspect of the projects and if not, why not?*
- 3.5 *What other works within the MRWA program have been deferred or cancelled due to its work and funding associated with the project?*

*Answer:*

- |     |  |            |
|-----|--|------------|
| 3.1 | New Metro Rail Package E<br>(Narrows to Glen Iris)                       | \$129.901M |
|     | New Metro Rail Packages A-D & F<br>(Project Management / Administration) | \$ 1.415M  |
- 3.2 The amount charged to the New MetroRail Project (ie. the amount invoiced excluding GST) is shown in the Income Statement as User Charges and Fees under the heading Income, refer Budget Papers p. 796.
  - 3.3 Main Roads provided an estimate of cost to New MetroRail for the Construction Contract Works, and also provided an estimate of Project Management/Administration costs for managing the project.
  - 3.4 The Construction Contract Works followed a competitive tendering process being a two staged Expression of Interest and Request for Proposals process managed by Main Roads.
  - 3.5 No works were deferred within the Main Roads program as a result of contract managing these works. All costs incurred by Main Roads in managing these works were reimbursed from the New MetroRail project budget.

**Question: Hon Donna Faragher asked -**

Road Use Safety Improvements Major Initiatives for 2007-08 – Black Spot Program (State) and Black Spot Program (National) (p.789, Service 4)

- 4.1 *Will the Minister provide a list of the 145 local Road projects and the 35 stat road projects to be funded through the State Government, including the cost of each project?*
- 4.2 *Will the Minister provide a list of the 45 projects to be funded through the Commonwealth Government, including the cost of each project?*

*Answer:*

- 4.1 The list of black spot projects to be funded in 2007-08 is currently being finalised and will be announced in the near future. At that stage the list will be tabled and also be available on the Main Roads website.
- 4.2 The list of National Black Spot Programme projects funded in 2007-08 can be accessed on the Department of Transport and Regional Services website at:  
[www.auslink.gov.au/publications/reports/pdf/WA\\_Projects\\_96\\_08.pdf](http://www.auslink.gov.au/publications/reports/pdf/WA_Projects_96_08.pdf)

**[Supplementary Information No II.]**

Not supplied.

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