

PART II.

THE QUESTION PAPER

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

An asterisk preceding an entry in the index indicates
that an answer has not yet been received.

From 5 June 1984

Staffing - NTPS

25 Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

How many (a) Aboriginal, and (b) non-Aboriginal people are employed by the Northern Territory Public Service, (c) at what levels are these staff employed, and (d) how many are employed (i) on a full-time basis, and (ii) employed on a short-term contractual basis?

Staffing - Department of Health

26 Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

How many (a) Aboriginal, and (b) non-Aboriginal people are employed by the Department of Health, (c) at what levels are these staff employed, and (d) how many are employed, (i) on a full-time basis, and (ii) employed on a short-term contractual basis?

Staffing - Department of Community Development

27 Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

How many (a) Aboriginal, and (b) non-Aboriginal people are employed by the Department of Community Development, (c) at what levels are these staff employed, and (d) how many are employed (i) on a full-time basis, and (ii) on a short-term contractual basis?

From 13 June 1984

Christmas Island Trip

28 Mr EDE to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. What was the total cost in terms of salaries, fares, accommodation, expenses, etc. of the trip you made to Christmas Island?

2. How will this benefit the administration of the Northern Territory?

From 21 August 1984

Aboriginal Communities - Trade Based Training

37 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Given that a Vocational Training Commission working party started meeting in December 1982 to examine and plan the introduction of trade based training to Aboriginal communities, what trade based training is currently being carried out and what is planned for 1985?

From 16 October 1984

Sports Travel Subsidy Scheme - Expenditure

39 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

How much was spent on the Sports Travel Subsidy Scheme during 1983-84 financial year?

Advertising Cost - Housing Commission

40 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING and CONSERVATION

1. What was the total cost of advertisements published under the name of the Chairman of the Housing Commission in respect of the recently announced changes to the Public Service Home Loans Scheme?

2. What was the total cost of all other advertising (other than that referred to in 1. above) in respect of the recently announced changes to the Public Service Home Loans Scheme?

Health Problems - Photographic Dark Room

41 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. When was attention first drawn to the potential health problems associated with the photographic dark room in the Department of Mines and Energy and what action was subsequently taken?
2. When were staff told to discontinue using the dark room facilities?
3. Since then, how many times has the dark room been used and in what circumstances?
4. Since use of the dark room was discontinued, how much photographic work has had to be done by contractors or the Government Printing Office and how much has this cost?
5. What steps have been taken in respect of the medical monitoring of the staff using the dark room?
6. Are new dark room facilities being installed, if so, when will they be completed, how much will they cost, and what health precautions will be incorporated?

Overseas trip - Deputy Chief Minister

42 Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

In respect of the Deputy Chief Minister's recent overseas trip -

1. Who accompanied him on the trip?
2. What was the total cost to the taxpayer (travel, accommodation, allowances, etc.) for all on the trip?
3. Will he be preparing a report in respect of the trip?

Gardens Hill Development - Housing Commission

43 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

1. How much will the Housing Commission pay for the pensioner units that will be constructed in Stage 1 of the Gardens Hill development?
2. When will the Housing Commission be taking over those units?
3. Who called for the tenders on the development?
4. What will be the developer's contribution to the upgrading of services in the area (referred to in the Minister's adjournment speech of 29 August 1984)?
5. What is the component of land cost in the total cost of \$1.985 million quoted by the Minister in his speech of 29 August 1984?

Aero-medical Contract

44 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

1. Has the government approved an assignment of the aero-medical contract from Northern Territory Aerial Work to Air North, if so, on what conditions was the assignment approved, if not, when is it expected to be considered?

2. Was Northern Territory Aerial Work asked to surrender the contract rather than assign it, if not, why not?
3. Is there a financial advantage to Northern Territory Aerial Work in assigning the contract rather than surrendering it, if so, what are the details?

Construction of Dwellings - Housing Commission

45 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING and CONSERVATION

1. How many Housing Commission dwellings were projected for construction in the 1983-84 financial year?
2. How many were actually built?
3. How many are projected for construction in 1984-85?

Acquisition of Land - Paspaley Family

46 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

1. What are the details of the arrangements made with the Paspaley family and associated companies for the acquisition of their land holdings within the area of proposed casino-condominium complex at Myilly Point?
2. What alternative land has been offered as part of those arrangements?
3. Have arrangements been made and are they being negotiated with other land holders within that area, if so, what are the details?

High Court/Federal Court - NT Government Involvements

47 Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. Since self-government, in what proceedings has the NT Government been involved before either the High Court or the Federal Court?
2. In respect of each proceedings, what was the cost to the government?

Inquiry into Freight and Related Costs

48. Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. What action has been taken by the government on part 1 of the report of the Inquiry into Freight and Related Costs which was tabled on 1 March 1984?
2. What further action is being considered?
3. What action has been taken or is being considered in respect of part 2 of the report of that inquiry which was tabled on 30 August 1984?

Leprosy Cases in the Northern Territory

49 Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

1. How many active (infectious) cases of leprosy are there in the Northern Territory and where are they located?
2. How many passive (non-infectious) cases of leprosy are there in the Northern Territory and where are they located?

Trips by Non-office Holders

50 Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. Since the beginning of 1984, how many trips, financed by the Government,

have been taken outside the Territory by non-office holding Members of the Legislative Assembly?

2. In respect of each of those trips (a) which Member was involved, (b) what was the reason for the trip, (c) where did the Member go, and (d) what was the total cost?

Recruitment of Public Servants

51 Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. What is the average cost (including related costs) of recruiting a public servant from outside the Territory?
2. What is the average cost (including related costs) of recruiting a public servant from within the Territory?

Recruitment of Teachers

52 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What is the average cost (including related costs) of recruiting a teacher from outside the Territory?
2. What is the average cost (including related costs) of recruiting a teacher from within the Territory?

Childbirth and Childwelfare Groups - Subsidies

53 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

In a press release on 25 September, he announced that 7 groups connected with childbirth and childwelfare would receive subsidies from the Territory government.

What are the specific allocations to each of the 7 groups - Nursing Mothers Association, Childbirth and Parenting Education Association, Childbirth Education Association, Pregnancy Help Inc., Natural Family Planning Council, Family Planning Association, and St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service?

Gas Turbine - Alice Springs

11 Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In regard to the gas powered turbine at Alice Springs power station which has recently failed in operation, (a) how long has this turbine been out of service, and (b) what arrangements have been made with the supplier and NTEC while gas is not being consumed?

ANSWER

- (a) The No. 5 engine was operational on gas intermittently from September 1983 to 29 March 1984. Gas operation ceased at that date. However, during the period when gas was not available the engine operated on distillate when available and required.
- (b) There have been a number of unrelated electrical and mechanical problems; these have been rectified by the engine supplier, Hawker Siddley Engineering Pty Ltd.
- (c) There have also been problems with the gas quality. These have been resolved by actions taken by both the gas supplier, Magellan, and the gas transporter, TNT Bulkships.
- (d) It is pleasing to note that gas operation recommenced at the Alice Springs power station at 1100 hours, Sunday 20 May 1984, and that No. 5 engine together with other sets have been operating in the dual fuel mode since that time. As at 29 August 1984, No. 5 engine has achieved 2248½ hours of operation, of which 2115½ hours were in the (gas) dual fuel mode. This represents 94% of its operation.

Leprosy Surveillance Programme - Kintore

36 Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Has the leprosy surveillance programme for the Pintubi community at Kintore been undertaken and, if so, (a) have any new cases been found, and (b) what results are available.

ANSWER

The leprosy surveillance programme for the Pintubi community at Kintore will be undertaken when permission from the Pintubi community is received by the Department of Health.

Permission was sought on 18 July 1984 for Dr A. Dyrting to visit Kintore and carry out the programme. No approval for the visit has yet been received.

Community College of Central Australia - Details of Courses Run

38 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What are the details of courses run at the Community College of Central Australia from January 1982 to August 1984 including, (a) length of courses, (b) number of students initially enrolled for each course, (c) number of students who successfully completed each course, and (d) cost of financing the college from January 1982 to 1984?

ANSWER

- (a) to (c) See pages 225 to 229.
- (d) \$5 195 012.

NOTE: In Technical and Further Education terminology 'Stream' refers

to different levels of courses.

- Stream 1 Professional
- 2 Para-professional
- 3 (a) Basic Trade
- (b) Post-trade
- 4 Other skilled
- 5 Preparatory
- 6 Adult Education, hobby, recreational - non-examinable.

The college also offers courses on behalf of interstate institutions and those institutions have the information on student passes for these courses.

LIST OF COURSES, LENGTH OF COURSES, NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED/PASSED

STREAMS 1 - 5

NAME OF COURSES	1982			1983			1984		
	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED
*Bach. of Business WIAE (3 units)	150	10		90	15				
*Dip. of Teaching TAFE (4 units)	200	8		200	12		200	7	
*Ass. Dip. of Welfare Works (4 units)	114	7		-	-				
*Business Cert. of Accounting	480	62		330	73		240	90	
*Business Cert. Personnel	480	12		60	14		60	12	
*NT Real Estate Cert.	180	27		150	14		60	18	
*Meat Inspection Cert. (T/Ck)	60	10		-	-		-	-	
Carpentry & Joinery (Trades)	880	19	17	880	23	19	880	27	3+/on-going
Aircraft Maint. Engineering	880	7	7	120	3	3	-	-	
Automotive Engineering	880	33	30	880	36	35	880	38	12+/on-going
Electrical Fitter Mech.	880	38	36	880	36	36	880	28	9+/on-going
Cookery	240	19	19	270	69	69	270	57	on-going
Hairdressing	864	15	15	864	15	12	864	15	on-going
*Builders Admin. & Prac. Cert.	84	46		100	25		16	4	
Elect. Licence Refresh. Course	144	12	12	144	6	6	-	-	
Basic Servicing Aircond. & Refri. Units	57	7	7	57	24	24	54	10	on-going
Screen Printing Ernabella	24	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	
*Scaffolding (Licence)	45	7		54	6		-	-	
*Crane Chasing/Dogman (Licence)	20	10		-	-		-	-	
Audio Typewriting	20	11	1	20	22	2	-	-	
F/T Day Secretarial Cert.	1140	15	5	1140	19	11	1140	15	on-going
Accounting I	30	7	5	-	-		-	-	
Communic. & Report Writing	30	5	5	-	-		-	-	
Intro. to B/keeping & Actng (T/Ck)	16	14	8	-	-		-	-	
Intro. to Computers	20	56	41	16	172	106	32	153	on-going
Intro Actng/Bookkeeping (I.A.D.)	136	23	9	-	-		-	-	
Prac. Computer Oper.	40	34	15	-	-		-	-	
Programming in Basic	20	35	28	16	76	43	32	41	18

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

NAME OF COURSES	1982			1983			1984		
	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED
Recep. Training	20	38	17	20	46	23	20	23	15
Secretarial / Link			32.5	8	6	-	-		
Shorthand	160	18	4	80	47	5	80	40	on-going
Typewriting Stage I	40	76	32	40	149	36	40	69	20
Typewriting A.V.T.	160	19	10	80	26	22	80	13	8
Typewriting I.A.D.	72	15	0	80	19	7	80	25	5
Typewriting II part-time	40	29	13	40	22	16	40	16	13
Typewriting Tennant Creek	20	11	6	16	22	12	16	15	10
Basic Auto Maint. (T/Ck)	36	9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pre-employment Auto Trning	1440	15	15	1710	6	6	1152	15	on-going
Basic Electronics	18	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
*Explosive Power Tools	4	92		4	27		8	10	
Diesel Maint. Course	14	15	15	30	33	33	-	-	-
Lathe Tool Sharpening	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health Workers Training Papunya	15	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bar Tender Course Darwin	60	31	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commercial Cooking	270	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drink Service	10	35	19	10	17	14	10	31	18
Drink Waiting Course Darwin	30	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food Service	10	27	21	10	11	5	10	13	8
Food & Drink Service	60	42	31	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food Waiting Course Darwin	30	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food & Drink Service (T/Ck)	35	22	22	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hospitality Link	40	15	15	-	-	-	2	89	on-going
Housekeeping Darwin	18	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
In-House Training Ayres Rock	4	12	12	6	31	31	12	23	23
In-House Training Katherine	20	7	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Printmaking I.A.D.	11	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illus. Lettering & Layout									
Congress Farm	32	13	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Art Link	10	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Building Trades Link		37.5	12	12	-	-	-	-	-

1982

1983

1984

NAME OF COURSES	1982			1983			1984		
	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED
A.V.T. Basic Building Yirara	40	26	26	-	-	-	60	6	on-going
Home Maint. Link	49	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foundation for Employment Office Pract.	300	12	6	300	13	6	300	22	10+/on-going
Trades Mechanical Link	34	19	19	-	-	-	-	-	-
Auto Practices Yirara	80	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
*AMEB Music Theory T/Ck	20	10		20	25				
*AMEB Music Theory	20	7		20	14		20	39	
Hairdressing Link	50	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intro. Child Care	126	36	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foundation for Employment T&H	300	10	5	300	8	7	300		to commence
Basic Literacy	160	18		80	55		130	18	on-going
Bridging English	80	34	17	20	23	12	40	32	on-going
Driver Education	20	5	4	72	24	15	66	12	on-going
English Composition	16	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intro. to Trade Maths	80	44	27	40	54	17	40	29	on-going
Life Work Leisure Skills Link	42	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maths for Trainees in Industry Warrego		30	6	6	-	-	-	-	-
*Matriculation Aust. History	108	13		-	-	-	-	-	-
*Matriculation Biology	108	12		114	6		114	5	
*Matriculation English	108	8		114	11		114	7	
Pre Matric. Maths	80	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Warramunga Language T/Ck	30	13		20	26		-	-	-
Women Returning to Work/Study	24	5	5	-	-	-	18	24	16
Volunteer Tutor Training Progress	70	8	8	70	8	8	70	6	on-going
Bridging Maths	60	9	4	40	22	6	-	-	-
Planning for Retirement	16	7	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Study Skills	20	4	4	-	-	-	16	5	on-going
*Assoc. Dip. of Public Admin.				120	10		60	11	
General Awareness T/Ck				300	22	13	300	5	5
Cert. in Creative/Applied Art				1656	30	on-going	1656	62	on-going
Cert. in Child Care Studies				1589	13	on-going	1589	36	on-going
Auto Diesel Mechanics				120	1	1	-	-	-
Food & Beverage Cert.				500	47	on-going	500	9	on-going

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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1982

1983

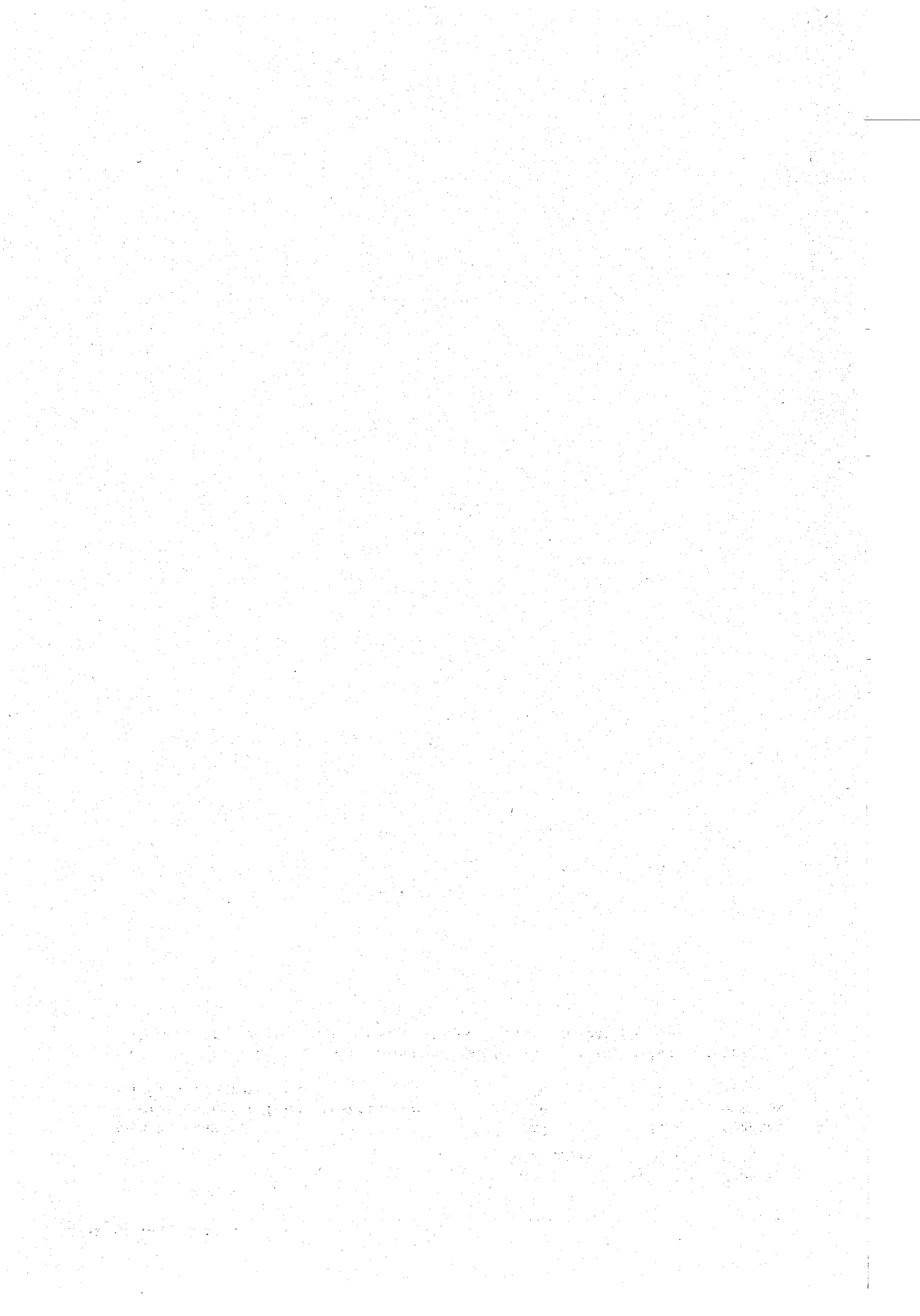
1984

NAME OF COURSES	1982		1983		1984	
	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED
Hospitality Prac. Cert.				450	17	on-going
Post Trade Cert. in Diesel Engines				108	8	Course cancelled
Post Trade in Ind. Electronics				40	4	4
Gas Fitting Licence				96	10	6
Typewriting Stages II & III				40	27	12
Typewriting Stage III				40	11	5
*Basic Aeronautical Knowledge (Private Licence)				40	6	
Basic Engineering				1120	13	12
Manual Metalic Art Welding Cert.				640	7	3
EPUY Automotive				108	6	6
A.V.T. Preventative Motor Vehicle Maintenance				24	13	13
Emergency Awareness				16	12	7
Intro. to Structured Program (Pascal)				16	18	10
Small Business Management				11	12	10
*Matric. Accounting				114	5	
Advanced Oral Eng. for Migrants				20	17	11
Automotive Electronics				24	12	12
Viola Workshop				16	8	8
*Matric. History				114	7	
FFE Basic Literacy/Numeracy Bindi Centre				190	5	5
A.V.T. Numeracy & Literacy				30	6	6
Youth Workers Course						54
In-House Food & Drink Serv. (Telford)						10
In-House Food & Drink Serv. (Chateau Hornsby)						6
Child Care Cert. T/Ck						48
Trade Maths T/Ck						20
German for Tourist Industry						16
Hotel/Motel Recep. Training						10
Computer Accounting						20
Computer Applications						10
Computer File Management						20

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

	TOTAL COURSE HOURS	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS PASSED
Word Processing	20	11	on-going
Modern Cookery & Food Presentation	30	10	on-going
S.T.E.P. Program T/Ck	80	2	2

* Courses offered on behalf of other institutions or licensing authority.
Those institutions, not CCCA, have records of student passes.



Houses at Myilly Point

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

A recent paper circulated in Darwin has estimated \$6m as the valuation for the housing component to be demolished at Myilly Point. Has the government placed a valuation on the housing that is to be demolished and, what is the current position in regard to the preservation or otherwise of the old houses on Myilly Point?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at this stage, it is very difficult to provide a proper estimate of the value of housing that is to be demolished at Myilly Point to make way for the multi-million-dollar development of new hotels, villas and casinos there. I suppose the principal obstacle to placing a firm valuation on that housing is that negotiations are taking place with private owners. I know of one negotiation that has been completed successfully but I understand that a number of others will continue. I imagine that the paper that the Leader of the Opposition refers to - and I had not heard of it until this morning - probably takes into account the value of land as well as the value of housing. A very significant part of the land at Myilly Point is owned by the Northern Territory government. Therefore, the value of that land would be irrelevant in arriving at any such total.

As regards the old housing on Myilly Point, there has never been any contest in relation to Audit House which the Northern Territory government restored at considerable cost some years ago and then assigned the title to the Northern Territory branch of the National Trust. I think there has been some dispute in relation to 3 other houses at Myilly Point because the government received a report saying that the housing was simply beyond economic repair. Then the Heritage Commission moved to register the houses with the National Estate without consultation with the Northern Territory government. On this very important point of principle, the Northern Territory government disputed with the Australian Heritage Commission. As a result of that, it now seems that the Heritage Commission has chosen to take notice of the existence of the Territory government. Of course we were promised consultation before any decision was taken to register the houses with the National Estate but now it has been agreed that a further detailed assessment will be carried out. In fact, my recollection is that that detailed assessment was commissioned in September. I suppose the results could be expected in the course of this month or next month. It is the government's intention to abide by the result of that study. It is being carried out by an architect and a structural engineer. If the study concludes that the housing can be restored then the Commonwealth government, which owns 2 of the properties, may wish to restore them itself immediately. With the Minister for the Environment and Home Affairs' great concern for these properties, one wonders why the Commonwealth has not taken steps to restore them. As I recall it, only 1 of the remaining properties belongs to the Northern Territory government. Assuming that the Commonwealth would be prepared to transfer the properties that it owns to the trust that has been set up to carry out the development on the old hospital site, then I would imagine conditions could be worked out which would enable the integration of that housing with the new scheme. I would imagine that, in consideration of the transfer of ownership of the Commonwealth properties, the developers or the Northern Territory government would be prepared to consider undertaking the cost of restoration. Mr Speaker, to some extent, we are anticipating the result of the assessment that has been commissioned by the Northern Territory and the Heritage Commission. Certainly, Cabinet has agreed that it will abide by the result of that assessment.

Darwin Airport Overseas Terminal Hold-ups

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The overseas terminal section of the Darwin Airport has been criticised, not unfairly I might add, for its failure to cope with passenger movements quickly due to immigration and carousel hold-ups. Bearing in mind the expected traffic build-up over the Christmas period, has he received any assurances from his federal counterpart that this situation will improve?

ANSWER

The subject of Darwin Airport has been raised in this Assembly not infrequently by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I understand that the latest problem was caused by the conveyor belt. On my understanding, it went absolutely nowhere. The baggage went along the conveyor belt which simply transferred it inside and dumped it on the floor.

Mr Speaker, I have written recently to the federal Minister for Transport asking for his assistance in the matter. I have written also to the general manager of Qantas who no doubt has a specific interest in the matter. That letter was sent only a few days ago and Mr Morris would not have been in a position to consider that matter yet. Certainly, this government is very conscious of the discomfort experienced by visitors to the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory is the first point of contact in Australia for many overseas visitors. What a point of contact it is! It is quite disgraceful. I do not think it is sufficient to say that, because the new airport is being built, no action needs to be taken in respect of the very inefficient and disappointing facilities which are in use at the moment. I hope to receive from the Commonwealth a positive response to our representation so that we may have some short-term easing of the current situation.

Bridging Loan for Burgundy Royale

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the government paid to Burgundy Royale all of the \$3.5m bridging loan it undertook to give the company earlier this year and what guarantee does the government have that the money will be repaid?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my recollection of the timing is not quite clear but my understanding is that the loan to Burgundy Royale was made within days of the announcement. To the best of my knowledge, the security that has been obtained by the government is either a mortgage security or a floating charge security. There is legal documentation but I am not in a position to specify whether, in fact, it is a mortgage over real property or a charge over the assets of the company.

Amadeus Basin Gas

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What is the current status of the Orange No 2 well presently being drilled south of Alice Springs and what role will that drilling play in relation to the upgrading of Amadeus Basin gas reserves?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the drilling and testing that is occurring at Orange No 2 well at the moment is the most important exploration going on in the Northern Territory. In fact, it has a very important bearing on the upgrading of the reserves and the upgrading of the line size between Alice Springs and Mataranka for the proposed line from Alice Springs to Darwin. We have in place at the moment sufficient reserves in the Amadeus Basin to sustain power generation in Darwin for 20 years using it at about 20 to 30 million cubic feet a day and anticipating a 5.6% to 6% growth rate during that period.

A couple of important decisions need to be taken which reflect very greatly on the results from Orange No 2 well testing which, hopefully, is taking place at this very minute. Testing has been hampered by technical problems for the last week and, therefore, we do not have the results to hand today, which is a pity. One of the dilemmas facing the pipeline proponents in determining the size of the piping is that, if we build a 12-inch pipe between Alice Springs and Darwin, we will satisfy the needs of NTEC and the government for some years to come. There is no doubt that it is a viable proposition with a 12-inch pipe but that will preclude any future development or prospect of supplying gas to Gove. We have a problem with the supply of gas to Gove in the sense that the reserves that we need for Gove are not yet proven to be in place, although they are assumed to be available. If we took a decision on a 12-inch line, we could rest assured that there would be no gas for Gove in the future and gas exploration in central Australia would taper off because there would be no market for it. We badly need to take a decision on the big pipe between Alice Springs and Mataranka in the initial pipeline construction stage. That will leave open the possibility of supplying gas to Gove in the future and will give us the advantage of transportation economies from the additional amount of gas that will be pumped down the line. It will also stimulate an exploration program in central Australia that is badly needed both for oil and gas.

Mr Speaker, the situation is that we desperately need to take a decision on a large pipe. The cost difference between the large pipe and the small pipe is assessed at \$40m at this stage. That is quite a punt for a company like Nabalco or for the oil companies and the gas companies to finance because it may be that the additional reserves to justify the line to Gove will not be proven in the near future. However, the pipeline and the additional size of the pipe have to be financed and interest paid in that period.

The Orange No 2 well that is being drilled at the moment has its second hole going down. The first went down in the late 1960s and proved to be a dry hole. The target area in Orange No 2 well is considerably deeper than the first hole targeted for. There is a flow of gas in the hole but, at this stage, it has not been possible to test it. The Orange well is so big in terms of the known structures in central Australia that we believe that, if it comes in as a gas producer, it has such an enormous potential that it is likely to provide Darwin and Gove gas by itself. If we get a flow of gas in the Orange No 2 well - and that will be known by the end of this week - we can be almost certain that supplies of gas for Gove will be available and that it is just a matter of time to drill additional holes to prove the size of the resource and the deliverability rate. As honourable members would be aware, the hole that was drilled recently in Dingo flowed at a rate of about 2 million cubic feet a day. The expectation for the Orange hole that is held by technical people within the department is that the hole that is being tested at the moment could possibly flow at 5 million cubic feet a day and that would be very encouraging and very satisfactory.

Mr Speaker, I can say to the honourable member, who has been a strong supporter of the project from day 1, that I wait with as much interest as he does for the results of the Orange No 2 well because, if it gets a flow rate of the order of 2 to 5 million cubic feet a day, we can anticipate with some confidence that we will be building a pipeline to Gove as well as to Darwin.

Nabalco Licence to Sell Electricity

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Have the negotiations between Nabalco and NTEC on the terms and conditions of Nabalco's licence to sell electricity been completed and, if not, why not, and when is it likely that they will be completed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that the 2 parties are still negotiating. I cannot tell the honourable member why they have not been completed. Maybe they are still talking about problems they would like to solve. I share his concern that the negotiations should be resolved as soon as possible so that both parties know what their commitments are in relation to the supply of power to the Gove community.

Relativities Review

Mr HATTON to TREASURER

Has he received any communication from the Commonwealth government following the Territory's protest at being included with the states in the relativities review being undertaken by the Grants Commission?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this matter is of considerable concern to the Territory. Unfortunately, the answer to the honourable member's question is no. To make matters worse, the opposition in the Northern Territory and the ALP members in the federal house, who supposedly represent the Territory, have done absolutely nothing to assist the Territory's case in regard to the relativities review. We have not heard a squeak let alone strong protests and objections on our behalf even though members of the opposition in this Assembly have told us that they have inside contacts with the federal government to present the Northern Territory case. Our representatives in federal parliament have variously described our arrangements in terms that would indicate that we are overfunded. The Leader of the Opposition has said that he is embarrassed at the level of money that the Territory receives. The shadow treasurer describes our funding from the Commonwealth as 'a luxury' and 'a handout' and the ALP senator claims that we are dependent on the federal government's generosity, never mind the fact that it is the subject of its obligations. Words like 'generosity', 'luxury', 'handout' and 'overfunded' hardly help the Territory's situation in a forum where the future of the Territory's funding will be decided in May or June next year. We offered a briefing to the shadow treasurer some time ago because he confessed in this Assembly that he did not understand the ramifications of the Territory being dragged into the relativities review despite the objections of the states to the Territory's inclusion. We have not heard a peep out of him since because he now understands the gravity of what the Commonwealth government is proposing to do. All that these members seem able to do is apologise for Canberra and suggest that there is no problem at all with the Northern Territory being treated as a state. Mr Speaker, when the Territory becomes a state, that

will be the time for treatment as a state on financial terms and certainly not before. The sooner we have a decent MHR in Canberra, who will speak for the Territory, the better.

Policy on Housing for Single Persons

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for HOUSING

Has the Housing Commission made any progress on the development of a housing policy for single persons?

ANSWER

I am happy to say that Housing Commission officers have met several times with officers from other government departments and considered the subject of a housing policy for single persons. They should complete their deliberations in the near future. I hope that next week or the week after, I shall be in a position to present to the public a policy for the housing of single people.

Mr Speaker, several things have to be considered in conjunction with a single-persons housing policy that the Housing Commission is contemplating in the Northern Territory. We have to know the background before we embark on a policy. We must know how much it will cost and how much money is available. We must know how many people could put their names on a list for this type of accommodation and the number of people already being accommodated. At the moment, approximately 1900 medium-density units are available for the accommodation of single people. These are provided to single pensioners, single members of the public service at 15 August who have an entitlement to accommodation and single people with dependants, who could perhaps be called people in receipt of welfare payments. We must not forget that single people are still eligible under the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme to buy their own private accommodation either from the Housing Commission or on the private market.

Mr Speaker, with the development of this single housing policy, several criteria for eligibility have to be considered to ensure that everybody receives a fair bite at the cherry and that no single group is disadvantaged. Criteria for eligibility will include such things as age, income, the household size, the assets of the person, previous home ownership or current home ownership, the physical situation, the social situation and even the geographical situation in the Northern Territory. To be fair to everybody and to give all single people a fair crack at housing, we have to consider our unique situation here and we have to consider especially those single people in centres remote from Darwin and Alice Springs.

When one considers that the Territory government spends 14% of its total budget on housing compared to an average of about 4.5% of the budgets in other states, it is clear that we really are concerned about housing people in the Northern Territory. The total Northern Territory housing allocation for 1984-85 is in excess of \$165m of which the Commonwealth contributes only about \$30m. In the negotiating stages of the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement, a sum was allocated to local government and community housing projects which, in effect, is aimed at single people. As a result of those negotiations, despite my representations on many occasions to the federal minister, the Northern Territory government received the grand sum of \$63 000. The Housing Commission has not quite worked out what it will do with this \$63 000. We are considering several ways to make it go as far as it can.

Because of that grand sum of \$63 000 as the Commonwealth commitment to housing in the Northern Territory, it can be seen easily that any single-persons housing policy adopted by the Northern Territory government must virtually be financed totally by the Northern Territory government. Our budget is severely stretched under existing policies. Nevertheless, a commitment has been made to develop a single-persons housing policy which does not deny single people the right to apply for public housing. As I said earlier, the working group engaged on this task will be presenting its findings probably next week or the week after.

Port of Darwin

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it still his intention to close the Port of Darwin?

ANSWER

I have never said that I would close the Port of Darwin. I said that I would have discussions with the port unions as to why the port should not be closed. We had a very useful discussion yesterday with all the port unions, including the Transport Workers Union, the Electrical Trades Union and, in fact, all those unions represented in the Trades and Labour Council with the exception of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. Why it was not there, I do not know. Mr Speaker, these discussions were very useful. We have agreed to meet again in a fortnight's time to discuss further the future of the Port of Darwin. Certainly, it is not the wish of this government, having put some \$47m of taxpayers' money into that port, to see it go to ruin. I am quite sure that the port unions are well aware of the position in which the port can be placed by activities which are not wholly desirable. As I said, very good advances were made yesterday. We are going to meet again, probably for the same length of time, in about a fortnight. We have agreed to set up a working party between us to examine areas in which efficiency can be improved at the port in order to keep stevedoring costs down as far as is practicable.

Mr Speaker, given that we are meeting again in a fortnight's time, I hope to be able to give more details on developments at the next sittings of the Assembly.

Expenditure in Aboriginal Communities

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Can he give members a comparison of expenditure in Aboriginal communities for both capital and recurrent town management and public utilities for the years 1983-84 and 1984-85 and state how much of the expenditure goes towards new and emerging communities?

ANSWER

To answer the question briefly, of TMPU funding to Aboriginal communities in 1983-84, the total amount directed to 84 major communities and 4 organisations was \$16.709m. To 84 minor communities, there was a total of \$2.559m. Of that, capital expenditure for the major communities was \$1.041m and for the minor communities, \$299 000. In 1984-85, 84 major communities and 4 organisations will receive in excess of \$17m. Of that, \$1.2m is capital and \$16m is recurrent. 126 minor communities, certainly rather a hefty increase, will receive a total of \$3.6m. Of that, \$2.921m is capital expenditure and \$678 000

is recurrent. That shows that not only is there an increase in funding but a large increase in the number of communities that require the splits of money that are needed to provide basic services.

Royal Darwin Hospital Bed Occupancy

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

How many beds are in use at the Royal Darwin Hospital compared to its total bed capacity?

ANSWER

As I understand it, the average occupancy of the Royal Darwin Hospital is about 82.25%. The honourable member would be aware that earlier this year we increased the bed state to some 300 to 350 because of the stress that was placed on the Royal Darwin Hospital services with the introduction of Medicare. For the honourable member's information, the authorised bed state in 1982 was 296; in 1983, it was 312; in early 1984, it was 324; and it is now 350. The average occupancy is only 82.25%. The average occupancy in 1982 was 82.98% and, in 1983, it was 86.78%. A very important factor has been brought to our attention. If we are looking at the occupied bed days of the Royal Darwin Hospital, in 1982 there were some 44 462 bed days. In 1984, it has increased to 54 196. There has been a dramatic increase in the last couple of years, particularly since February this year.

Defective Motor Vehicles

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has the government any plans to tighten up the law regarding the driving of defective motor vehicles?

ANSWER

To my knowledge, there is no intention to tighten up the law in relation to this. I would have thought the existing law is quite adequate. The question of policing that law rightly lies with the Northern Territory Police Force, which is not in my area of responsibility. All honourable members would be aware that the police recently announced a major campaign directed at unsafe vehicles. I do not know whether the minister responsible, the Chief Minister, has any further information. I have no information myself as to the success or otherwise of that campaign, other than to say that I fully commend the police for carrying out such campaigns.

Jackaroo Homestead

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the fate of the Jackaroo Homestead?

ANSWER

As I understand it, the Jackaroo Homestead enterprise, for which the Northern Territory Development Corporation loaned funds to the entrepreneur, Mr Chilman, has gone into receivership. As I understand it, the main asset of the company is real property and improvements adjacent to the Stuart Highway south of Berrimah. As far as I am aware, the receiver is taking action to

realise these assets and, no doubt, when a sale has taken place, a distribution will be made to the creditors.

Australia Day Holiday

Mr DALE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Northern Territory government's initiative to celebrate Australia Day on 26 January received further support?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory took action this year to celebrate Australia Day on 26 January. We announced that that was the government's intention a year or so ago at the previous Australia Day celebrations. For some time now, the Northern Territory has been campaigning for the Commonwealth and all Australian states to celebrate Australia Day on the day itself. This accords with the policy and the wishes of the Australia Day Council and I believe it is supported by a majority of people in the community. Surveys have been carried out and people believe that Australia Day should be celebrated on the day. Mr Speaker, can one imagine Bastille Day being celebrated on the following Monday? Can one imagine the 4th of July being celebrated on the following Monday? If Australia Day is to receive the recognition as Australia's national day which it deserves, then the whole of Australia has to agree that we celebrate it on 26 January.

Mr Speaker, the major impediment to these celebrations taking place on the day itself are industrial awards which have been so written that the Australia Day holiday on the following Monday has more or less assumed the characteristic of holy writ. This morning, I was heartened to receive a communication from the federal government which indicates that New South Wales and the Australian government will come into line with the Northern Territory and commence celebrating Australia Day on the day itself from 1988 onwards. I would hope that the other Australian states will bring themselves into line as well. In this case, the Northern Territory has set the trend in ensuring that Australia's national day is celebrated on the day that Captain Arthur Phillip set foot on the shores of Sydney Cove.

Alice Springs Airport

Mr HANRAHAN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has the federal government responded to the initiative and subsequent proposal by the Northern Territory government to upgrade the Alice Springs airport to international status?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it would be quite unrealistic to expect the Commonwealth minister to have responded; he would not have received the letter yet. Nonetheless, the document which outlines the government's proposal to the Commonwealth is in my hand at the moment. There are not a great number of copies of this but any honourable member is at liberty to peruse the submission we have made to the Commonwealth in relation to the upgrading of the Alice Springs airport.

Mr Speaker, you would be aware that this Commonwealth government and the previous Commonwealth government made offers to the Alice Springs Town Council, and later to the government of the Northern Territory, under the Airport Local

Ownership Plan for the upgrading of the Alice Springs airport as a domestic airport. The government simply cannot accede to such an offer on the basis of a domestic airport because, given the traffic volumes and flows and the way revenues are collected, it is the people of Alice Springs who will have to foot the bill. However, we are more than willing to enter into negotiations conjointly with the Alice Springs Town Council and the Commonwealth in relation to tripartite arrangements for the management structure of an international airport for Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, there is a sum of some \$14m which has virtually been set aside by the Commonwealth for upgrading the domestic side of the Alice Springs airport. Our estimate of the cost to upgrade the movement area beyond the normal wide-body requirements of the Alice Springs airport to the 747 Jumbo size aircraft from the 767 airbus operation would be an additional \$7m to \$8m. Geographically, Alice Springs is the hub of this continent. It is the hub from which all spokes radiate equidistantly to all the capital cities. It has been expounded for years that Alice Springs is an eminently sensible place to have an international airport, irrespective of east coast politics. The proposal that I have put to the Minister for Transport, Mr Peter Morris, is a very serious one. We wish to sit down with the Commonwealth and the Alice Springs Town Council to discuss this proposal for the betterment not only of Alice Springs and tourism throughout the Northern Territory, but also for the betterment of tourism throughout Australia.

5-year Plan for Aboriginal Communities

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What has been the success or otherwise of the government's 5-year plan which was trumpeted around Aboriginal communities nearly 5 years ago? Specifically, I refer to detailed achievements as regards its major aims in the fields of sanitation, water and housing.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been here less than 1 year and I am afraid I am not fully conversant with the 5-year plan.

Mr B. Collins: Good grief!

Mr MANZIE: Well, Mr Speaker, if I cannot answer the question, I will sit down until the opposition wants to be in order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to find out the details for the honourable member. I will provide that information to him at a later date.

Truck Parking in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for LANDS

Is he aware that a large and increasing number of interstate haulage trucks overnighing in Alice Springs are presently parking indiscriminately in areas around Alice Springs? If so, can he advise if any area has yet been identified as a parking base for these vehicles? I might add also that this problem will be compounded because of the speed with which the south road is being completed.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, indiscriminate parking is causing some inconvenience in the streets of Alice Springs because of the number of road transport operations which work out of there. There have been 2 proposals put to the government by private developers for land in Alice Springs for substantial truck servicing depots and overnight facilities for truck drivers. At least one of these is at a fairly advanced stage and probably should start construction fairly soon because lease offers were made and accepted some months ago. In relation to the other proposal, I am not sure if the lease offer has been accepted. The lease offers have substantial covenants that the developers have to meet in order to be entitled to have land sold to them under our direct sales scheme. I would hope that, within the next 12 months, at least the first major truck depot in Alice Springs will be operating to alleviate the problems in the honourable member's electorate.

Budget Discrepancies

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer him to comments made by the member for Millner in his budget speech of 30 August and ask that he explain to the Assembly discrepancies between budgeted and actual expenditure on capital works and repairs and maintenance in the 1983-84 financial year.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, when the Treasurer answered a question a while ago, the opposition did not seem to like the kick in the teeth he delivered to their wonderful colleagues in Canberra. I would suggest that they block their ears because they are about to get another serve of the same pudding.

The honourable member claimed that there was a deficiency in expenditure from an allocated amount of \$103.7m to \$99.54m - an underexpenditure, he said, of \$4m. Apart from his not being able to do his arithmetic, it is fascinating to find out just where the so-called \$4m actually came from. If he had done his arithmetic properly, the figure was actually \$4.581m. Why the discrepancy? Fascinating. Would you believe, Mr Speaker, that his mates in Canberra have once again clobbered us in the eye? Mr Speaker, \$1.8m of that \$4.5m just happens to relate to Mr Morris's little bit of playing around with the Stuart Highway.

Where do we find another \$1.768m lost to our capital works program? Would you believe, the Commonwealth once again? Too much to believe? It is true. It came from reduced specific purpose payment funding of Commonwealth projects in the tertiary education and, unbelievably, Aboriginal public health improvement programs.

Another \$0.513m - and, this time, we will not blame the Commonwealth - was transferred from the capital works program to the 'Other Services' subdivision - which was in the documents - to local government bodies throughout the Territory for expenditure on roads. Thus it was spent on capital works. This occurred because of a shift in the Local Government Association's allocations under the State Grants Act and the Bicentennial Trust Fund from 10.9% to 16.6%. The only component of the \$5.5m which was not spent as a result of lack of performance was a sum of \$500 000 as a result of the tardiness in completing the Darwin Performing Arts Centre.

In relation to repairs and maintenance, if the member had looked at the documents that he claims are so sparse in information, he would have found that the repairs and maintenance vote this year has been shifted from subdivision 5 of the budget documents to subdivision 2.

Milingimbi School

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that the Milingimbi School had to be closed down about 11 times during the last semester and, if so, what is his department doing to remedy the situation?

Mr B. Collins: It goes back about 10 years.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just mentioned that the issue has a long history. Our concern in the Department of Education is that the school has had to be closed down. However, that was not as a result of any fault on the part of the Department of Education. We believe very strongly in the devolution of powers to local communities and community governments. In relation to the sewerage problem at Milingimbi, the honourable member would be aware that it has resulted from a lack of action by members of the community council there. The Department of Education is looking very seriously at the situation in Milingimbi because it has been going on for a number of years and it cannot be allowed to continue. We will be addressing that particular problem but I might say that the responsibility comes with the devolution of powers. If lack of action by some people in the community causes other facilities to be closed, then we will have to look very seriously at doing something about it.

Aboriginal Land Bills

Mr McCARTHY to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it the government's intention to proceed at this sittings with the various Aboriginal land bills before the Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the best way of answering the honourable member's question is to read 2 letters. I received a letter from the Primer Minister on 12 October which reads as follows:

I am writing to suggest to you that, in light of present developments in relation to Aboriginal land rights, your government might appropriately defer further action in respect of the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (Vesting of Lands) Bill which is currently before the Legislative Assembly and reconsider its approach to other legislation relating to Aborigines. As has been reported in the media, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon A.C. Holding, and I have been having extensive discussions with a range of interested parties relating to the development of national policies on land rights and protection of sacred sites and objects.

Significantly, Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government has been excluded from those discussions.

In the past week, we have met with representatives of the National Farmers Federation, the Aboriginal Steering Committee on Land Rights Legislation and the Australian Mining Industry Council. On Friday last, 5 October, Mr Holding and I, together with the Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator the Hon Peter Walsh, had discussions with the Premier of Western Australia, the Hon Brian Burke, concerning the course his government has announced it will take on land rights legislation following completion of the Seaman Inquiry into land rights in that state.

These discussions have been most useful and considerable progress has been made towards a reconciliation of positions on many substantive issues. I am now confident that, following further discussions, we can reach a position where a national approach for land rights can be achieved that will enable proper regard to be given to different circumstances in the various states and territories while preserving the integrity of national aims and responsibilities.

That seems to open the door to a different land rights deal in the Northern Territory to what might apply elsewhere.

Naturally your government will have an important voice in these discussions...

We have not had one so far.

... and we will be in touch with you to see what arrangements can be made for this purpose. As to the vesting of land bill, you will be aware of the Commonwealth's concern that, if enacted, it would have the effect of alienating a number of parcels of land which are the subject of claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. Given the encouraging developments now taking place, however, I am sure that your government would wish to review the situation and that you will be able to agree not to proceed further with the bill at this stage.

I replied yesterday, Mr Speaker:

I refer to your letter of 12 October 1984 regarding Aboriginal land rights. I note your advice regarding actions taken by the Western Australian government and it is with this in mind that I draw to your attention that the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (Vesting of Land) Bill, which is currently before the Legislative Assembly, will do no more than preserve public purpose lands which, of course, is effectively what New South Wales has done, what Western Australia has announced and what Victoria has been considering.

Unfortunately, your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs had adopted a most intransigent attitude towards the Northern Territory position, which is essentially that public purpose lands and, for that matter, national parks should be exempt from land claim. Mr Holding has never explained why public purpose lands should remain open to claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act but not elsewhere in Australia. You will recall that this subject was addressed in detail by Mr Justice Toohey in his report Seven Years On but, despite my government's rapid response to the recommendation

contained in that report, I have yet to hear from Mr Holding as to the Commonwealth's attitude, despite the considerable time which has elapsed. I was negotiating with him with a view to there being a further inquiry to be conducted by the new Aboriginal Land Commissioner concerning public purpose lands which could operate without the constraints placed upon Mr Justice Toohey but Mr Holding is not prepared to state his hand in regard to public purpose lands which have been heard and or recommended.

I should also remind you of the telex which I was obliged to send you in response to Mr Holding's threats to take what he believed to be the deficiencies in the proposed amendments to the Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act to the Commonwealth Cabinet. I have had no response to those recommendations.

The Northern Territory is most anxious to work closely with the federal government in resolving issues relating to Aboriginal land but we must say that, as a matter of principle, the Northern Territory policy is that Aboriginal land should be held as far as possible upon similar terms to land held by other Australians.

Referring to the third paragraph of your letter, it is difficult to see that the circumstances in the Northern Territory, for instance, are different to those in Western Australia where the government has announced there will be no Aboriginal veto over mining or exploration.

You say that my government will have an important voice in discussions on national land rights. Unfortunately, up to date, the Northern Territory's voice has been almost totally disregarded by your minister. It is extraordinary to consider that, upon coming to office, Mr Holding dismissed with contempt the 10-point package towards which the Northern Territory government had been working in concert with the Commonwealth to resolve Aboriginal land matters only to find now that the Western Australian government has largely adopted the Northern Territory position of 2 years ago.

As to the vesting of land bill, it, together with excisions legislation and amendments to the Sacred Sites Act, is currently before the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. I would propose, so that there can be no claims at a later time, that these important pieces of legislation were debated in a highly-charged political atmosphere or without sufficient time being given for their consideration, although 2 of the bills have been available now for many months, to defer passage of the 3 bills through the Legislative Assembly until after the federal election.

I would be interested in the meantime to hear from you why the Northern Territory should continue to be treated differently in terms of Aboriginal land matters by the Commonwealth to the way that Western Australia and other states have decided for themselves.

Alice Springs Town Council's Request for Planning Input

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

I refer him to the Minister for Education's statement during question time that it is government policy to devolve power on local governments. Will the

minister accede to the Alice Springs Town Council's request for greater input into planning decisions in that town?

ANSWER

The matter of town planning functions for local governments has been pushed for by local governments ever since their inception. The government has persistently adopted an attitude, has advocated it publicly many times and has justified it many times to the individual councils. At present, it proposes to continue to do so. Primarily, our view is that, as the Northern Territory government is required to undertake planning functions throughout the Northern Territory both within municipal areas and without them, and has a substantial planning section in the Department of Lands with considerable expertise, facilities and resources, it would be inappropriate for town planning to be transferred to local governments in the Northern Territory. With the possible exception of Darwin, no council could even consider the budgetary imposts of a planning section of the level which would be necessary. It is doubtful whether even the Darwin council is of a size to employ the necessary resources to take over town planning fully.

Under the system that operates in the Northern Territory, we have a Planning Authority which changes its constitution depending upon where it is considering matters. It is comprised of 7 members, 3 of whom are core members. The core members travel throughout the Northern Territory to deliberate on the various town plans and submissions to amend town plans. Once the core members are in any particular area in the Territory which requires planning action, they are joined by 4 local representatives and perhaps this is a little bit closer to the honourable member's question. The 4 local representatives are nominees of the relevant local council. We believe that that provides an input to the Planning Authority by councils. In addition, councils have the ability - which in most cases they take up - to prepare submissions themselves and put their views to the Planning Authority on matters that are before the authority in relation to their local town plan. Also, the town planners in the Northern Territory Department of Lands consult regularly with local government town clerks and engineers on planning issues within towns. Every subdivision that is undertaken within municipal boundaries has to be cleared with local government, including aspects of layout and standards, prior to its being proceeded with and approval being granted by the local planning authority. Of course, all aldermen, and indeed any citizen in the Northern Territory, can put written submissions to the Planning Authority. They can propose amendments to the town plan and represent others before the Planning Authority if the authority sees that the points being put forward are such that appointments should be made for people to be interviewed personally. In fact, a very public process operates in the Northern Territory. It has many advantages over interstate planning systems where a whole range of local government areas adopt different attitudes towards town planning. In some cases, that has caused considerable delays to projects and proper planning in various areas around Australia. Honourable members will see plenty of examples of that if they travel around.

The Territory government does not believe that the time is right for the devolution of town planning powers to local governments as such. However, I point out to honourable members that, under the Planning Act in the Northern Territory, the Planning Authority has powers of delegation. It can delegate virtually to any person and certainly to a full council, a town clerk, a mayor or to a committee of a council. Most of the powers of the Planning Authority can be delegated in relation either to a particular application or to general classes of applications. It seems that, for reasons of which I am not aware, over the past few years, the Planning Authority has sought to use these powers

of delegation very sparingly. I am happy to receive any further representation from the honourable member on behalf of the Alice Springs Town Council.

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