

The Estimates Committee convened at 8.30 am.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: We are ready to commence, technical difficulties resolved. I welcome the Chief Minister and invite him to introduce the officer accompanying him and, if he wishes, to make an opening statement on behalf of the Auditor-General's Office.

CHIEF MINISTER HENDERSON'S PORTFOLIOS

NORTHERN TERRITORY AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Mr HENDERSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. First of all, Frank McGuinness, our Auditor-General, is here to answer questions from the committee. I have no opening statement, so over to the committee.

Whole-of-Government Questions – Budget and Fiscal Strategies

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: The committee will now consider the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2011-2012 as they relate to the Auditor-General's Office. Are there any agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies?

Mr MILLS: Good morning, Auditor-General.

Mr McGUINNESS: Good morning, sir.

Mr MILLS: I do not have any questions for you.

Mr McGUINNESS: None at all, sir?

Mr MILLS: Not one.

Mr HENDERSON: Not one? Fantastic – you must be doing a great job.

Mr MILLS: No, because we are always told to make good use of our time, and thank you very much for coming, Mr McGuinness. It was lovely seeing you.

Mr McGUINNESS: Well, thank you very much, sir. It has been a pleasure to have met you this morning.

Mr HENDERSON: It was interesting, there was no debate on the amendment to the bill, the Auditor-General's bill, there are no questions? He must be doing a fine job.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Nelson, do you have any questions?

Mr WOOD: I have questions, but not whole-of-government questions.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Not the whole-of-government. That concludes consideration of agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies.

OUTPUT GROUP 1.0 – AUDITS AND REVIEWS

Output 1.1 - Audits

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: We will move on to Output Group 1.0, Audits and Reviews, Output 1.1, Audits.

Mr MILLS: No questions.

Mr WOOD: Auditor-General, in relation to your audit of the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program, are you considering doing a second audit?

Mr McGUINNESS: Not at the moment, Madam Deputy Chair. The Commonwealth Auditor-General is doing a performance audit of SIHIP at present. I am waiting until that audit is finished, to see what the results are and to what extent we might then use the new powers under the *Audit Act* to ...

Mr WOOD: That is what I was going to ask you.

Mr McGUINNESS: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Those new powers would allow you to follow some of the money trail that you could not follow in the previous SIHIP ...

Mr McGUINNESS: I believe so, yes.

Mr WOOD: That will be good. I do not know whether the Commonwealth would be looking at an audit of employment of Aboriginal people under the SIHIP program. Would you be looking at that, even as a separate audit?

Mr McGUINNESS: I have not framed the audit of SIHIP yet. As I said, I am waiting to see what the Commonwealth report comes down with. I believe the Commonwealth Auditor-General will address Aboriginal employment as part of it.

Mr WOOD: I know you have the ability to audit many places, and one is the Charles Darwin University. Have you done any audit on Charles Darwin University?

Mr McGUINNESS: We do several audits out there of both the university and its subsidiary companies, and report on those to parliament each year.

Mr WOOD: So, have you done any audit on Mataranka Station?

Mr McGUINNESS: Mataranka is included; it is part of the university. Mataranka assets, in the context of the university, are relatively small, but we do attend the stocktake each year, which is where I think you might be wishing to take this question.

Mr WOOD: Stocktake is probably the right word in this case. Have you done a stocktake of the stock at Mataranka Station?

Mr McGUINNESS: Madam Deputy Chair, if we go back to 2009, which has been the subject of much public comment in the last few months, no stocktake was done in that year because we were advised the cattle were stressed and to muster them and bring them to a point for counting would stress them further. I was happy to accept that and use the stock records at Mataranka as the guide to what stock they had on hand. In that year, there were about 216 deaths recorded, which was higher than I would expect in the industry. I take the view that if you can achieve 2.5% mortality rate, you are doing reasonably well. I have based that estimate on a paper by Westerman published some years ago by the Bureau of Agriculture and Economics, as it then was. Westerman looked at the cattle industry in the Kimberley. Mortality rates were interesting. There was a direct correlation between the size of the herd and the mortality rate ranging from about 4% for small herds up to about 12% for large herds. At Mataranka, it might be viewed as a small herd. Allowing for improvements in animal husbandry over the period since Westerman's paper was published, I would say 2.5% would be a good figure to aim for.

In 2009, we found the death rate, the mortality rate, was about 5%. In the wake of subsequent reporting, I thought if the station's stock records were that wrong, then the next stocktake would highlight it and we would see a major discrepancy in numbers in 2010. This year, cattle were mustered, a good count was done, and deaths were about 124, so I cannot see where the 800 figure that has been used over the last few months is supported. The mortality figure for Mataranka for 2010 was about 2.5%.

Mr WOOD: Did you investigate whether that was through natural causes or whether there may have been some other factors?

Mr McGUINNESS: In terms of the deaths?

Mr WOOD: Yes. If you were looking at why there might have been any variations in the mortality numbers from year to year, did you see any difference from one year to the next?

Mr McGUINNESS: In the last few years, 2008 was the year of highest mortality in recent times. Part of the cause of that was that a fire went through the station in 2008 and the mortality rate was higher as a result. In 2009, the practices were not good. It is undeniable, and the tragedy of it is, it almost can be seen as a management text issue. You had a manager who was not prepared to take the advice of people around him, I suspect. You had people there like Toby Gorringer who probably knew more about animal husbandry than most people - he has forgotten more than most people knew. I do not think their advice

was being taken. The station did not have good supplemental feeding, and the animals wasted and died as a result. But the deaths for 2009, I am pretty confident, were about 216.

It is interesting that a consultant was engaged to examine the practices there. Tom Stockwell had arrived at similar conclusions some time earlier. He has academic credentials but, more importantly, he owns and manages a couple of stations, so he has some good practical experience to draw on. At one stage, he said: 'One can only guess about the real mortality figure, but a figure of 100 to 200 seems probable'. That was for 2009 and we found the stock records show 216, which was not too far from Stockwell's estimate. In the subsequent debate, I thought if those stock figures were manifestly wrong, the stocktake for 2010 would reveal that, and it has not happened. We have a lower mortality rate.

Mr WOOD: When will you finish your report on the CDU?

Mr McGuinness: I am hoping to sign the audit opinion this week because the university, under its act, has to deliver its annual report to the minister by 30 June. We are just haggling over minor issues to ensure I am satisfied with all the numbers.

Mr WOOD: Will that report be available for the inquiry on Mataranka to be held in two weeks time?

Mr McGuinness: These will be the financial statements of the university and they will be available.

Mr WOOD: Will that include some of those figures?

Mr McGuinness: The figures for stock will be included in the balance sheet and will have been verified using the muster and stock count, along with verified purchases and sales to satisfy ourselves that the end figure is supportable.

Mr WOOD: Have you done an audit on Batchelor College in recent times?

Mr McGuinness: We have just wrapped up the audit on Batchelor College.

Mr WOOD: As part of your audit do you look at standards?

Mr McGuinness: Standards of education?

Mr WOOD: No, standards of teaching.

Mr McGuinness: No. I confine myself to auditing the financial statements. I would be very careful about opining on educational standards without embarking on a proper performance audit. To do that, I would have to pull people in who knew something about education.

Mr WOOD: Thank you. That is all the questions I have.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 1.1.

Output 1.2 – Reviews of Public Information

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: We move to Output 1.2, Reviews of Public Information. Are there any questions?

A member: No.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Nelson, any questions to Output 1.2?

Mr WOOD: Yes. Auditor-General, how many times have you had to review Territory government public information? Have you had to reject any applications?

Mr McGuinness: Three referrals have been made to me, and I have reported to the Legislative Assembly on each of those. A fourth was made above the signature of a ministerial staffer, and I have referred it back to the MLA whose name was used and suggested that, under the act, he should make the referral to me, not via a third party.

I have collected the data I need but have heard nothing back from the member. It may be he has chosen not to pursue it. However, I have rejected none.

Mr WOOD: I have no other questions.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: That concludes Output 1.2. Are there any non-output specific budget related questions?

A member: No.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: That concludes audits. On behalf of the committee, I thank Mr Frank McGuinness for attending today.

NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: We will now move to the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

I invite the Chief Minister to introduce the officials accompanying him and, if he wishes, to make an opening statement on behalf of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

Mr HENDERSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. I introduce Bill Shephard, our Electoral Commissioner in the Northern Territory, to take questions from the committee. I have no opening statement.

OUTPUT GROUP 2.0 – ELECTORAL SERVICES **Output 2.1 – Electoral Services**

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to consider the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2011-2012 as they relate to the NT Electoral Commission.

I call on questions relating Output Group 2.1, Electoral Services.

Mr MILLS: Commissioner, good morning. Can you advise us the expected costs of the 2011 redistribution?

Mr SHEPHEARD: We expect it to come in probably around \$200 000. It is early days at the moment. When I say \$200 000 that is a little less than we did last time. It is quite difficult to predict because sometimes you have road trips and all types of things. We are still halfway through the process, and some of these things are slightly unpredictable.

We put many things in place the last time in templates and processes we will be more familiar with this time and be able to lean on. We are hoping it will come in around \$200 000.

Mr MILLS: Which is less?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Yes, less than last time.

Mr MILLS: Has the augmented redistribution committee been formed already?

Mr SHEPHEARD: It has been formed, I suppose, technically. It convenes for the first time next week.

Mr MILLS: Who was consulted as to the makeup of that committee?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Not the Electoral Commission; that is a matter for government. My understanding is the chairperson of the committee is appointed following consultation with all members of parliament.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, would you know who is being consulted to the formation of that committee?

Mr HENDERSON: The committee, as I understand it, has the same personnel as were on the previous redistribution. It is the same people.

Mr SHEPHEARD: Sorry to interject. It is the same people with the addition of the chair. They have a new chair. The chair is the person who is appointed following consultation. Sorry, I did not make that clear.

Mr MILLS: What funding has been allocated, commissioner, to the Electoral Commission for Budget 2012-13?

Mr SHEPHEARD: I am not sure. I do not have the figure here at the moment. The amount will not take into consideration the Legislative Assembly election, if that is what you are alluding to. Those figures are usually done by Treasurer's Advance. The difference you might note in the budget figures at the moment is a substantial budget estimation for costs in this financial year to do with the local government election, but that is funded on a different basis. The normal budget for us is about \$1.77m.

Mr MILLS: That was the cost of the 2008 election?

Mr SHEPHEARD: The 2008 election cost \$1.3m, from memory.

Mr MILLS: The predicted cost of the 2012 election will be by Treasurer's Advance?

Mr SHEPHEARD: It will be by Treasurer's Advance and will probably be in the same degree as 2008 with an inflationary cost involved.

Mr MILLS: How is that calculated?

Mr SHEPHEARD: It is calculated by the direct cost for the election, for equipment, personnel, advertising, etcetera. Any costs in the Electoral Commission itself are absorbed if it is just normal hours. Anything after hours for staff is calculated in the election budget.

Mr MILLS: If there are fixed parliamentary terms, could you explain why it would be then that you would require a Treasurer's Advance rather than having an allocation, even in a year-by-year system rather than waiting and then having a Treasurer's Advance? With accounting procedures, I thought it could be spread out over the four years.

Mr SHEPHEARD: I can only suggest that question is probably better directed to Treasury. I have actually suggested, in a 2005 report after the Legislative Assembly election, something similar to what you were saying should probably be in place. However, it is really a matter Treasury should deal with. I have raised the issue before with them, but that is their preferred way of dealing with the matter.

Mr MILLS: Unfortunately, the Treasurer was yesterday, but we can write a letter. The annual report, commissioner, of 2009-10 mentions that the NTEC will explore the use of electronic devices for marking off voters in polling places. Can you give us an update?

Mr SHEPHEARD: We put our toe in the water a bit with that one. At the Katherine Town Council, election, we had the roll on netbook computers. That seemed to work pretty successfully on that very small sample. We look to extend that in the fullness of time. In other jurisdictions, that particular technology is being explored and established more widely. Of course, with all forms of technology, there are things you have to take into consideration: the risk factor with it, in particular in our context where we do remote mobile polling and all sorts of things like that. There is also a necessity to bear in mind the training of polling staff. Our polling staff in general are acquainted with the manual way of dealing with things, so we have to have a fallback position if technology fails us on the day. Also the staff have to be fully conversant with how to use the technology. Having said that, the technology itself is not particularly difficult to use. There are different versions of it around, and we will certainly try to implement it for the next Territory election, even if it is on a small scale.

Mr MILLS: Oh, right. You referred to the fullness of time; we could well be looking at this for August 2012?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Yes, subject to legislative change.

Mr MILLS: Right. Are you aware of any proposed changes to legislation which would permit the use of electronic marking?

Mr SHEPHEARD: You will be aware I have made a couple of reports following the two general elections that the new Electoral Commission has run. Some of those suggestions have been picked up; others have been kept aside whilst there was a lot of harmonising with federal legislation and so forth. The Chief Minister's Department is currently driving the changes to electoral legislation and we are assisting in a technical way on that. What that will hope to pick up are these issues regarding some of the suggestions I

have made in the past, harmonising provisions in tune with recent developments in other jurisdictions, and also the government's own agenda, I guess, with that. That is currently under way and, hopefully, that will be in place before the next ...

Mr MILLS: What specific issues of the initiative of the harmonisation between Territory and the Commonwealth electoral laws are being considered, commissioner?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Again, I do not know how much I can talk on that. It is not being driven by the Electoral Commission. It is probably a matter that is best addressed by the Chief Minister's Department. When we talk about harmonising provisions, they are not necessarily big ticket items, but just making sure that many of the common provisions are the same; for instance, application for a postal vote or something like that. If the Commonwealth does change something, you naturally want to do a similar thing here.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, commissioner. I will ask the Chief Minister. Are there any specifics that you could advise us about matters to do with the harmonisation of NT and Commonwealth electoral?

Mr HENDERSON: Any work that is being done is yet to come to me, as the Chief Minister, or to go to Cabinet. I am not prepared to speculate on hypotheticals. There is no agenda that I am driving in regard to these issues. Obviously, the commissioner has made his reports to parliament post the 2005 and the 2008 elections. We have accepted some of those changes that have already been made, other changes we will not accept. I cannot speculate on things that have not gone to Cabinet yet.

Mr MILLS: That is all right. Can you then advise when you would expect that to be before Cabinet?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, this is not an issue I am driving at the moment. Of course, there is a process for changes to legislation. At the appropriate point in time, things will go to Cabinet and will come to the parliament. You will see them when they are in the parliament and they will be debated as any other legislation is debated.

Mr MILLS: I accept all of that. Are you able to predict, or give any idea of when this would be coming to Cabinet?

Mr HENDERSON: Well, no, because, as I said, it is an issue that is hypothetical and I am not prepared to speculate.

Mr MILLS: Electoral Commissioner, I have before me the 2009-10 political party and branch return of the Australian Labor Party, Northern Territory Branch. In 2009-10, the ALP received \$193 692. The *Electoral Act* requires that not only must a registered political party disclose the total amount received, it also must provide the names and addresses of people or entities from whom payments of \$1500 or more were received. Have you had to contact the ALP to check on the accuracy of their return?

Mr SHEPHEARD: That return, from memory, is due 16 weeks after the end of the financial year. We contacted the ALP a couple of times and they have had a change of a staff member - a registered officer has changed just recently. We have been in recent contact with them again. We generally wait until the federal returns are lodged and do some cross-checking, etcetera.

There was contact made, particularly earlier this year, and we have followed up in recent times. We understand they are looking into it and I would think we will be getting an amended return. I should say amended returns are not uncommon. I am not sure what the situation is with this one, but it is a frequent occurrence where you have to go back to parties to get them to amend a return, or query something, and seek further clarification at least, to an amended return.

Mr MILLS: You have asked a couple of times. How many weeks overdue is this?

Mr SHEPHEARD: The return is due 16 weeks after the financial year and it was lodged on time. All the returns from all the parties were lodged on time. In following up, I do not know if there was any deadline given to the ALP, but with the most recent contact we would be expecting something in the very near future.

Mr MILLS: It is certainly quite seriously overdue. We have the number in 2008-09 and an extensive list of the names and addresses of those who have made donation. However, in the following one, we have a number but we do not have anything. It is well and truly 16 weeks over. Do you have powers of investigation?

Mr SHEPHEARD: We do have powers of investigation into financial disclosure matters. They have never been used, as we have not been an Electoral Commission for that long, and the financial disclosure provisions have only been in since 2004. I do not know if we are particularly well-equipped in our permanent staffing for investigations of a serious nature.

Mr MILLS: What sort of tolerances does the commissioner have when it comes to this matter; this information being provided by the Labor Party?

Mr SHEPHEARD: I do not know if there is anything prescribed in the way of tolerance. We are at the stage now, if we do not get something very quickly, we would be looking at taking more serious action.

Mr MILLS: What could that serious action be, commissioner?

Mr SHEPHEARD: It would have to be some form of investigation. On financial disclosure matters, the parties have an obligation not only to lodge returns with us, but also with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has the same sorts of responsibilities, and we liaise with them before we go too far down the track.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, are you be aware whether this information has been provided to the Commonwealth?

Mr HENDERSON: This is an issue for the party.

Mr MILLS: Maybe it is, but are you aware?

Mr HENDERSON: I am not aware of these issues; it is purely an issue for the party, and the secretary of the party.

Mr MILLS: You are concerned, though, that this matter has not been dealt with adequately?

Mr HENDERSON: There are issues in finalising that return – issues for the party. I am sure it will be addressed and the appropriate information will be provided to the commissioner very soon.

Mr MILLS: It was 16 weeks to the end of the financial year and we are over that now. This is to do with political donations so it is quite a serious matter. Would I assume, commissioner, that the Commonwealth has not been provided this information as well?

Mr SHEPHEARD: I am unsure where the Commonwealth sits on this. The Commonwealth's timetable is a little different to ours. One of the things I mentioned before is a normal cross-check we would do with Commonwealth returns on that - even though they are on different thresholds and such. My recollection is that cannot really be done until about March or something of this year. You are quite right to say it is starting to be very drawn out. Having said that, there has been a Christmas/New Year break, the thing with the Commonwealth deadline, and a change of staff at the head level of the ALP. Even so, we are getting to the stage now where ...

Mr MILLS: Commissioner, I am curious as to what occurs for you to decide to investigate. You have asked them a couple of times and they have not provided it. At what point do you then decide to investigate or take it to a new level?

Mr SHEPHEARD: I do not know if I could give you a date; however, it will be in the very near future.

Mr MILLS: You appear to be a very tolerant man. Is there any pressure being brought to bear upon you to make it difficult to probe further about political donations that are not being disclosed?

Mr SHEPHEARD: No, no. It has rested entirely with our office and how we handle it. The disclosure return is from a party which we expect to be a little more organised than some of the candidates we deal with. However, we have to chase up the people for returns, particularly election returns. All I can say is it will be something that, if we do not get it very shortly, we will have to explore what options are open to us for investigation. I would probably need to get some legal advice on that because the commission has never been in a position where it has had to conduct an investigation before. I would be in contact with the AEC to see what it was going to do, because we would not want to double up on something.

Mr MILLS: You have been, commissioner, put in an awkward position. However, it is an offence is it not, under the act, not to provide this information?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Yes.

Mr MILLS: There is no description as to what level of tolerance there is before action is required?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Correct.

Mr MILLS: It is a judgment call on your part?

Mr SHEPHEARD: That is correct.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, you accept that the explanation of a change of personnel in the party is going to wash on this quite embarrassing situation for the party?

Mr HENDERSON: As I have said, it is an issue for the party.

Mr MILLS: Yes, that is correct.

Mr HENDERSON: I was unaware of this issue. It has not been raised with me and, from where I sit in the party I will ensure that that return is provided immediately.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. I imagine if this was the Country Liberal Party there would be a different approach from you, Chief Minister. However, it is not a good look and I expect you, as a member of the Labor Party, will ensure this embarrassment is resolved swiftly, otherwise the judgment call by the commissioner will have to be made in the best interests of the wider community who expect more. That is all, thank you.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: I am sure, after all that, it will now be fixed up very quickly.

My first question to Mr Shephard is a general one. The first page of your annual report mentions the NTEC is required to maintain electoral rolls, conduct elections, promote public awareness of election matters, and provide information advice on election matters to the Legislative Assembly and members of the Executive Council, Cabinet, political parties, candidates, and Territory authorities. It also says:

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act ... NTEC must prepare an election roll for any council election or poll of council members, make it available to the returning officer and make the roll available for public inspection at its public offices.

I just wanted to check: any person can walk into your office and check the roll for a particular electorate. Is that correct?

Mr SHEPHEARD: They can check the roll; yes, they can come in. The roll is provided in electronic form. It is not only a roll for local government or Territory elections, it is a national roll. People can actually come in and check a name on the roll anywhere in Australia.

Mr WOOD: Okay. I have a copy of the roll of the electorate. If a person comes into my electorate office, are they allowed to look at that roll as well?

Mr SHEPHEARD: The roll is provided to MLAs on the basis of their functions as an MLA. It is not provided specifically in the act for being a public access point for the roll.

Mr WOOD: That is true. However, is it illegal for an MLA? If someone comes in and asks them if Fred Bloggs is living in their electorate, am I free to show them those details?

Mr SHEPHEARD: If it is within the functions of your performance as an MLA. However, in providing the public inspection of the roll, I would say no.

Mr WOOD: It was not so much a whole inspection. I often get people come in and ask if I know if Bill Smith is still living in Howard Springs. Technically, we could just pull out the roll and have a look, or we say if they go all the way into Darwin they can have a look on your roll. I am in an area that I felt ...

Mr SHEPHEARD: The access points are, obviously, in our office. However, people can also check the roll on the Internet by going to the AEC's website. There are public outlets for the roll people can check. The difference is, in the one that is on the AEC which anyone can have access to, you have to get the name right. If I put in Shephard Bill and I was on the roll for Shephard William, it will not match. The roll in our office will actually bring it up. If you just punch in Shephard it will bring up the Shepherds in the Northern Territory, for instance. I am not sure what system the roll you have is ...

Mr WOOD: I might get to that; our system is woeful.

Mr SHEPHEARD: All I can say is the *Electoral Act* is pretty specific that security of the electoral roll is pretty paramount. The MLAs get extracts of the roll on the strict basis it is for the performance of their functions. I would not think that lends itself to the MLA being a public access point, or even responding in those sorts of ways. However, you have to look at each inquiry case by case.

Mr WOOD: In other words, you are saying we have to use it to our discretion?

Mr SHEPHEARD: All I can say is the electoral roll is provided to the MLAs on the basis they use it in their functions. If you deem that as part of the function, you might have to go a bit closer into what they want it for, if you are providing information. Many changes have been put in - not many changes but changes are continually being put in - to preserve that security of the roll. That is why the *Electoral Act* is so specific on when we actually provide the roll for people.

I, for instance, have the capacity to make the roll or extracts available for the purposes of medical research and that sort of stuff. Again, they have to come to me to get clearance for that sort of stuff. All I can say as an Electoral Commissioner is the security of the roll is held in pretty high regard. That is why it is so prescribed and we should be taking some care on how the information is given out.

Mr WOOD: I suppose the anomaly for me is, I can walk into your office and look at the roll. People are free to do that, but I also have the roll and then I have to apply discretion.

Mr SHEPHEARD: The reason why people can walk in and check the roll is because it is a public document; we cannot keep it a secret. At the same time, there are other issues about security that, in a modern world, need to be addressed as well, and that is why we have the legislation we have. There is a recognition that roll data is beneficial in the public sense with MLAs, but it is not necessarily suggesting they are access points, or should see them as being freewheeling giving out information on the roll.

Mr WOOD: I do not think there is any intention of that, only to clarify it.

Mr SHEPHEARD: No, that is for sure.

Mr WOOD: I get on to a subject similar to that. My question is about how updated your electoral roll is. I will give you an example. I have somewhere between 700 and 1100 members of the Defence Forces in my electorate. The problem is, that is not the exact number of people who are in my electorate, but is the number of people we know are on the roll. Why is it so difficult to get updated numbers for, not only Defence, but just the general public in my electorate, because it is way out?

Mr SHEPHEARD: Occasionally, MLAs raise the issue about the numbers on the roll as opposed to accuracy per se. I am not sure what the reason for that is. I am not fully acquainted with the system that actually provides you extracts of the roll. I understand it is maybe different from an Independent member to a member of a party, and ...

Mr WOOD: From my point of view, I would have thought the roll could be on a simple compact disc that just gave names and addresses, because I do not need any more than that - some members want to know people's ages and send birthday cards out to people - a basic roll that simply, each month is updated with deletions and additions. That seems awfully difficult to come by.

Mr SHEPHEARD: The system at the moment is something very similar to that, I would have thought. Basically, we get a monthly update from the AEC, which we forward on to the people who provide the service to you. My understanding is you have the basis of the roll, then you get an update and a deletions

file which you are supposed to update. Of course, I am not sure what the system is. If somebody does not update it on their own in-house system at the MLA level, then perhaps they can get out of whack. I am not quite sure in your case.

I believe an officer of my office has actually contacted your electorate officer to come out to have a look at how your system works. There are several points there, I guess. One is the accuracy of the roll in itself, and another is the accuracy of the roll in the database you hold. The third point is if there is a better way of providing you with the roll information, can we seek that out? We can provide the information in electronic form. From my recollection, I do not think the act specifies it has to be in specific electronic form. We are more than happy to come out and sort that out for you.

I just touch the general point, though, about the accuracy of the roll. Whether there is some failing in the transfer of data between the data distributor here and the MLA's office, or in the MLA's office itself, there is another issue about the accuracy of the roll. It is fairly clear - it is in the paper again today - the electoral roll in the Northern Territory is in very poor quality. It has been deteriorating for a very long time. What is attributable to the normal decline in the roll, and what is attributable to, maybe, the mechanical way it has been provided to MLA's needs to be determined.

What I can say about the roll in general is we have seen the raw turnout figures at elections deteriorating. People have been quick to jump on the bandwagon and think it is something to do with voter apathy or lack of services or something like that. It quite clearly can be attributed significantly to the quality of the roll, in that these people will not be voting because they do not live there anymore.

Mr WOOD: Whose job is it to maintain the roll, the AEC or you?

Mr SHEPHEARD: In prescription, we have a role for the maintenance of the roll at local government level, as well as at Territory level. The reality of the situation is it is a joint roll and the legislation requires that anybody who is a Commonwealth elector is also a Territory elector. Essentially, the AEC controls it because if they consider someone a federal elector, they have to go on the Territory and local government rolls.

Mr WOOD: Are you saying the AEC is not keeping up to scratch with the rolls, keeping them up to date?

Mr SHEPHEARD: By their own admission, the rolls have been deteriorating for a long time. By their own admission, the methodology that has been used in roll maintenance is not particularly productive these days.

Mr WOOD: We have an election in a bit over 12 months. What are you going to do to ensure the roll is up to date? We have fixed term elections, as the member for Blain just said. Surely, preparations should mean we can get rolls up to a pretty good standard by the time the ...

Mr SHEPHEARD: Yes, we are doing something about it. Now that we have fixed elections, you are quite right, it gives us the opportunity to do what we can as an Electoral Commission of the Northern Territory, and not so much the AEC. The AEC will run their own programs and maintain the roll along the lines of their own policy. However, with fixed term elections we now have the opportunity to organise on-the-ground initiatives ourselves to improve the quality of the roll. We have been given some funding for it - not quite as much as I would have liked - but it is funding we will be utilising prior to both the local government elections in March, which are compulsory elections, and also the Territory elections in August.

Mr WOOD: Can I ask a final question?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Nelson, I am just letting you know that, by virtue of the internal agreement with timing, you are over.

Mr WOOD: I will still ask one question and you will have to take it off the next bit. I ask respondents to be aware that some of us are on strict time limits for questions, so we might have to cut the answers down too.

An issue regarding local government elections was raised with me on a trip around the Barkly recently. In one of the previous local government elections, people, especially on cattle stations, did not get enough time to receive mail, especially in relation to nominations or information on when the elections were going to be held, and felt they had been disenfranchised. Has someone investigated those complaints and is there

going to be changes to ensure, not just on remote communities, but also people who live on cattle stations, know exactly what is going on, the timetable, and who is going to stand for election?

Mr SHEPHEARD: The Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services deals with local government. We deal with the actual roll-out of an election, which that is tied up with. One of the benefits this time around will be the shire and municipal elections will all be rolled in together in March. What we had last time, if you recall, was not an easy environment to operate in. We had the redistribution in 2008 which had just been completed, a snap poll for the Legislative Assembly, then it rolled out to the local government shire elections.

Mr WOOD: Will you be able to improve on last time?

Mr SHEPHEARD: The role of educating and rolling out a timetable was not really there in 2008.

Mr WOOD: Do you think it will be right for this election?

Mr SHEPHEARD: I do. If I can go back to ...

Mr WOOD: We will not go back; I have had my sign. Will you guarantee me those people who had a complaint regarding the adequacy of notification of nominations and candidates, especially in places where mail delivery is occasional, will have a chance to participate in those shire elections?

Mr SHEPHEARD: The shire elections have a long lead-in time this time.

Mr WOOD: That will happen?

Mr SHEPHEARD: It will happen.

Mr WOOD: That will do; I will be in trouble.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 2.0. Are there any non-output specific budget related questions for the Electoral Commissioner? No.

On behalf of the committee I thank you, Mr Bill Shepheard, for attending today.

OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: The committee will now consider the Ombudsman's Office.

OUTPUT GROUP 3.0 - OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE Output 3.1 – Ombudsman for the Northern Territory

Mr CHAIRMAN: I invite the Chief Minister to introduce the Ombudsman. Thank you very much for coming in. Do you have any statement you wish to make today, Chief Minister?

Mr HENDERSON: No, thank you, Mr Chairman. I welcome Carolyn Richards, our Ombudsman in the Northern Territory, to address any questions from the committee.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Not a problem, thank you.

Mr MILLS: Good morning, Ombudsman.

Ms RICHARDS: Good morning.

Mr MILLS: What is the reason for the delay of the annual report 2009-10?

Ms RICHARDS: All our statistics had to be calculated manually because we had a major computer failure. It is now at the printer and will be available shortly.

Mr MILLS: Good to hear. Computer failure – is the computer fixed?

Ms RICHARDS: No, we had to get a whole new system. We will be doing this year's annual report manually as well, but are on top of it now. We did not leave it until the end of the year. We are doing it month by month.

Mr MILLS: How are your calculators going?

Ms RICHARDS: I do not know.

Mr MILLS: This question relates to matters that are brought to your attention, and there would be many of those, I assume?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, that is right.

Mr MILLS: In the scenario of your capacity to fully undertake investigations into matters you deem important, is your staffing allocation adequate to fully investigate those matters?

Ms RICHARDS: Not all of them, no. We have had vacancies for the last 18 months. However, we received a new injection of funds that was approved in April this year. Since that time, I have recruited two more staff. I believe our performance will improve. The problem with not having enough staff is it takes too long to do things.

Mr MILLS: Yes. There have been vacancies?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, we had two positions vacant for nigh on 18 months because we did not have the funding to fill those vacancies. However, we now have an additional \$200 000 ongoing added to our budget allocation, which happened in April this year. We have, since that time, recruited two new investigators and we hope that will improve our time frames.

Mr MILLS: When you say there is a vacancy, does that mean there is funding and you are looking to find people to fill that position? How is it there are vacancies you are seeking funding for that can be called vacancies?

Ms RICHARDS: We have an establishment of a certain number of positions; each has a number. In my case, we have an establishment of eight investigators. When we were given new functions such as the *Surveillance Devices Act* and the *Telecommunications (Interception) Northern Territory Act*, the people who were doing those new functions had their positions reclassified. They said they had more responsibility and wanted their positions re-JESed - they call it. They were re-JESed so what was an AO8 position became an ECO2 position, and what was an AO7 position became an ECO1 position. That means those two positions alone took an extra \$180 000 a year they had to be paid. Because we did not have an overall budget allocation, that meant we did not have the money to fill the lower AO7 positions. However, that has now been fixed.

Mr MILLS: Good. Thank you. I am glad I asked that question because another way of saying this would be that the requirements, the obligations, of the office had increased, but the staffing cap had not?

Ms RICHARDS: There was not a staffing cap when this happened in 2007. However, the staffing cap also has had an effect because you cannot replace someone who is on long service leave or on maternity leave, for instance. That is the effect the cap has.

Mr MILLS: Has the cap increased?

Ms RICHARDS: It is a bit hard to answer because, during this financial year, the Health Complaints Commission has separated from the Ombudsman. We were the two agencies operating under the one umbrella. As of January this year, we separated. I have not yet heard from the Commissioner of Public Employment how that is going to affect the cap because eight of the staff who were in the Ombudsman's Office doing the work for the Health Complaints Commission have now been transferred to the Department of Justice. I assume what will happen will be Justice's cap will go up, and the Ombudsman will go down. Just a question of whether it goes down to the actual number of people we had as at March 2009 or whether it will be the number of established positions we have.

Mr MILLS: Have you made submissions for an increase in funding? There was \$400 000 requested in the last estimates.

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, that is right. We got half of that.

Mr MILLS: What was the basis of the \$400 000? Was that an ambit claim? You just thought: 'We will go for \$400 000 and, hopefully, we will get at least half of that'?

Ms RICHARDS: No. It was to cover the increased salary for the two officers I spoke about who had more responsibility. I also asked for \$100 000 so I could implement a memorandum of understanding we have entered into with the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

When the intervention started, the Commonwealth Ombudsman was given money to, in effect, extend the service here in the Territory. The Commonwealth Ombudsman goes out regularly to remote communities and takes complaints and promotes the services of the Ombudsman. We entered into a memorandum of understanding that we would join with him and do the same thing. It is both education as well as servicing those people out there. However, we did not get that \$100 000, so what is happening now is we are relying on the goodwill of the Commonwealth Ombudsman who, when they are out there, they take complaints and just give them back to us.

Mr MILLS: If I do my sums, you wanted \$400 000 you got \$200 000 ...

Ms RICHARDS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: ... but \$100 000 of the \$200 000 you did not get was for this MOU to be developed ...

Ms RICHARDS: That is right.

Mr MILLS: There is still a missing \$100 000?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, there is

Mr MILLS: What is that about?

Ms RICHARDS: That was to undertake more education activities and run the investigation program. We developed in-house an investigation training course, and we ran it in partnership with CDU for two years. However, we cannot manage to do our investigations as well as run a course because we just cannot spare the personnel. We have a waiting list of some 100 people wanting to do this investigation course in the public service here. There is no equivalent course, and we just have not been able to run it because we do not have the \$100 000.

Mr MILLS: You have just advised me of something that is very interesting. There is a course?

Ms RICHARDS: We developed it, yes. It is a ...

Mr MILLS: Do other Ombudsman Offices around the country offer courses?

Ms RICHARDS: Some of them do, yes. Victoria, for instance, has entered into a partnership with, I believe Latrobe University. The Ombudsman's Office does all the training, prepares the materials and then, at the end of it, the university or the college, which is a registered training organisation, is able to give a certificate. You can do the training, that is not a problem. However, the people who are doing the training, at the end of it, want to have some nationally-recognised certificate. That is why you enter into partnerships with someone who is a registered training authority. A registered training authority here is the Police College. We tried to partner with them and they did not want to do it, so we chose Charles Darwin University. We have not been able to do that this financial year.

Mr MILLS: Not because CDU is unwilling to partner with you?

Ms RICHARDS: No, it is just that we do not have the staff and cannot spare them, because it is an eight-week course.

Mr MILLS: How many people did you say are wanting to do this course?

Ms RICHARDS: We have a waiting list of between 80 and 100 ...

Mr MILLS: Good heavens!

Ms RICHARDS: Everyone needs to do investigations. There are industrial relations issues, disciplinary positions, environmental protection, child protection - I hear Bill Shephard might even be doing an investigation. There is a great need to have trained investigators, and there is no course offered here.

Mr MILLS: You actually made a submission last year, Ombudsman, for the ...

Ms RICHARDS: I believe it was late 2009.

Mr MILLS: Right. It was contained within the \$400 000?

Ms RICHARDS: That is right.

Mr MILLS: Okay. When you got \$200 000, was it explained that the \$200 000 is for this but it is not for that?

Ms RICHARDS: That is not the way Cabinet submissions come out, no. It was very brief.

Mr MILLS: But you had to make your own judgment on how you would use half the amount you had asked for?

Ms RICHARDS: We had already had a \$200 000 deficit from the previous two years and we had been surviving on Treasurer's Advances, so there really was not any question – that is where it went.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. That is very interesting. I will investigate that further, if I could do the course, but I will do the best I can. What is the anticipated release date for your investigation into the NT child protection system?

Ms RICHARDS: I have promised the minister it will be before the end of this month. At the moment, the draft is with the Department of Children and Families, because I am required to give them an opportunity to comment on it before it is finalised.

Mr MILLS: You would anticipate by the end of this month, given that?

Ms RICHARDS: Oh, yes.

Mr MILLS: The computer glitch that you have suffered ...

Ms RICHARDS: It does not have statistics in them. I have only borrowed - I have plagiarised from the *Growing them strong, together* report where I have used statistics.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Ombudsman, what is the anticipated release date for your investigation into the reprisals and harassment of Susan Mansfield?

Ms RICHARDS: I am not doing an investigation into that; I have not had time. Once the amendments were announced to the *Care and Protection of Children Act* in, I believe, March this year, I had to cease all investigation. However, I understand the department itself has engaged an independent investigator who is doing an investigation into that.

Mr MILLS: My second question related to your capacity to fully investigate matters that you deem worthy of investigation, and you cannot investigate all due to capacity. Is this one of those? If you had the capacity, you would have ...

Ms RICHARDS: No, it is a matter of time frame. When the amendments were made to the *Care and Protection of Children Act*, it removed the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to do investigations into child protection matters, unless there was a complaint about a police officer. That amendment is coming into force on 1 July this year so, thereafter, if I do not get it done, it is just not going to happen.

Mr MILLS: Are there any other investigations on foot which are related to complaints about the child protection system of vulnerable children?

Ms RICHARDS: There are no other investigations, no. I ceased all investigation in March, and have been concentrating on analysing the information which had been collected and writing the report.

Mr MILLS: Due at the end of this month. Are you satisfied with the government's response to your report into the deaths of cattle and horses at Mataranka?

Ms RICHARDS: I believe, yes. My main recommendation was that someone needed to look at animal welfare and how it is enforced and implemented. As I understand it, there was a debate in parliament about that, and it has been referred to the Council of Territory Cooperation.

Mr MILLS: Have you had any further complaints about related matters?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, not about cattle and stations, but about animal welfare issues, yes.

Mr MILLS: Are any of these being investigated?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: And?

Ms RICHARDS: I am sorry, I am not free to answer.

Mr MILLS: I understand. Ombudsman, have you received any complaints that are related to water quality or testing of bores - either the results, or the testing procedure - by a Northern Territory government agency?

Ms RICHARDS: No.

Mr MILLS: In the past 12 months, what complaints related to the actions of police were raised with you? What is the status of investigations of these complaints?

Ms RICHARDS: Since the new commissioner came - and, particularly the deputy commissioner, who has responsibility for these issues - the work being done by the police, who actually investigate the complaints, has improved considerably. It is particularly pleasing to see the time it takes to investigate complaints has been shortened and the number of cases and complaints where the police actually go and see the complainant and give an explanation and conciliate matters has improved.

There are still a number of cases that exceed the six-month time limit. The relevance of that is if six months expires from when the complaint was made, no disciplinary action can be taken against the police officer, even if the investigation discloses that it was appropriate or justified.

The police have increased the speed at which they are doing things and that means we have had a little more pressure on us. They do the investigation, they do a report, they send it to us, we comment on it, and we do our review on documents only. On one or two occasions, we have gone further and spoken to a witness, but usually it is done on documents only. Then I might have a meeting with the deputy commissioner and we will have an argy-bargy about why I do what I do and the police department does what it does. One of those was the phone records of a journalist being looked at. We either work it out or, if we are at substantial disagreement, I can then do a report to the Legislative Assembly. However, that has not happened yet.

Mr MILLS: Yet - you mean there are some potentially going down that path to the Legislative Assembly?

Ms RICHARDS: Possibly, yes. We usually sort it out. I find the attitude of the current police management very favourable and fair.

Mr MILLS: Good to hear. Have you issued any government agency a summons for information requested in the course of an investigation in the preceding year?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Were the summons successful in obtaining the information requested?

Ms RICHARDS: The summons usually asks for all information. I can say with a number of summonses, when we receive information, it is apparent from what we read there is other information we

have not received. Usually, we would follow it up. However, that has not happened with the child protection matter because we ran out of time.

Mr MILLS: There were 50 summonses from last year's Estimates ...

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, that would be about right, because that was when we were doing the Mataranka matter. I believe we had also done the chaplaincy matter. Of course, when you are dealing with child protection, they have very strict confidentiality requirements in their act. Although the *Ombudsman Act* says those secrecy requirements do not apply when you talk to the Ombudsman, people do not seem to understand that, so we issue summonses so they feel safer.

Mr MILLS: The summons is made and information provided and, in an assessment of that information, you find there is missing information - it takes us back to the request for additional resources does it not? That would certainly slow the process down. Can you comment on the effect of the non-compliance? When you ask for all information and all information is not provided, how seriously does that impact upon your capacity to investigate?

Ms RICHARDS: It can double or triple the time it takes to get a specific piece of information because we do not accept what we are told until we have seen the source records. We go by the records and, if there are any gap and we are satisfied we have them all, we will then ask to speak to a witness to fill in any gaps.

Mr MILLS: If you get into a situation, which appears to me would be not infrequent, what recourse do you have to ensure people play the game correctly and do not go down that path which impedes your capacity to properly and thoroughly investigate?

Ms RICHARDS: Usually a phone call to the CEO has an amazing effect. However, if that does not work, then the ultimate sanction is someone can be prosecuted for not responding appropriately to the summons.

Mr MILLS: Usually a phone to the CEO results in the withheld information being released? 'Usually' implies not always. How many are we looking at where there still is a reluctance to provide information?

Ms RICHARDS: It is reluctance; however, the bigger problem is very poor knowledge management and record keeping in two or three particular agencies.

Mr MILLS: What are those agencies, Ombudsman?

Ms RICHARDS: It would not be fair for me to name them at this stage. Mr Chairman, am I ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: No, that is fine. You are allowed to answer the question however you see fit.

Ms RICHARDS: We could start with the Motor Vehicles Registry, Health Department and child protection authority. They are the three worst offenders.

Mr MILLS: You have, obviously raised, this a number of times. Cabinet would be aware of your concerns?

Ms RICHARDS: It has been raised in a number of reports. The Coroner has raised it in some of his reports.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, have you any advice as to how that area could be improved? It must be difficult to manage these matters; however, they are important nonetheless. What is the response when you hear this?

Mr HENDERSON: My response is I would expect CEOs to comply with the act and provide the information the Ombudsman requests in accordance with the act. That is a clear responsibility and a legal requirement.

Mr MILLS: That is the correct answer. However, if there is some systemic problem, disorganisation, or improper processes which need some focus, what measures have you employed or are at your disposal to ensure there is a proper process in place and they have the capacity to efficiently provide the information to the Ombudsman as requested?

Mr HENDERSON: To be fair to Families and Children and the Ombudsman, that is a new agency which has just been established. Many of the records, record keeping and archive material will be transferred from the old department. One of the recommendations in the Howard Bath report that led to the establishment of the new agency was to address the record keeping requirements, and that is being done. I expect that to improve significantly as a result of the additional funding provided to that new agency to implement the recommendations in that report. I was not aware of systemic problems with MVR and their record keeping, so I will look into that. The other one, Carolyn, was Health?

Mr MILLS: Health.

Ms RICHARDS: Yes.

Mr HENDERSON: If that relates to child protection I have covered that. However, the MVR issue I was not aware of. It may have been in one of the reports.

Mr MILLS: Does it relate in Health, Ombudsman, to child protection, or more broadly?

Ms RICHARDS: No, just Health generally.

Mr HENDERSON: In regard to Health, those issues are for the Chief Executive Officer to address. Health has a very significant budget - over \$1bn now - and there is a requirement for the agency to comply with the act. That is an issue for the chief executive of that agency to get right. I encourage the Ombudsman to have discussions again. We have a fairly new CE of the Department of Health, and I am not aware if Carolyn has had an opportunity to discuss those concerns with him.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, the question, though, was: what tools do you have at your disposal to ensure there are adequate processes which permit the efficient provision of information? You said funding. You said Health has a very large quota of the Territory budget, so funding, yes. However, what tools do you have at your disposal, as the Chief Minister, to bring some solution to bear upon this problem?

Mr HENDERSON: For me to have tools to bring to bear a solution, I would need to understand the absolute detail of the problems. I have not had an explicit request or brief to deal with a particular issue. What I am saying is I expect Chief Executive Officers of government agencies to comply with the requirements in the acts. If they have difficulty because of IT issues or record-keeping issues, then I would expect the Chief Executive Officer of that agency to deal with those issues. They have budgets, they have the ability to prioritise expenditure and to raise issues with ministers and, ultimately, for those issues to come to Cabinet. It is a core requirement of chief executives to comply with their obligations under the acts, and I expect them to do so.

Mr MILLS: With respect, Chief Minister, as the Opposition Leader - and as any citizen would also have the same expectation - you hold quite a unique position, and the question is quite explicit. What tools do you have at your disposal?

Mr HENDERSON: I have answered the question.

Mr MILLS: An expectation that they comply?

Mr HENDERSON: No, not an expectation, a requirement that they comply.

Mr MILLS: Okay, so therefore ...

Mr HENDERSON: Because it is a legal requirement.

Mr MILLS: Right. How do you give a substance to the requirement? How does the authority of the Chief Minister make use of the fact that there is a requirement, and that requirement is, in fact, met? What can you actually do?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, we are dealing in hypotheticals here, because I have not had a conversation with the Ombudsman about explicit problems the Ombudsman may have with a certain agency. I am quite happy to have that conversation with the Ombudsman and, then, have subsequent conversations with relevant Chief Executive Officers to hear their side of the story.

Mr MILLS: Sure, thank you. Probably the fairer and more appropriate question, therefore, would be: what will you do now?

Mr HENDERSON: I am more than happy to have a discussion with the Ombudsman about these issues within these agencies and, then, have a discussion with the relative chief executives and require them to ensure they meet the requirements under the acts. However, I have not had that explicit conversation with the Ombudsman, so I am not aware of the details of the particular problems the Ombudsman has. But, I am happy to have that conversation.

Mr MILLS: Yes. I really did not ask about how you dispose towards having the conversation, I asked you what are you actually going to do?

Mr HENDERSON: I will have a conversation with the Ombudsman ...

Mr MILLS: You will?

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely. I have said that for the last five minutes.

Mr MILLS: No, I was hearing that you were happy to have one, but will you have one?

Mr HENDERSON: Okay, if you want to play semantic points, that is fine.

Mr MILLS: This is Estimates, and it is actually quite a serious matter. I just wanted to know what tools you had at your disposal - there is an expectation and a requirement. What will happen with that requirement? You will have a ...

Mr HENDERSON: I will have a conversation with the Ombudsman about those issues.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister. Ombudsman, are there any plans to reopen the Alice Springs Ombudsman's Office?

Ms RICHARDS: No.

Mr MILLS: Not one? The Alice Springs folk wanted that question asked, and they expected the answer. However, once again, for the questions asked previously, you were able to provide an assurance that matters of concern to people remote from Darwin can be adequately met in the Darwin office?

Ms RICHARDS: Before we closed the office, 8% of the complaints and inquiries we got from Alice Springs came through the Corrections direct line, e-mail, or a telephone line which was answered in Darwin anyway. The number of people who actually came to the office was very small. I am, in fact, going to Alice Springs - I think it is the second week in August - because we have a series of complaints about a particular issue and they seem to be associated. So, someone is going down there for three or four days to see the people who have these problems. It is not as though we have abandoned Alice Springs.

Mr MILLS: You would not want to do that. Ombudsman, there are the familiar areas we have covered over the last number of years of the areas of complaint. We have just heard reference to the need for improved systems within MVR and Health. Can you advise of any new areas of complaint in the past 12 months?

Ms RICHARDS: We are getting more procurement complaints than we did. When I first took up this position in 2005 there were many complaints, usually from businesses, about procurement matters. Then there was a new procurement framework introduced - I think it was 2007 or 2008 - and that seemed to cut down on the complaints quite considerably. However, lately there seems to be an increase of them. Someone has said to me that usually when the work is drying up, there is more competition and more dissatisfaction on the part of those who miss out. I do not know whether that is the explanation or not.

Mr MILLS: You have a number of matters under investigation at that moment?

Ms RICHARDS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Then you will be able to find the answer to that question of whether it is just that they are feeling it is tight times, or whether it is, in fact, systemic problems, corruption, or ...

Mr HENDERSON: A point of order, Mr Chairman! I really caution the use of that language. We are still governed by the standing orders. I ask Mr Mills to withdraw allegations of corruption in the procurement system, unless he has any evidence to support that.

Mr MILLS: No. I withdraw that. Whether it is a matter of an investigation, and whether those matters would reveal things I have just suggested is really a matter of procedure; it is not an allegation by any means. So I withdraw that ...

Mr HENDERSON: Thank you.

Mr MILLS: It is not an allegation, but the purpose of an investigation, obviously, is to undercover the source of that problem.

Mr HENDERSON: And in support of the Ombudsman's investigations. All of us, as local members of parliament, receive complaints from people around procurement from time to time. It is a very tightly contested area, as the Ombudsman has said. The economy is much tighter than it has been for a few years. We can see that through the procurement system. There are many more people tendering for work than were a couple of years ago. Also the government is putting much more work out into the marketplace to try to keep the economy going. Procurement people across agencies are under the pump to get work out of the door to support the economy. I have absolute expectations of the system to be fair and transparent. If the Ombudsman brings forward any information to me or to the parliament that there are issues with that, they will certainly be dealt with because that is the expectation of our business community.

Mr MILLS: You are the Chief Minister, I am the Opposition Leader - I have the same expectation.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, absolutely.

Mr MILLS: That is a given. You and I, as local members, hear of matters from time to time that cause real concern ...

Mr HENDERSON: I refer people to the Ombudsman.

Mr MILLS: ... so we are both coming from the same side of the argument. Thank you for the answer to that question, Ombudsman. No further questions at this point.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The Independent member is not here, so he has no questions. That concludes questions to the Ombudsman. Thank you very much for your time. We now move into the Department of the Chief Minister. We might take a five minute break at that stage as we change witnesses.

The committee suspended.

DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Chief Minister, would you like to introduce the officials accompanying you and make an opening statement.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman. I have Mike Burgess, the Chief Executive of the Department of the Chief Minister with me to my left and Phil Vivian, the Chief Financial Officer to the right. There are other people in the department behind me if there are any topics or specific issues we cannot cover on the front bench. I have a short opening statement I wish to read to put the agency in context.

The Department of Chief Minister provides a leadership and central coordination role in facilitating government's priorities, positioning the interests of the Northern Territory at the local, national and international levels, and supporting the business of government.

The Territory continues to go from strength to strength. Economic growth is strengthened and it is now 2.2% at \$17.3bn, and our unemployment rate of 2.4% is half the national average. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis the Territory is proving resilient. With future growth from projects such as the \$25bn INPEX/Total Ichthys LNG project and other LNG projects in our region, we are set to reap an even greater reward.

Along with Western Australia, we are expected to lead the nation's economic growth over the next five years. We have also made real progress across health, housing and education outcomes through the whole-of-government initiatives such as *Territory 2030*, the Territory's first long-term strategic plan, and *A Working Future*, our plan for improving the lives of Indigenous Territorians.

At a more detailed level, there have been great achievements in my department. The Policy Coordination Group responds to the myriad of issues emanating from the COAG process and national partnership agreements. This year, I have also had the honour of chairing the Council for the Australian Federation. Coordinating the implementation of initiatives under *Territory 2030*, the NT Climate Change policy and the Alice Springs Transformation Plan forms a significant workload for the Chief Minister's Department, and government as a whole.

The major projects in Asian Relations and Trade continue their vital work in attracting investment to the Territory, facilitating major projects such as downstream gas-based developments, including a new marine supply base, and coordinating the many interrelated complex matters in the concluding stages of the lead-up to the final investment decision for the INPEX Ichthys LNG project.

The department has also been extremely busy this year on other significant matters including across government coordination of social change, multicultural advancement, and strategies to ensure the Territory remains a great place to live and work.

All sections of my department work long hours and hard days. The Office of Parliamentary Counsel has been processing an unprecedented volume of legislation. Protocol is well-known for their hectic work program and strategic communications work to tight and demanding headlines, and do it very well. Corporate Services and administration elements of the department continue to provide a valuable service to the department as a whole, as well as to the Administrator and ministerial officers. I am extremely proud of the efforts of every single staff member in my department.

In relation to questions on the Department of Chief Minister, I inform the committee I will be taking questions on outputs Policy Advice and Coordination, Multicultural Advancement, the Alice Springs Transformation Plan, Major Projects, *Territory 2030*, management of the Darwin waterfront, ministerial officers, Legislation Production and Community Support. Questions on Asian Relations and Trade output will be covered by Minister Knight next Wednesday.

I am happy to take questions from the committee.

OUTPUT GROUP 4.0 – POLICY ADVICE AND PUBLIC SECTOR COORDINATION
Output 41. – Policy Advice and Coordination

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any questions on Output Group 4.0 – Policy Advice and Public Sector Coordination, Output 4.1, Policy Advice and Coordination?

Mr MILLS: Yes, I have questions. Chief Minister, yesterday – this relates to the area of Policy Advice and Coordination – the Treasurer failed to respond to repeated and very specific questions about the Territory budget's return to surplus. Can you advise, in relation to policy, when the Territory budget will return to surplus?

Mr HENDERSON: The Treasurer, yesterday, was frank in her advice to the committee that we will return the budget to surplus as soon as we possibly can, dependent on, essentially, the growth in the GST pool from the Commonwealth, and other reviews of taxation and revenue that are in play at the moment. However, there are many unanswered questions in regard to the tax summit to be held before the end of this year - the review of GST allocations to the states is a big threat to the Northern Territory and outcomes are unknown from that particular process - and our own budgetary decisions.

We will continue to support the economy to the best of our abilities and, if that means going into deficit, we will. We will bring the budget back to surplus as soon as possible, and do it without threatening our credit ratings and other external oversight of the budget through rating agencies and the Commonwealth. I am not going to put a date on it, as there are too many unknowns in regard to Commonwealth processes that could have very significant impacts on the Territory budget.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, I expected that answer; it is a reasonable response. You have outlined a number of the risks or threats to the Territory: the shrinkage of the GST pool; the tax summit - unknown what is coming from that and the implications that may have on the Northern Territory; and the review you

referred. Given all that, it is not possible to predict. We can expect or hope and want it to occur. What would you say is the greatest threat to the Northern Territory capacity to get out of deficit into surplus in a timely manner?

Mr HENDERSON: Crystal ball gazing across all of the potential issues on the horizon, obviously, whatever happens as a result of the mining tax as well could prove to be very beneficial to the Territory if there is additional infrastructure funding. That is another issue that could have significant impacts on our budget. In regard to specific issues that pose the greatest threat to the Territory's bottom line would be the review of the GST relativities and the carve up of the GST between the states.

Mr MILLS: Can you be more specific as to the nature of that risk, and specify the nature of the risk? What is the response from government on that particular line of threat?

Mr HENDERSON: The specific risk is in our revenue from the Commonwealth to the Territory government budget. Obviously, 80% of all revenues expended in our \$5bn-plus budget come from the Commonwealth, and the vast majority of that through the GST pool. The carve up of the GST was established when the GST was legislated for between the states. It is quite obvious if some states such as Western Australia - which has been arguing for a bigger slice of the pie - get it, other states will receive a smaller slice of the pie to fund the additional request from the Western Australians. That is the threat.

In regard to response to that threat, at the very highest level through Treasury we will be making very strong and significant representations to the panel that has been charged with overlooking this particular review, that all of the arguments in developing jurisdictions still apply to the Northern Territory. Regarding the argument that now, for example, Western Australia requires a stronger share of the GST and the parameters that supported developments in Queensland and Western Australia over the years - Queensland and Western Australia are strong economies and growing, therefore, they need more infrastructure funding - the same applies to the Northern Territory. We are much smaller than those economies in Queensland and Western Australia but, proportionally, we contribute more in per capita to GSP in Australia than any other state. We are a developing jurisdiction, and just a small movement of a decimal point in regard to our funding stream could have very serious consequences to the budget. We will be putting up the fight of our lives to ensure if a particular state is to receive more, there is not 1¢ less for the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: That is good, Chief Minister. I hear the fight of our lives and I look at Western Australia and I see Col Barnett leading the charge on that ...

Mr HENDERSON: To take money from the other states.

Mr MILLS: He is leading the charge advocating the best interests of his constituents. I look on the other side and see other Chief Ministers or Premiers leading these fights. Tell me about your fight for the Northern Territory. What specific representation and campaigning are you embarking upon to meet this very real threat?

Mr HENDERSON: Obviously, I have a direct line to the Prime Minister. I have made significant representations to the Prime Minister, the federal Treasurer - our Treasurer making significant representations to the federal Treasurer - and we will work through the process that has been established with the best possible positioning from Treasury as to why, in the event of a carve up of the GST, the Territory should not receive any less than we currently receive. We will work through the processes established by the Commonwealth to the very best of our ability. I have to say, in regard to the Department of Treasury and our Under Treasurer, we have a very good track record in achieving support from the Commonwealth for the Northern Territory. We have a great team in Treasury. They are very experienced in putting forward these arguments, and we will put the very best argument we possibly can. I will use every influence I have with the Prime Minister and federal Treasurer to ensure we do not receive less than we currently receive. If there is an opportunity for more, obviously, we will be out there grasping it with both hands.

Mr MILLS: Thanks, Chief Minister. We all want that to occur. We have identified a very real risk. We do not hear from Western Australia that the Treasury officials are the ones at the front line of this defence or this response ...

Mr HENDERSON: It is an offence.

Mr MILLS: Right. We do not have an offence in the Northern Territory that is being led by any politician. We have phone calls being made, we have significant representation - whatever that means - and we have an admission that its process that will be followed through in the attempt to meet this very real threat. Could you tell me what you mean by significant representation with the members of the Labor government in Canberra?

Mr HENDERSON: I have already said I have met with the Prime Minister on a number of occasions and made significant representation as to the risk this poses to the Northern Territory's budget, the same with as our Treasurer has with the federal Treasurer. The reality of life is, you can grandstand all you like, but what you should be doing is working through the processes the Commonwealth government has put in place. That is what we are absolutely doing. As I said, my absolute expectation is not 1¢ less for the Northern Territory, given the state of development and the Indigenous disadvantage issues in the Northern Territory. We will work through those processes and use all the levers we have at our availability. However, we are at the beginning of that process and we will work through it in a professional way.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, it is just that this is a threat, and is a very serious threat. You used the term 'this is the fight of our lives'. I am sure Col Barnett, for example, has made phone calls. I am sure he has made significant representation and Treasury officials are involved in discussions, and process is being followed. However, none of that constitutes, in my mind or anyone in the Territory's mind, that is evidence of a fight for the life of the Territory's financial stream in resisting the threat we have with the GST pool being altered and our proportion being decreased.

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, I am not sure what level of access the Premier of Western Australia has to the Prime Minister. Probably, he does not have the access I do, given the Prime Minister and I are from the same political persuasion. In regard to the Western Australian Premier, he is arguing for a bigger slice of the pie, and that is an argument, of course, he is entitled to run.

However, in regard to the Northern Territory's position, as I said, the reality of this situation, Leader of the Opposition, from where I am sitting, is that grandstanding will get you nowhere, but hard, diligent work, putting together the very real risks - not only to our economy in the Northern Territory with the contribution to GSP which is disproportionate to the rest of Australia in favouring the Australian national accounts, and particularly the challenge in regard to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage - would mean in any fair, reasoned, and balanced process about the competing needs of the different states at the different levels of their development, would ensure the Territory does not receive less. That is the path I am responsibly embarking upon. I am not grandstanding for political theatrical purposes, but working through a very real challenge the Northern Territory faces, and I am very hopeful we will not receive any less.

We are at the start of this process, not at the end of this process. It is a process which has been initiated by the Commonwealth government, and we will do everything we can to ensure we do not receive less. But, I am not going to grandstand for political, theatrical processes. What I am going to do is ensure the best outcome for the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: I believe it is unfair to describe the actions and responses of Western Australia, for example, as sheer theatrics.

Mr HENDERSON: I have not said that at all.

Mr MILLS: You said they are putting up a fight and ...

Mr HENDERSON: No, I was not referencing my comments to Premier Barnett at all. I am saying I am not going to grandstand and play political theatrics. Who you want to apportion that to is up to you, but I am not apportioning it to Colin Barnett.

Mr MILLS: Who is it you are referring to? Others putting up a fight is theatrical; you are following a process.

Mr HENDERSON: No, in regard to the questioning you are providing me, that somehow you believe there should be more theatrics from my side on this issue, I am saying I know how the Commonwealth works. I am the person who sits around the COAG table to fight for dollars for the Northern Territory. We have a very good track record; I have a very good level of access to the Prime Minister and other senior members. I am pointing out that this is a real threat and we will do everything we can to ensure we are no worse off. But, I will not be doing it by way of political theatrics and grandstanding.

Mr MILLS: I am concerned, and it is a very real concern, Chief Minister, that when you use language like 'the fight of our lives' and then ...

Mr HENDERSON: That is not new; I believe the Treasurer said that at the time.

Mr MILLS: The use of that language and, then, the evidence of that fight is phone calls and significant representation ...

Mr HENDERSON: It is not phone calls. I have said I have personally ...

Mr MILLS: ... and the adherence to process ...

Mr HENDERSON: No, no, listen. I have said I personally met with the Prime Minister, so not just phone calls ...

Mr MILLS: No, I have said that ...

Ms WALKER: A point of order, Mr Chairman! The Leader of the Opposition has asked the question at least three times now, and the Chief Minister has answered that question. I suggest, given that time is of the essence here, we really need to move forward on this.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. I remind members that Estimates is conversational in nature, so there is a degree of back and forth. However, Standing Order 114 does say repeating questions and questions fully answered cannot be renewed ...

Mr MILLS: If fully answered!

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, you have the call in what questions you ask. Obviously, once you ask the question the Chief Minister will respond, and we will keep going that way.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. I am trying to get beyond. I also have an expectation that we are going to meet this challenge; everyone has an expectation. What I am concerned about, Chief Minister, is what you are actually saying; that you are in a better position than Colin Barnett because the Prime Minister is of the Labor Party and, therefore, insider trading is going to give us the running, which Col Barnett does not have.

Mr HENDERSON: I am wondering where you are coming from here, Leader of the Opposition. Are you advocating the case – I know you are from Western Australia – for Colin Barnett; that Western Australia should receive a greater share of the GST pool? I am the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, and my job is to do everything I possibly can to ensure the best possible outcome for the Northern Territory. That is what I am focused on; I am not here to prosecute the case for any other state about whether they should get more or less.

I have answered your question. I state again I have personal access to the Prime Minister. There are processes being put in place in regard to two ex-Premiers who are going to oversight this review. We will make the presentation to them at the appropriate time, once all the information comes to hand of how this process is going to unfold, how the assessment is going to be made, and under what criteria of who is going to get more, who is going to get less. We have the Commonwealth Grants Commission. We have had an established process in place for many years where the Grants Commission determine the relativities of the GST. In fact, the Grants Commission has recently provided new relativities that informed our budget process. What is the future of the Commonwealth Grants Commission in this process?

There are a heap of process issues in regard to how this assessment is going to be made, how it is going to be evaluated. Once we understand that, we can form the best possible representation for the Territory's cause. Until we understand all those issues it is hypothetical to determine how the representation is going to be made. However, I expect the Territory would not receive 1¢ less in regard to our relativities the way the GST is carved up because of the state of our developing economy and of the very significant Indigenous disadvantage the Commonwealth government has acknowledged.

Mr MILLS: For the record, no, I am not advocating in the interests of Western Australia.

Mr HENDERSON: You mentioned Colin Barnett more times than ...

Mr MILLS: I did because of a very specific effort made in Western Australia which I see as a direct threat to the Northern Territory. For the record ...

Mr HENDERSON: You should be using your influence to call him off. He has all the mineral royalties to fall back on...

Mr MILLS: That is what I am referring to, Chief Minister.

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely. If you can join with Team NT and call on Barnett to back off and leave the Territory alone, it would be very helpful.

Mr MILLS: For the record, I have made representation because I have special inside running: back off INPEX. However, that is another story. The point I am making ...

Mr HENDERSON: Do not start; do not go there. There is some very interesting correspondence you sent out to the northern suburbs about INPEX. I will get a copy of it.

Mr MILLS: Go your hardest! Chief Minister, I am particularly concerned about is you are effectively saying you have special access to the government. If that government changes, it is at risk. A non-Labor Premier does not have the same level of special access as you have. If that were to change, are we then doubly exposed?

Mr HENDERSON: I am not going to play hypotheticals. I do not anticipate a Commonwealth election over the next few years, and I have no idea what Tony Abbott's view is regarding a carve up of the GST. I deal with the issues I am faced with; I do not deal in hypotheticals that are unlikely to materialise.

Mr MILLS: I can read this quite clearly. 'Fight for your life' is a nice turn of phrase, but I do not see the evidence of it, Chief Minister

Mr HENDERSON: Maybe you do not; it is up to you.

Mr MILLS: The live cattle trade, Chief Minister. Were you advised of the blanket ban on live cattle trade exports prior to the announcement by Senator Ludwig?

Mr HENDERSON: I was advised the night the Prime Minister was here last week, and the night the Prime Minister and Warren Snowdon met with the cattlemen. I was advised that evening of the decision, yes.

Mr MILLS: Were you at the meeting?

Mr HENDERSON: I was not at the meeting; I had another meeting scheduled that night. I had a conversation with the Prime Minister that day and was advised of the decision. I was advised the cattlemen would be advised that night as a courtesy to them.

Mr MILLS: It was that evening you received the advice? In what form did that advice come?

Mr HENDERSON: It was a discussion I had with Warren Snowdon.

Mr MILLS: Was it a conversation or a phone call?

Mr HENDERSON: It was a conversation. I was travelling with the Prime Minister and Warren Snowdon.

Mr MILLS: Given you were not advised prior to this announcement ...

Mr HENDERSON: I was advised prior to the cattlemen being advised. The formal announcement was made the following morning.

Mr MILLS: Would it be fair to say you were advised a matter of hours before the announcement was made?

Mr HENDERSON: I am unsure what time the media release went out from the Commonwealth government; however, it was the late afternoon prior to the meeting the Prime Minister had with the cattlemen last week - Tuesday last week.

Mr MILLS: You were advised on Tuesday?

Mr HENDERSON: I was advised late Tuesday afternoon, prior to the meeting with the cattlemen that evening.

Mr MILLS: Prior to that, Chief Minister, you were with the Prime Minister? Correct?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, I was with the Prime Minister.

Mr MILLS: Can you describe the matters of concern you raised with the Prime Minister during that time regarding the effect a potential ban on live trade would have on the Northern Territory?

Mr HENDERSON: I had a conversation the following morning with the Prime Minister and ...

Mr MILLS: Wednesday morning?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, because it was not the Prime Minister who advised me, it was minister Snowdon.

Mr MILLS: Nonetheless, it was impending. The *Four Corners* program had already been aired; there was concern in the community ...

Mr HENDERSON: Very much concern.

Mr MILLS: You would have been able to recognise the real threat this would have in the Northern Territory. I take it on the Monday and the Tuesday when you were with the Prime Minister you did not raise these concerns?

Mr HENDERSON: No, the Prime Minister, to my memory - and I have to get this right - did not arrive in the Territory until the Tuesday.

Mr MILLS: Right. So, in the time you were with the Prime Minister, or even just after the program had been aired, at any stage did you raise the specific concerns related to the effect this would have on the Northern Territory if a blanket ban were imposed?

Mr HENDERSON: Hypotheticals. At the time there was a temporary ban – sorry, let me go back a step. The position of the Commonwealth government as of before last Tuesday night, after the *Four Corners* program was shown, was there was a ban on Australian cattle going to the abattoirs that were shown in the *Four Corners* program. There was no talk of a blanket ban being considered by the Australian government. There was a lot of media speculation, but there was nothing coming from, as I understand it, the minister's office through to the Primary Industry minister. Regarding a blanket ban being announced on the Wednesday - I believe it was announced on the Wednesday morning after the discussion with the cattlemen on the Tuesday night - yes, it did come as a surprise to me because I was not contemplating there would be a blanket ban on the live cattle trade.

The discussions I have had with the cattlemen in the Northern Territory has been fully supportive of getting this trade returned as quickly as possible. I, absolutely - and I have had a conversation with you - appreciate, understand, and really feel for producers, people who are employed directly and indirectly in this industry, and I want to see this trade returned as quickly as possible. We will work with the task force that has been established to get accreditation through the supply chain and get this moving again as quickly as possible. So, yes, it did come as a surprise to me that a blanket ban on the entire live export trade to Indonesia was being implemented.

Mr MILLS: Frankly, Chief Minister, I am surprised it was not difficult to read this is the way it was going to go ...

Mr HENDERSON: No ...

Mr MILLS: It appears to me, with the special relationship you have with the Labor government you are running behind the game.

Mr HENDERSON: No. If your crystal ball was that the Australian government was going to impose a total ban on the entire trade to Indonesia, I did not see any comments from you at that time that was a

potential outcome. I worked with the information I had. My responsibility is to work within the processes that have been put forward - not to politicise this - and to get an outcome as quickly as possible, and that is what I am doing.

Mr MILLS: As we have talked before, this is a very real threat to the Northern Territory. Given that it is a significant threat, what estimation has been made of the cost of all the damage this ban could have to the Territory economy? I assume that is done because you need to mount substantial argument as to why this should be understood and then should be expedited.

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely.

Mr MILLS: What assessments have been done?

Mr HENDERSON: The industry is worth around \$300m to the Territory in live exports. About 1700 people are employed directly and indirectly in this industry, and the threat is very significant, with real job losses in that workforce. I appreciate and acknowledge the good people from Katherine who were part of your media conference yesterday. I met with them and many other people. They can only pay wages for so long without having an income. I absolutely am acutely aware.

There is a process in place. Territory government officers are on that task force with the industry to ensure an accreditation regime through the supply chain to get this trade happening as soon as possible. We are hopeful by the end of the week we should have a better estimation of how long that is going to take. My position with the Prime Minister and other federal government ministers is this is extremely urgent, and we need this trade resumed as quickly as we possibly can. I am not talking about months, I am talking about weeks, if not days.

Mr MILLS: Nonetheless, Chief Minister, in risk management, I assume there has been an assessment made as to the damage that is already being incurred in the Northern Territory ...

Mr HENDERSON: I have just told you what it is.

Mr MILLS: Yes, well, you are in a more privileged position than I. I hear the stories anecdotally but you, as the Chief Minister, have responsibility for government and governance. In the real threat that is presented to the Territory, what assessment of the potential threat to the Territory budget has been made in specific terms? Has there been a request for some risk management, some contingency plans?

Mr HENDERSON: At the end of the day, the assessment is this is worth around \$300m to our economy; 1700 people are employed directly and indirectly. There are multipliers that flow from that. Regarding the threats to the Territory economy, the reality is, in talking about the Territory budget, we raise very little of our own source revenue. There would not be many people in the primary industry sector apart from the major companies that pay payroll tax. There would be some impact on stamp duty, particularly the transfer of cattle properties across the Northern Territory. I am sure there will not be any properties transferred until this particular issue is resolved. In significant and direct impacts on the Territory budget, this does not pose a very significant risk directly regarding revenue. In expenditure, yes, if we had a significant increase in unemployment and significant regional disadvantage in places like Katherine and Tennant Creek, then there would be an additional impost on government expenditure as a result of a rise in unemployment. But, again, we are playing hypotheticals here until we get some understanding of the time frame this ban is going to be in place for.

Mr MILLS: Once again, are we just hoping that it turns out okay and we are not actually going down the path of risk management assessing? Let us be very specific then. We have heard the general terms - and I am not the Chief Minister, you have access to material that I do not have; you have responsibilities I do not have. When it comes down to specifics, what about job losses, say, in the Indigenous community? How many jobs are likely to be lost if this is prolonged for three months?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, there are 1700 jobs directly and indirectly associated with this industry. My understanding of direct/indirect Indigenous employment in the industry is around 600, so there would be significant job losses. It all depends on individual property owners and the Northern Land Council on behalf of traditional owners. It would all depend on the relationships individual property owners have with their banks, what their position is with their banks, and what their banks are prepared to do in overdraft facilities. That would be a property-by-property assessment, and different properties and different companies would have a greater capacity to keep the payroll going than others. That is the situation.

It is a hypothetical until we get some clearer understanding from the task force that has been established - which has industry and government members - as to how long this particular ban is likely to be in place. That is the highest priority I have requested to come back from that task force; to give industry some certainty about how long this is going to be in place for, so they can then go and negotiate with financiers, bankers, and other institutional arrangements they may have. That is the greatest uncertainty. As I said, we are hopeful for some clarification from that task force by the end of this week.

Mr MILLS: So, there is no specific processes around risk management, there is no assessment from government? You are hoping it works out?

Mr HENDERSON: No, that is not the case at all. I have answered significantly that until we know potentially how long this ban is going to be in place for - it was announced last week a task force has been established. It met for the first time on the weekend, as you well know, and we should have an indicative assessment by the end of the week. Once we have some clearer factors in this equation, it is very difficult to put any modelling in place outside to say this is a very real and present danger to rural and regional people in the Northern Territory. This trade is very important to the economy of the Northern Territory, and up to 1700 jobs are at risk, directly and indirectly, as a result. Until we can put some more numbers into the equation, it is very hard to model anything.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister. As Minister for Defence Liaison, how many meetings have you had with the Department of Defence, who have you met with, and what was the subject of these meetings?

Mr WOOD: Could I ask a question on the cattle?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister, we have some flexibility in the committee. If there is a line of questioning, we will allow the member for Nelson to come in.

Mr WOOD: It was not a case of not wanting to ask the Ombudsman any questions, but that I would run over time.

Mr HENDERSON: I am sure the Ombudsman will be happy to meet with you any time, Gerry.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, you know my thoughts on resuming live cattle exports. What has happened is a tragedy. I have to be realistic that what we saw on television is abhorrent. I have a *Jakarta Post* dated this week, 13 June, which says that slashing legs and throat are all in a day's work. It talks about a person who believes that crippling animals before they are killed is normal. I believe that is inhumane and we should open up the cattle trade again to those slaughter houses that use methods that would be acceptable in Australia. How can you guarantee, or what will happen to guarantee those practices will never occur when our cattle go overseas? Are we putting into place - in relation to this motion we are going to debate tonight - mechanisms which will have people permanently in Indonesia making sure that our cattle do not have to face those processes which we all abhor?

Mr HENDERSON: Thank you, member for Nelson. This is exactly what the task force which has been established by the federal minister has to ensure - that no Australian cattle are going to be treated in that way - before the trade can commence.

I will table two documents that might assist the committee and Territorians in general in the understanding of this debate. They are both public documents, but I do not think they have had wide circulation. The first one is a communiqué that was issued by the federal minister as a result of the phone hook-up that was held between Joe Ludwig, our minister here in the Territory, Western Australian and Queensland ministers, and industry on Friday last week. The communiqué clearly states - and I will table this after I read from it:

Issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

The suspension of the export of livestock for slaughter to Indonesia.

The meeting noted the government's decision to suspend the export of livestock for slaughter to Indonesia.

The meeting noted the core elements of the safeguards that the government will require before trade can resume in full. These are:

- *adherence to auditable acceptable welfare standards right through the supply chain to the point of slaughter;*
- *full traceability,*
- *full monitoring, auditing, and compliance; and*
- *agreement with Indonesian authorities.*

The meeting agreed to work together to establish and implement these safeguards.

The task force established by the federal minister includes industry representation, as well as government officials. We pushed hard to ensure Luke Bowen is on that task force, and he is now. I was concerned the Territory industry did not have a seat at the table, given the huge impact this is having on the Northern Territory. The task force has been charged with delivering that criteria. Regarding your question, member for Nelson, of how we can be assured, as the result of the resumption of this trade, that those types of practices will not happen for Australian cattle; if the requirements are met - and they have to be met under the federal government's requirements - I would be confident it would not happen again because there will be full traceability, and full monitoring, auditing, and compliance with those requirements.

The second point I made in the media conference yesterday is in regard to comments from Indonesia and individual Indonesian politicians who make comments on this. All of us who understand Indonesia understand it is a complex body politic over there. There are many different parties and groups that use issues for whatever reason. What we can go on is the official Indonesian government policy and statements on this matter. I, appropriately, met with the Indonesian Consul here on Friday to discuss these issues. The Indonesian Consul is the Indonesian government's representative in the Northern Territory and for me to meet with him is appropriate. Feedback from that meeting goes back to Jakarta as well as the embassy in Canberra.

I told the Consul this issue would not have a broader impact on the Territory government's relationship with Indonesia; a well-developed and supported relationship over many years. However, it was a specific issue we had to address and it would be confined to this issue. He pointed me to a media release issued through the Embassy of Indonesia in Canberra on 1 June, which is the official Indonesian government position on this, as opposed to individual members of parliament who might be quoted in various newspapers.

I will quote several paragraphs because it is important in the debate:

Indonesians themselves are appalled at these findings, especially considering that the widely-accepted convention in preparing Halal food stipulates the humane killing of livestock with proper Islamic prayers beforehand and applying one quick stroke in the jugular area to guarantee the least amount of pain to the animal. This principle underlies the expectations of the general public in Indonesia, almost 90% of which are Muslims who expect nothing less than a strict adherence to this Halal stipulation.

As recently as 2009, the Indonesian Government updated its regulations on animal welfare through the Bill on Livestock and Animal Health ... which clearly states that preparing meats must fulfil the health requirements as outlined by the Veterinary and Animal Welfare Community, whilst also fulfilling the religious techniques upheld by society in general.

This is the point:

Additionally, this law also dictates that the killing of animals for their meat must be done in the best manner possible, specifically, that the animal must be free from pain, fear, pressure, misuse and torture.

There are other parts to this release.

The official Indonesian government position expressed to me by the Consul in Darwin, in this media release and in comments from the Indonesian President, is that those practices are unacceptable. They are unacceptable to the government and are in direct contravention to specific legislation amended in 2009. Those comments from the Consul and the Indonesian government through the work happening through the

federal Department of Trade and Foreign Affairs lead me to believe this issue will be resolved and we will not see those practices again.

I have to work, as Chief Minister, with all the responsibilities of ensuring this trade is expedited as quickly as possible through official processes. That is the official position of the Indonesian government. I was very heartened to see that, and am certain when this trade resumes those practices will not be apportioned again to Australian cattle.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr HENDERSON: I table those two documents to assist in the debate.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, what role will our departmental people play in not only advising, but maintaining standards required for Northern Territory cattle?

Mr HENDERSON: We have departmental people on the task force. Our departmental people from Primary Industries will be part of the task force that will be putting together the regime to support the requirements of the federal minister. Once those procedures have been determined, there has to be a monitoring and compliance regime. Whatever that is, we will participate. My concern is we have to get this right and be confident, when the trade resumes, *Four Corners* or any other camera crew is not going to get into one of those abattoirs and expose those abhorrent practices on Australian cattle again. If it happens a second time it will be very hard for the industry to recover. We will be part of any compliance regime put in place as a result of the task force we are now on.

Mr WOOD: Do you have any estimate of when the compliance program would be up and running?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said in answer to the Leader of the Opposition, I am hopeful by the end of this week we will have a better understanding of the time frames we are looking at. The task force was only established over the weekend; it is now meeting around the clock. We have to wait for that to come through. However, whatever resources are needed from the Territory will be provided. The Primary Industry minister and I met with the Prime Minister when she was in Darwin last week on this issue. We have pledged all the resources we can put to this.

Also, our Primary Industry minister has a very good relationship with the Indonesian Agricultural minister. When it is appropriate for him to visit, that will also take place. We are working through the official diplomatic processes as part of Team Australian to get this right, and we will do it responsibly.

Mr WOOD: Thanks, Mr Chairman.

Mr MILLS: My question is regarding RAAF housing. Chief Minister, how many meetings have you had, as Minister for Defence Liaison with the Department of Defence? Who have you met with, and what was the subject of these meetings?

Mr HENDERSON: I do not have specific dates and time in front of me now, but I meet with Defence Department officials on a regular basis across a whole range of matters. I do not have the specifics of dates and times and who I have spoken with about what. There would not be a week goes by when I am not speaking, informally and formally, with people who are either Defence officials or people with the Defence Department.

Mr MILLS: To be more specific, Chief Minister, in the question, this is related to the RAAF housing. How many meetings have you had in relation to RAAF housing with the Department of Defence?

Mr HENDERSON: I have had one meeting with the minister responsible for the RAAF housing, which happens to be Warren Snowdon, in Canberra about the same time the member for Nelson was in Canberra with the member for Fong Lim on this particular issue. Warren had just been appointed minister for this area. I had a meeting with Warren, who is the minister, who said he was going to conduct a full review into Defence's decision around RAAF housing. Obviously, I articulated the position that the Territory government did not want to see those houses destroyed, and they should be made available in the marketplace.

Warren has concluded his review and announced, at a media conference last week - I think it was or maybe two weeks ago - there had been a revision in regard to the land at the RAAF Base. About a third of the land that was going to be resumed by RAAF for things other than housing will be kept for housing, and

there will be housing at the RAAF Base. The other two-thirds of the land would be made available to RAAF. So, there will still be a third of the houses that are currently there on the RAAF Base - maybe not exact numbers. There has been a review and a decision made to maintain about a third of the current stock on that particular site.

There was no point liaising with the department officials because I met with the minister, and the minister ordered a review into the decision, and that is the outcome of the review.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister. I am curious - and I hope you can explain this to us - that in federal parliament recently, the government indicated RAAF houses had been offered to the Northern Territory. It was reported that offer was not accepted. Can you ...

Mr HENDERSON: I do not know where those comments came from, because the position we put prior to the last federal election was that those houses which were fit to be inhabited should not be demolished, and the Territory government would seek to facilitate the relocation or the sale of those houses into the marketplace. Obviously, we were not going to become the proud owners of however many hundred houses there but, if they were to be put onto the open market for sale to other organisations or community groups we would work with the Commonwealth to facilitate that. That was the position. To my knowledge there was no direct offer. I do not know what the government would have done with several hundred 35-plus-year-old houses. It is not really the business we are in.

Mr MILLS: You must accept this is a concerning revelation that members of your own party in Canberra ...

Mr HENDERSON: They are wrong. Who was the member for this? Laurie Ferguson. I have never had a conversation with Laurie Ferguson about this.

Mr MILLS: What, not even since it became public and it is on *Hansard* that this was reported? Have you had a conversation ...

Mr HENDERSON: I have made public comments, and I have said that he is wrong, and I have never had a conversation with him about it.

Mr MILLS: You have not followed it up?

Mr HENDERSON: No, I have other things on my plate. What would I do with several hundred 35-year-old houses? The position of the Northern Territory government was, as this occurred very successfully at the RAAF Base, that a private company purchased those houses, removed those houses from the RAAF Base, and is now putting them on the market for sale, and doing so quite successfully. That is the preferred outcome. I would have thought, being a party that champions the private sector, you would have thought that was a pretty good outcome.

Mr MILLS: What I am still not satisfied with, Chief Minister, is that you have not responded, in my view, adequately to these revelations that have come from the federal parliament ...

Mr HENDERSON: What revelations? They are comments by a member of the federal parliament who has never even had a conversation with me about it. I have other issues to deal with, like the suspension of the live cattle trade. This is very much an issue that I have responded to in the media and that is my position. What Laurie Ferguson thinks did or did not happen is a matter for him. I have never even met the bloke.

Mr MILLS: You have never met Laurie Ferguson?

Mr HENDERSON: No.

Mr MILLS: You have not followed this up? It leaves a question hanging as to who is actually telling the truth.

Mr HENDERSON: I am under the requirements of parliament here. I am saying the position was always that we would work to facilitate the non-destruction of those houses where they could be devolved through the community - never to be the proud owner.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister. How many houses have been sold in the last 12 months?

Mr HENDERSON: Houses from where?

Mr MILLS: RAAF Base.

Mr HENDERSON: From the RAAF Base. I am not aware of how many houses. All of the houses on the RAAF Base were sold under a tender to a private company. They were all sold; the private company bought them and has relocated them. How many that private company has on sold is a matter for them.

Mr MILLS: You do not know?

Mr HENDERSON: I do know that there have been a number of inquires for sale. There have been some issues around certification that were being worked out. The last time I had a discussion on this issue was about a week ago.

Mr WOOD: That was the Naval base, was it not, you were talking about?

Mr HENDERSON: Sorry, I am talking about the Larrakeyah houses.

Mr MILLS: I am too, actually.

Mr HENDERSON: Well, that is good. It is a bit about deficits and surpluses.

Mr WOOD: That is why you need one Independent in here.

Mr HENDERSON: Maybe we need another cup of coffee, I think.

Mr MILLS: I have seen them. I am wondering, just last week you have had a report as to how those sales are going?

Mr HENDERSON: No, there were issues around some certification that needed to be sorted out before banks would finance loans on those houses. The company concerned advised me they had strong inquires; that they were advertising those houses on the television. I have seen the ads that are being run. How many transactions have been completed in the last week, I do not know. It is really a matter for them; it is not an issue for me.

Mr MILLS: It is in Policy Coordination. It would be an indication of how ...

Mr HENDERSON: He was very confident, once the certification issues were solved, that he would sell them - very confident.

Mr MILLS: Yes, I am just answering your question, Chief Minister. In Policy Coordination, those numbers and sales would give a clear indication as to the state of the housing crisis and whether the problems around accreditation could impede people getting a house in a housing crisis. That is why this question is being asked, but we will leave that. Do you have any questions on that RAAF housing?

Mr WOOD: Not RAAF housing, other housing.

Mr MILLS: Other housing?

Mr WOOD: Yes, Aboriginal housing.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Keep going, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MILLS: What was the estimated cost of Cyclone Carlos, Chief Minister?

Mr HENDERSON: I believe I have a number in here, I saw it yesterday. Can you answer that, Mike?

Mr BURGESS: Mike Burgess, Chief Executive, Department of Chief Minister. There is a brief and I will find it. The cost to the department in the aftermath of Cyclone Carlos is estimated to be around \$35 000. If you are seeking a broader response about how much damage was incurred in the Territory ...

Mr MILLS: No, no. The people who were moved from the Daly River community were housed at Batchelor for a period of time. Are you able to advise those details of the costs associated with that move, and the cost of feeding those people who were evacuated?

Mr HENDERSON: Before we get to that, in answer to your question, Leader of the Opposition, I take the opportunity to congratulate Northern Territory Police and Emergency Services and the Coordination Committee of Katherine who organised that evacuation. I went down the following day after people had been evacuated. Getting over 300 people out of there as quickly as they did without any injuries – not so much as a sprained ankle - was a significant achievement. While we are looking for that number, I wanted to put on the record my thanks to the people who organised the evacuation because it was a Herculean effort in difficult circumstances.

Mr WOOD: Daly River people have had plenty of practice; they are good at doing their own thing.

Mr HENDERSON: They have. It was a good, well-organised evacuation. Can you help us, Mike?

Mr BURGESS: I do not have exact details of the accommodation, but I understand the Department of Children and Families will have that because they handled the transactions; they contracted the accommodation service and the food and all the rest.

Mr MILLS: That would be family and community services payments to Batchelor College?

Mr BURGESS: Yes, that is right.

Mr MILLS: That advice can only be provided when we get to ...

Mr BURGESS: They will have an accurate figure. I understand it is in excess of \$0.5m.

Mr MILLS: What about the Yuendumu issue? What was the cost associated with handling that matter of the relocation, accommodation, backwards and forwards?

Mr HENDERSON: There is a brief in regard to that. I believed it was \$130 000, but it is \$158 000.

Mr MILLS: Is that broken down into details, or just a number?

Mr HENDERSON: Mike Burgess.

Mr BURGESS: We do have a breakdown of that, which can be provided.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. I request a breakdown on the costs associated with the ...

Mr HENDERSON: We have it here; we can table it.

I can say on this - and it depends how the debate goes; I will not be too political - these costs were provided, to a large extent, because there was a significant number of children accommodated within this particular group who went to and from Adelaide. Let us not get into the situation of how they ended up in Adelaide in the first place, unless we want to have a blue about that. I believe the costs were appropriate. They were costs which should and could have been avoided in the first instance, but the fact that there was a significant number of children accommodated within that group meant that support had to be provided.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, I appreciate your comments there. I am not going into a debate, I was just asking for the breakdown of the numbers ...

Mr HENDERSON: Regarding the \$158 000, if children were not part of those groups we probably would not have funded anything. However, the fact that children were meant we had a responsibility to do so.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister. My questions now relate to the strategic plan. How many people are employed in policy advice to the public sector coordination division of the Department of Chief Minister?

Mr VIVIAN: Phil Vivian, Chief Finance Officer. In the output Policy Advice and Coordination, the number is 30, as at June.

Mr MILLS: Last year it was 19. Why the increase?

Mr VIVIAN: It depends on what number you are referring to. The last year number you got from which source? I want to ensure it is the same output group you are referring to.

Mr MILLS: It is policy advice and public sector coordination division. We do not need to go - it is 30. Chief Minister, what support has the policy advice division provided to the *Territory 2030* Cabinet subcommittee?

Mr HENDERSON: What support explicitly? Part of that role is to support the subcommittee of Cabinet. However, in regard to specific and direct, I will let Mike Burgess answer that.

Mr BURGESS: *Territory 2030*, the subcommittee of Cabinet and the Parliamentary Secretary, and the work we do across government, is supported out of the Implementation Unit we have which is recorded in our Major Projects area. There are three people in that unit.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, what are the key priorities for the 2030 strategic plan for 2010?

Mr HENDERSON: One of the key priorities is to have a conference very soon around establishing Darwin as a university city. That is a priority determined through the subcommittee of Cabinet and we are having that conference very soon. There has been some shuffling of dates regarding that; however, that is a key priority. We have also done significant work on a survey to be undertaken to survey Territorians on some of those targets. We have done much work with stakeholder groups across the Territory.

I have been meeting with public servants in a number of government agencies around the *Territory 2030* plan and how their agency is implementing and prioritising that plan. The real focus for the first half of this year is the Territory ambition. We have already met with Professor Barney Glover and the subcommittee and our Parliamentary Secretary to plan for that conference because the university is growing at a significant rate. How the broader community of the Northern Territory benefits from the university and we establish ourselves as a university city is a priority for the conference for the first half of this year.

Mr MILLS: Two of the key priorities are a conference around the university and a household survey?

Mr HENDERSON: Let us step back. Every single government agency has a requirement to frame their individual strategic plan to support the implementation of *Territory 2030*. In regard to every government agency it is a focus now. All chief executives have written into their performance contracts a requirement to deliver strategic and operational plans to support the implementation of *Territory 2030*. The decisions of the subcommittee of Cabinet and the priorities for the first half of this year were to target a conference around Darwin becoming a university city. That was also a request borne out of the Darwin Capital City Committee I co-chair with the Lord Mayor. When we made a presentation of *Territory 2030* to the council, they requested a focus and a priority around that issue. All *Territory 2030*, strategically and operationally, is embedded in the public sector.

The subcommittee of Cabinet which includes the Parliamentary Secretary, Bill Moss, and Vicki O'Halloran, has targeted this particular ambition as something to look at in the first half of this year.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, that is fine ...

Mr HENDERSON: I am explaining what this is all about.

Mr MILLS: I wanted to know if they were the two main issues You described, in a speech to the Assembly on 16 February 2010, that a household survey was being developed. We are mid-year in 2011, and you have just indicated that household survey is still yet to be completed. Is that correct?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, it will be completed in the next few weeks.

Mr MILLS: When that survey is conducted, because you have said you want to provide an evidence base for your decision-making, will that material be released publicly?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, absolutely.

Mr MILLS: When?

Mr BURGESS: The material being sought through those surveys is complementary material where there is a lack of datasets either from ABS or other significant data collection warehouses. We are just

targeting a few areas, and conducting some forums in remote communities as well. That information will then feed back into the fact sheets we are developing against all the targets in 2030.

Mr MILLS: Right.

Mr BURGESS: They will be published as soon as they can.

Mr MILLS: But will the results of the surveys be made public?

Mr BURGESS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: It is going to be conducted in a matter of weeks. When do you predict there will be the material, and the results of the survey made public? Can you advise when we could expect that?

Mr BURGESS: I will just refer to my paperwork. We expect the various bodies who are pulling this together for us to bring the results back to us once they have completed their field work in the next month or so. That will enable us to report in about September, I think.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Chief Minister, you said in your speech that I referred to before that information about how the Territory is tracking against the targets would be published on the *Territory 2030* website shortly. Now, 16 months later, this information you have promised is not available on the website. We are putting out targets and visions, and we are told we are going to have a measurement against how we are tracking around those goals, but we do not have anything after 16 months. Can you please explain?

Mr HENDERSON: Before I pass to Terri Hart, who is very capably leading the implementation of *Territory 2030* across government, there is a very significant number of fact sheets already on the Net that position us against the targets. What we did say is we would re-evaluate those after two years, which we are still on track to do. The survey is to fill some of the gaps. So, there is a lot of information up there as to where we are at against specific targets as of when *Territory 2030* was released. There will be a review of all of those targets in 2012, and those will be updated. Terri, you might have some more information.

Ms HART: Thank you, Chief Minister. Terri Hart, Director, *Territory 2030*. Yes, there are about 54 snapshots available on the website now against targets, and we have a rolling program of adding snapshots to the website.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, has the Office of Urban Design been established yet?

Ms HART: Regarding the Office of Urban Design, there is currently existing in government a committee called the Urban Design Advisory Panel. Advice is being prepared by the Department of Lands and Planning in transitioning that existing body to an Office of Urban Design.

Mr MILLS: This was, I understand, an objective – it is on page 24 of the 2030 strategic plan – that that office would be established. When will it transit from one form to another? When will it actually occur? Can you let us know whether we get there before 2030? It is happening now, is it?

Ms HART: I would have to refer that to the Department of Lands and Planning; they are managing and leading that target.

Mr MILLS: So, you go on to a website and there will be a snapshot provided when this does occur, or probably a big announcement of some kind. Where do we find these things when looking at the website? We heard the speeches 16 months ago - gave us all a good feeling - but we are now finding there is much transiting, talking, snapshots, and bits and pieces being updated. However, 2030 is coming, the clock is ticking on the big statements of 16 months ago, Chief Minister. We just need to be very clear about these things as people ...

Mr HENDERSON: As I said earlier, every government agency is now required to embed *Territory 2030* in strategic and operational plans. That is occurring. I encourage you, for the detail of what is occurring within agencies, either to request a briefing with Terri at a macro level. If there are micro issues you want to pursue, more than happy to provide briefings for you at that level. I can absolutely say that *Territory 2030*, in all of the targets, is the absolute priority of every agency. You will see that reflected in annual reports, in the way agencies are structured, in 2012 when the progress towards those targets is evaluated and published. That will be done in a traffic light-type system: in green, we are on track; amber, we are not on

track; red, we are in danger of not meeting those targets. There is total transparency around this, but it is a significant work in progress.

Mr MILLS: All of that is fine. When we talk about a strategic plan, and then there are specific references made, such as a household survey, 16 months later it is still not out. Another one is objective No 1. It says the government will develop an ongoing program for the delivery of remote housing beyond SIHIP by 2012. How are you going with that?

Mr HENDERSON: Obviously, that is in discussion with the Commonwealth at the moment. What we actually do have is \$670m allocated to SIHIP. We are working with the Commonwealth now around the next tranche of the roll-out of that. There is \$1.5bn over 10 years in the remote service area ...

Mr MILLS: A point of order, Mr Chairman! It is not those numbers. What specific action is occurring? When you say you are working with the Commonwealth, what ...

Mr HENDERSON: Well, that is what we are doing.

Mr MILLS: What does that mean, though?

Mr HENDERSON: That is \$670m committed, houses popping up all over the Northern Territory; \$1.5bn committed. We are now in June 2011, working through, with the Commonwealth, priorities and process for the next roll-out for remote Indigenous housing. That is where we are at, so officials are working with Commonwealth officials to do that.

Mr MILLS: It is just not right. I will leave it. The point is, we say things and we have general commentary, but it is what specific action is flowing from that, is where I am working with ...

Mr HENDERSON: There are houses popping up all over the place.

Mr MILLS: No, but you said you were going to develop an ongoing program by 2012.

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely, we have the money, we have \$1.5bn.

Mr MILLS: What do you mean by working with? Is it just a statement?

Mr HENDERSON: No, it is Territory government officials working with Australian government officials ...

Mr MILLS: In what form?

Mr HENDERSON: What do you mean, in what form?

Mr MILLS: Well, you make a statement ...

Mr HENDERSON: They are sitting down around a table ...

Mr MILLS: Is there an official body you have described? You would assume that is happening anyway.

Mr HENDERSON: It is ...

Mr MILLS: In what form? Under what authority?

Ms SCRYMGOUR: You had better draw it for him; it is a bit hard for him to understand.

Mr HENDERSON: I have to say, it is pretty simple stuff. It is officials within the housing department working with the Commonwealth government to look at the next stage post the \$670m-odd that has already been committed. There is a work program; there are time frames to achieve the housing and the refurbishments. It is audited to death like no other program in the history of the Northern Territory has ever been audited before. We are building those houses now, and we are planning for the next tranche of houses. Out of that will come a plan which will say how many houses, in how many communities, over how many years, how they are going to be built, and what the budget allocation is to that. That work is being done now.

Mr MILLS: It is just that we all got pretty excited when we heard there was a 2030 vision ...

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely.

Mr MILLS: ... and then when you have objectives ...

Mr HENDERSON: There are houses popping up all over the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: You have a very explicit objective No 1, and as much detail as we get is that you are working with people. That would happen without a 2030 plan.

Mr HENDERSON: No, there are houses popping up. You need to get out more.

Mr MILLS: All right.

Mr HENDERSON: Get out to Gunbalanya, get out to Maningrida, see the houses that are popping out of the ground all over the place.

Mr MILLS: That will do for me, thanks. I have just about had enough.

Mr WOOD: I might just follow on to that question; it is an important area. Chief Minister, I have just spent time visiting homelands and outstations in the southern Barkly region. What is the government's policy in relation to new houses in outstations? Have you completed an audit of all infrastructure on homelands and outstations? Have you any indication of how many existing houses have been abandoned, so you can have an overall picture of where you are in relation to what your policy should be for this area?

Mr HENDERSON: Thank you for the question, member for Nelson. I am not trying to be difficult here, but the minister for Indigenous policy would have that level of detail. You have anticipated questions I was asking just a week or so ago about the status of that audit. My understanding is it has been completed and will inform policy-making about where we go in regard to outstations.

You have to remember that this was dumped on the Northern Territory government by the Commonwealth - under the previous Commonwealth government - in return for funding for additional houses. We received little information from the Commonwealth of the status of housing out there. We had to do a lot of work from the ground up. I am advised the audit, if not actually complete, is very nearly complete - I have not seen the results of it - and, yes, it will feed into policy determination about where we are going with outstations, particularly next year because this is the last year of the \$20m from the Commonwealth. We will be into the Commonwealth for maintenance of that funding.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, fair enough. I do not expect you to give me all those numbers. There are people in communities; some of which could be regarded as outstations, and some like Nauiyu or Peppimenarti would be regarded as townships; they have all the infrastructure - even some like Ampilatwatja. The problem they have is they have no indication from the government about the future of their communities.

In the case of Nauiyu, it is getting to a point where the community is losing focus. Morale has dropped off in that community because they lost their council, and they were told there would be no more houses. That is a thriving community, which is going downhill because the people have no indication of what the future is under the government's policies in relation to future housing.

Mr HENDERSON: In new housing?

Mr WOOD: New housing, yes. I am asking what the policy is and, if you do not have a policy, how long is it going to take to have a policy, so these people feel there is some direction?

Mr HENDERSON: We do have an existing policy which is that outstations which currently exist, and the people who live out there, will continue to be supported. We received \$20m per annum in Commonwealth funding for three years to maintain the status quo. Until we had completed the audit of outstations across the Territory, we were not in a position to understand how big the deficit might be in that number. As I said, the minister will have information about the status of that audit.

What the Commonwealth has said - and let us remember whose responsibility this is. The Commonwealth has always had responsibility for funding of outstations and new housing on outstations until such time as Mal Brough held a gun to the Northern Territory government's head and said: 'You do not get the \$600m-odd for new housing unless you take this problem onto your shoulders, and we will give

you \$20m a year for three years to deal with it'. The Chief Minister at the time could not walk away from \$600m that was desperately needed for housing in remote communities across the Northern Territory.

In regard to new housing, we do not have any budget allocations within our budget. We are sitting down with the Commonwealth regarding what will occur post the NT legislation expiring next year, our *A Working Future* policy, the national partnership agreements we had regarding the remote service delivery towns - the 15 towns in the Territory - and how that affects outstations, and if new housing is to be built what the funding source is for that new housing.

I am aware options are being explored for that. I understand the Commonwealth government's firm position is there will be no new housing without a lease over that land. The position of the land councils is outstations are private land, private ownership. I accept the lack of certainty; it is a very real policy conundrum and issue. We are working on that as a government, with the Australian government, because the issue of the housing shortage across the Northern Territory is extensive.

We have made the biggest gains since self-government with new housing under SIHIP. With all the headaches that has given everybody, we have houses springing up all over the Northern Territory and that is a big step forward. There is \$1.5bn committed over 10 years in the RSD. Apart from the \$670m that has been committed, the remainder of that money has yet to be committed.

Is there potential for any of that money for outstation housing? The current policy position of the Australian government is no. However, it is about to embark - and this is public comment from the Indigenous Affairs minister - on public consultation about where the NTER goes post-2012. That is an opportunity to open this debate up. However, I have to say within our own budget capacity, we do not have capacity to build new houses on outstations.

Mr WOOD: I understand that. The word 'outstations' sometimes can be taken ...

Mr HENDERSON: Homelands, then.

Mr WOOD: Even homelands, because no one would regard Nauiyu at Daly River as a homeland or an outstation.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: It is a community.

Mr WOOD: And a town. Unfortunately, that town has no future unless it receives new houses. That applies to Palumpa, Milikapiti and Ampilatwatja. There are many I would not regard as outstations because they have a considerable number of people. They have schools, clinics and all of that type of infrastructure. The future for them - because they will have more children and the objective of this program is to reduce overcrowding. We might reduce overcrowding at Gunbalanya; however, at Milikapiti we might increase it because there is nowhere to go.

Mr HENDERSON: Member for Nelson, I know you appreciate the deficit is so huge across the Northern Territory. At the moment, it is a little like *Sophie's Choice* - to quote one of my Cabinet ministers. Which communities do you focus on because there is not enough budget capacity to do everything everywhere all at once? I accept there is a question mark over where new housing will come from in some of those communities. We are working through those issues; however, on the glass half-full principle, we are building more houses in the bush than were built since self-government, and that is a good thing and it will continue. There will always be a debate around where the priority for that housing lies.

Mr WOOD: Yes, I understand that. However, parliamentarians need to be proactive into looking at alternatives. The Indigenous Land Corporation ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: It is called leasing.

Mr WOOD: The Indigenous Land Cooperation bought Yulara. Why is there not more investment from private Aboriginal corporations into housing? We are not very successful with private housing development yet. Have we looked at the ability of communities to build their own houses? Maningrida had mud houses, Daly River had concrete houses. That seems to have died now.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Not at Maningrida.

Mr WOOD: We are still miles behind. Have we looked at alternatives to government providing houses for these communities?

Mr HENDERSON: In a policy sense, yes, we have and continue to do more. I would like to see private investors - whether they be Indigenous business entities or the private sector generally - able to invest in rental housing in our *A Working Future* towns and RSD towns. That is an ongoing conversation we are having with Indigenous business organisations and land councils because, at the end of the day, unless people have equity to put into housing for rental and are prepared to invest without the security of lease over land, you have to do it through financing. All the issues about leasing need to be worked through.

However, I agree, in principle, with you that the government will never be the sole solution to the housing overcrowding in the bush, because no government has budget capacity to do that. There needs to be investment from other sources, whether it is Indigenous organisations, ABA funding, or banking lending with security being provided. We need additional sources of funding. The principle, I agree with you, as government cannot be the solution to the entire overcrowding issue. That is the reality of the position.

Mr WOOD: There is a great deal of money out there in the form of royalties and that type of thing which, perhaps, should be invested in that as all.

Mr HENDERSON: I believe that is a conversation which is being held with the ABA.

Mr WOOD: Just quickly, then. With regard to leases, the intervention leases are nearly running out. The government and the Commonwealth have spent a great deal of money on refurbishments and most of those houses which have been refurbished are on intervention leases. What is going to happen when the intervention lease runs out?

Mr HENDERSON: There are active negotiations under way between the two levels of government. There are no decisions on that yet, but there are active negotiations under way with regard to those issues. This, ultimately, will come to Cabinet.

Mr WOOD: A subject you know I have debated before is government facilities having to pay more than a peppercorn rental for government facilities on Aboriginal land. Have those types of payments now commenced? Have we any indication of how many payments have come in?

Mr HENDERSON: I will have to get advice. There have been a number of individual section 19 leases agreed to - a small number in individual communities. However, in whole-of-government policy on that issue, that is yet to come to Cabinet - but coming shortly. We have negotiated section 19s in some areas where we have had to. I believe one of them is the police station at Ramingining, for example. Obviously, it is in our interest to minimise those costs, particularly over assets that were built many years ago.

Mr WOOD: That is a question I will be asking on a continual basis ...

Mr HENDERSON: Keep asking.

Mr WOOD: I do not agree with the policy at the present time. Chief Minister, also in relation to climate change in your annual report, you talk about the Territory being a low land-clearing jurisdiction. How does that fit in with the NT Agribusiness framework, because I see the two concepts clashing?

To have a sustainable agribusiness in the Northern Territory, you will have to increase the area of suitable land. How does that fit in? Is your strategic policy about being a low land-clearing jurisdiction, basically, going to clash with the option of developing a thriving agribusiness industry, as in this strategy?

Mr HENDERSON: Where we are at the moment, obviously, is out for public consultation on a land-clearing strategy for the Northern Territory. I understand the Environment minister has extended the time frame for the consultation ...

Mr WOOD: It needs to be longer than that.

Mr HENDERSON: We probably will, given what is happening with the pastoral industry at the moment. Regarding the agribusiness strategy, the Territory is a very large place and there are opportunities to develop those industries strategically around the Northern Territory. However, we do not want to see wholesale land clearing in the Northern Territory.

With the development of markets for carbon sequestration as well, we really have to understand those settings in where the real value for the land is for the long-term future of the Territory. The value versus agribusiness may be maintaining significant tracts of land which would otherwise have been developed for carbon sequestration. There is a heap of interwoven policy issues out there at the moment before we get to a firm landing. However, I would like to think the Territory is a very large jurisdiction, and we can still be a low land-clearing jurisdiction and develop opportunities for agribusiness.

Mr WOOD: I will respond to that and say I am not a koala bear and I do not eat gum leaves, but the reality is we have to feed people too.

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely, so we are pretty pragmatic about these issues. There is a real economic debate out there at the moment of where the real value is. I am surprised I have not had any questions yet on a carbon price; I am sure that is coming. Until all of those macro-level policy issues are determined, these issues will be a live debate as to where the real value of this land is coming from.

Mr WOOD: One last question - do I have time?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, go for it, you have the call.

Mr WOOD: I always get scared when the Chairman gets up like that and folds his arms.

Mr CHAIRMAN: You are on the verge.

Mr WOOD: In relation to Aboriginal employment in SIHIP, I have figures here that the CTC was given in relation to the number of people being employed under that program. What is a concern to me is there is a target which, basically, talks about the 'agreed Indigenous employment' is 20%, and 30% in some places. It is obvious, from a percentage point of view, targets have been reached. However, when you dig down into those targets you find figures like 1018 people have been employed and only 142 have lasted more than 26 weeks. Some of those people, according to those figures, appear to have gained certificates and some qualifications.

The reality is, you are not reaching those targets, for instance, at Wadeye. Wadeye, which was a major SIHIP project, has employed 166 people and only one person has worked longer than 26 weeks. In the southern region refurbishments, you would expect, or hope, some people lasted 13 weeks, because some places have fairly substantial refurbishments. Nobody lasted more than 13 weeks. Do you feel that, although it is nice to say we have reached a percentage, to be honest, we need to be going out there and investigating whether governments are really achieving government goals - and you have them in the 2030 document - that will create real jobs, or are we just living on percentages and not on reality?

Mr HENDERSON: We all want the same thing, member for Nelson. We are all passionate about that. My advice is that over 250 local Indigenous people have gained employment and, at the macro level, we have achieved those targets. What we all wanted out of this was to develop sustainable jobs for people going forward. We are in discussions with the Australian government at the moment about the real levers around this. Let us understand, it is the Australian government, and welfare and employment programs. In discussions I had as recently as last week with minister Macklin the conclusion was we really need to focus on employment programs in the bush.

In our last budget, you will have seen there is a significant commitment to several thousand jobs in the bush through additional funding that was provided by the Territory and Commonwealth governments. I do not have that number in my head. The real levers around this is the Commonwealth government and expenditure they incur on one hand in welfare payments and, on the other hand, the expenditure they could occur on employment programs, in conjunction with the shires and the outstation organisations, and with government and private sector investment. We are having those conversations.

Mr WOOD: Is not the crux of the matter welfare? If you have 1018 people who started employment and only 142 lasted 26 weeks, and you have a system where it is relatively easy to go on to welfare, the problem is really welfare. I have been to five or six communities in the southern Barkly region and, to be honest with you - I am not going to name them all - they were dirty. Not all of them, but many of them were dirty; all they needed was people to clean the place up. There are only three people employed by the council in some of these communities. Years ago, we would employ 50 people. Has there not to be a total change in the attitude of the Commonwealth government as to the way it deals with welfare?

Surely, by saying welfare is not a gift, it is for those who need it, and we will supply jobs to everyone who needs a job, you would not get this great lack of ability to last in a job. If 1018 people have started work and 142 have lasted half a year, you have to think something is wrong with the system.

Mr HENDERSON: You have those numbers there. I have not seen those numbers. The first challenge is to dig into those numbers and find out what is happening.

Mr WOOD: I am happy to table those anyway.

Mr HENDERSON: I am more than happy to take that on with you as a body of work because very real questions arise from that. As I said, in answer to the previous question, the conversation I had last week with minister Macklin was on this very issue. The focus, from where I sit, in the NTER moving forward has to be around education and employment. We are doing a lot on housing and there is always more you can do. The tragedy of long-term unemployment sits with a person forever, and it is the Commonwealth which has the levers. We are encouraging them to use them. We are working together to try to find employment programs and host employers who are prepared to employ people. They need revenue streams to fund the employment and all the on-costs and where those revenue streams are going to come from. We are on the same page.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you want to seek leave to table that?

Mr WOOD: I am happy to table that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: You need to seek leave.

Mr WOOD: I seek leave to table.

Leave granted.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, members.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes questions to Output 4.1.

Mr WOOD: Did I run out of time?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr WOOD: That is all right.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Only just, though, only just. That last question put you over.

Output 4.2 – Multicultural Advancement

Mr CHAIRMAN: We now move to Output Group 4.2, Multicultural Advancement.

Mr STYLES: Chief Minister, in relation to Multicultural Advancement, I note the 2011-12 projected budget is \$1.881m. If you go back through the years to 2004-05, where we were at \$2.347m, that is a reduction of around 20%. If you throw CPI into that, that is a reduction somewhere between 30% and 40% in funding for multicultural advancement. Do you believe that it is appropriate to keep funding for multicultural advancement at such low levels?

Mr HENDERSON: While we are getting the answers - we have this debate every year. There was a point in time where the Interpreter Service was transferred from Multicultural Affairs to wherever they exist in government today. That is the answer to that question. The budget for Multicultural Affairs has remained static over the years. It is a straight line; \$1.9m in 2009-10, \$1.88m in 2010-11 – a \$20 000 change.

Mr STYLES: Do you agree that CPI is biting into that?

Mr HENDERSON: If you talked to any of the multicultural groups, they are funded far better in the Northern Territory than they are anywhere else in Australia. People always want more. Every community group - it does not matter whether it is the multicultural group, a sports group, or an arts group in the Northern Territory - would like the government to give them more money. They will say yes. We have just

had the Glenti Festival this weekend. The Glenti Festival would not happen - talk to Lilliane Gomas and John Nikolakis about it - without government support. They just would not be able to turn a quid.

Mr STYLES: I have no issue with that, Chief Minister, and I agree. Given that multiculturalism is such a great part of our community and tourism revolves around that, I encourage you to look at the actual amount budgeted and, perhaps, see if you can find a few more dollars. Many multicultural groups are suffering from lack of funds.

When we go into key deliverables on page 32 of this year's Budget Paper No 3, we are looking at the value of grants paid of \$1m, grants issued of \$100 000, and forums, workshops and consultations conducted at \$50 000. Can you tell me how much it is costing to administer these grants?

Mr HENDERSON: Phil, do you have a number on administration of grants? We have a very small number of people in the agency.

Mr VIVIAN: We have four staff members administering the grants.

Mr STYLES: Can you answer one of the other questions? How many people ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Could you introduce yourself every time you speak, Mr Vivian, so Hansard can always assign the voice to their record, thank you. Sorry, shadow, you have the call.

Mr STYLES: How much is it costing for the four people in the Office of Multicultural Affairs? We have \$1.1m in grants and we have a budget of about \$1.881m projected.

Mr VIVIAN: The budget at the moment for OMA is \$589 000 including the four FTE staff.

Mr STYLES: Where is that in the budget? It is \$600 000; we are still a tad short of the \$1.881m.

Mr VIVIAN: I am talking about direct funding to the unit. The budget papers will talk about the full output cost which includes some corporate overheads, plus grant funding.

Mr STYLES: Excellent. How many forums, workshops and consultations will be conducted in the coming financial year?

Mr CURRY: Adrian Curry, Manager of the Office of Multicultural Affairs. We have a practice of meeting with a multicultural group weekly. That lends us to get to each multicultural group in a roundabout period of 18 months. On top of that, a number of issues-based working groups are being established, and other meetings and forums as we go through the year.

Mr STYLES: Can you tell me how many of these break-ups, forums, workshops and consultations will be held in Darwin, or outside Darwin?

Mr CURRY: We travel to Alice Spring usually three or four times per year. The majority of our work, and our staff, is based in Darwin.

Mr STYLES: Any other regional centres other than Alice Springs?

Mr CURRY: We have an intention to get to Katherine because the Filipino community there is quite active, and we would like to understand more there. We also understand there is a growing community in Gove which we have been planning to visit for some time.

Mr STYLES: Chief Minister, do you believe the government is keeping pace with the demand for functions of multicultural advancement?

Mr HENDERSON: I meet with multicultural groups on a very regular basis. The importance I place on this aspect of Territory life is reflected in the fact, as Chief Minister, I hold the portfolio. Wherever I go across the Northern Territory I meet with multicultural groups and organisations. Of course, everybody would like to receive some more funding; however, the reality is there is never enough to go around. By and large, our multicultural community and the diversity of our community is very well supported by government. People from interstate belonging to different cultural groups see what is provided in the Northern Territory and they cannot believe it. Any fair assessment would say we support our multicultural communities very well here.

Mr STYLES: What, if any, leadership development programs are in place to increase the proportion of Territorians from diverse backgrounds and, in particular, multicultural areas in leadership positions?

Mr HENDERSON: Within the public service generally?

Mr STYLES: Either private or public.

Mr HENDERSON: We have in this budget the Charles See Kee Awards, which was previously an award for nominations. We have provided a scholarship this year. A scholarship was provided to a very impressive African lady I met to study at Charles Darwin University. That has been a significant change and very well received.

Mr STYLES: Thank you, Chief Minister. What, if any, programs are in place to increase the proportion of Territorians from culturally diverse backgrounds sitting on government boards and committees?

Mr HENDERSON: Obviously, all the time we look to ensure diversity on advisory boards and committees; it is a core responsibility of every minister who appoints people to boards and committees. It is not only cultural diversity but also to ensure we get women into boards and committee roles. It is an active part of the decision-making process. I encourage all members of parliament to encourage people to nominate for those particular boards and committees.

Mr STYLES: What programs, if any, are in place to encourage women from culturally diverse backgrounds into senior public service positions?

Mr HENDERSON: I will hand this over to Mr Burgess.

Mr BURGESS: Through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, there are a number of programs already in place around diversity in the workplace and extensive leadership programs. We do quite a number of renewed leadership programs in our department. I am happy to say we have recently appointed a new Director of Social Policy, Janet Buhagiar, to join us. I would like to see more appointments like that across the public sector.

Mr STYLES: Are there any Northern Territory government sponsored participants in any high-level leadership development programs - both within the public sector or the private?

Mr HENDERSON: There is a program. I cannot, for the life of me, remember what it is, but there is a senior public sector administration leadership program that is funded through the Commissioner of Public Employment. I can get the name for you, member for Sanderson. It was a fairly significant budget allocation that was approved for it. I just cannot, for the life of me, think of the name of the program at the moment.

Mr STYLES: Thank you, Chief Minister. Are there any Northern Territory government-sponsored participants from the multicultural community on the Australian Institute of Company Directors' courses? Do we sponsor anyone?

Mr HENDERSON: From within the public service?

Mr STYLES: More particularly from multicultural areas.

Mr HENDERSON: People would self-nominate to do that course.

Mr STYLES: I know they can nominate, but I am just wondering has there been anyone who has requested sponsorship from the Northern Territory government to do these sort of things from that area?

Mr HENDERSON: Not to my knowledge; not that I have seen.

Mr STYLES: The last question, Chief Minister. Can you explain what you have done to reduce the impact from the cattle bans across the multicultural community? Have you taken any action in contacting the Indonesian community, in particular, in the Darwin region?

Mr HENDERSON: I am not sure where you are going here, member for Sanderson. I met officially with the Indonesian Consul on Friday to discuss this issue, and very clearly said to him - I am not sure if you were in the room earlier - that in no way should this issue cloud the otherwise very strong relationship we

have with Indonesia and the Indonesian community here. That relationship is very strong; it is enduring. This is a single issue we have to deal with on an issue-by-issue basis in a mature way between both countries. I requested he formally relay that message not only to the governments in Jakarta and the Ambassador in Canberra, but also through the leadership of the Indonesian community here in Darwin. I had that meeting with the Consul with that very specific message on Friday.

Mr STYLES: Thank you, Chief Minister. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions in this area, member for Nelson?

Mr WOOD: I do not, Mr Chairman. I just need to get a motion in regard to those employment figures I mentioned before. They were given as part of a confidential briefing, so I want to know whether we could move the document be tabled but not published?

Ms SCRYMGOUR: I am not in favour because they were part of a confidential briefing. As the Chair of CTC, we need to have a discussion.

Motion agreed to.

Mr CHAIRMAN: There you have it, member for Nelson. We now conclude questions to Output 4.2.

I note that questions for the output Alice Springs Transformation Plan will be divided between two ministers. Questions regarding social support spending will be answered by the Minister for Central Australia on Tuesday 21 June. Questions regarding housing works on town camps and SIHIP, and questions on stimulus funding will be answered by the Minister for Public and Affordable Housing on Thursday 16 June.

OUTPUT GROUP 5.0 – TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT

Output 5.1 – Major Projects

Mr CHAIRMAN: As a result, the committee will now consider Output Group 5.0, Territory Development, Output 5.1, Major Projects. I will throw to the shadow, just noting we will be breaking at 12 noon and returning at 1 pm.

Ms PURICK: Chief Minister, with regard to major projects from a general point of view, what new projects were granted major project status in the last 12 months?

Mr HENDERSON: Good question. The answer is there have not been any formally added to the list we supplied last year, member for Goyder, but we are working intensively with the two project proponents in the Roper Gulf area around the status of their projects. I am sure, when they get to a particular point, that will be afforded major project status, as well to the two companies in that region we are talking to.

Ms PURICK: Thank you, I am aware of that. In regard to the two major proposed projects in the Roper Bar/Roper region, where are you at in regard to granting them major project status?

Mr HENDERSON: I have met with both proponents. Where we are at the moment, obviously there is certain criteria they have to fulfil in moving forward with regard to notices of intent and documentation around those. We are working with Mr Burgess to find an appropriate way forward to look at the issues which will arise from those projects; not just on a project-specific basis, but on a regional basis. There are many issues around infrastructure which would need to be dealt with, as well as environmental and employment issues.

They will be accorded major project facilitation, but there are a couple more steps. I am awaiting advice from Mike Burgess of how we are going to move that forward, because there will be significant regional issues which will need to be addressed, not just specific project issues.

Ms PURICK: I am aware of the requirement and the need to have certain infrastructure to support these projects, both from a road network and delivery of energy and water. What work has been done in regard to infrastructure planning to support these two projects, if and when they proceed to development, including ports and off-coast facilities?

Mr BURGESS: The infrastructure logistics solution for these projects is probably the key to the projects. We have been in dialogue with both proponents for some time now about that, because it will run to the

heart of their unit costs and getting it to market at a cost that is actually viable. We encouraged both proponents to seek a joint solution on that, because a joint solution, from our point of view, is the one which will guarantee the lowest unit cost. They did form a joint venture arrangement to look at the offshore logistics solution. They have both now lodged NOIs that talk about exporting product via slurry pipelines off the coast, and via a Maria Island landing and, then, a barging operation to offshore. Their NOIs describe that. Prior to that, they had been looking at a railway solution back to the North Australian Railway and export through Port Darwin. However, in the start-up phases of the project in particular, those costs would have been quite high, so they have agreed that would be the solution they would look at for export.

Ms PURICK: In regard to the Roper region, and in your dialogue and discussions with those companies, have you also extended including your discussions to the Highland Plains phosphate project, which is quite near to the Roper region. Have they been included in the dialogue?

Mr BURGESS: Not with those two proponents; they have not at this stage. Those things would require a different logistics solution. They could not use the same slurry pipeline, for example, so they would have to get their product either to North Australian Railway or to a port handling facility in that location.

Ms PURICK: They could consider taking their slurry pipeline to the same location on the coast?

Mr BURGESS: Yes, if that is the solution that they adopt. What is important in this discussion is the proponents are all reaching and landing in their own business planning that would require the development of another port in the gulf. That is the key issue here. We have started additional work internally around those questions. I have had brief discussions with the NLC about that so, as these things develop, we can walk hand in hand and find a proper solution.

Ms PURICK: In regard to Maria Island, do you envisage any issues in the foreseeable future which would limit use of that land mass for a port?

Mr BURGESS: I had a meeting with Peter Blake - Maria Island falls within the control of the NT Land Corporation. There are very few issues, terrestrially. There is an issue of a land claim that is still on foot around the intertidal zone, and on the foreshore immediately opposite the island is all ALRA. Apart from the environmental issues that would need to be worked through around laying a slurry pipeline on the bed, no one has said to me there are insurmountable environmental issues. There are many studies going on, so they would need to be brought to the fore and properly assessed.

Ms PURICK: Does it trigger the Commonwealth's environmental legislation?

Mr BURGESS: It probably would, given it is in the gulf and there are species out there that would fall under the protection of the Australian government, so the answer is yes.

Ms PURICK: Thank you. I would like to turn to a different topic. Chief Minister, in the 2030 document you state you will be investigating major projects including the Mt Isa to Tennant Creek rail link and a Darwin light rail system. What work has been undertaken in the last 12 months on either or both of these projects to proceed to some stage of development?

Mr HENDERSON: Regarding the light rail link, I have asked for formal advice and costings to come forward. Within the greater Darwin land use strategic planning document that is out for discussion, the rail corridor is identified and preserved. It will come down to the economics, and how that is going to be funded, and whether it is passenger and transport. There is a formal study being undertaken on that issue.

In terms the Mt Isa, Adelaide to Darwin rail link, we have been waiting for a new owner of the railway. Tennessee Wyoming has only recently completed their financial purchase of the railway. It is prudent to let them get their feet under the desk and see that business up and running. We have not formally started any discussions on that issue yet because we have been waiting for a new owner of the railway. They have only just completed the purchase. This is a 2030 strategic document, not something to do in 12 months. I am also not aware of where that whole issue is on the east coast at the moment. I think the banks have dried up, so I would not see any movement there quickly.

Mr CHAIRMAN: At that point, Chief Minister, we will break for lunch and we will meet back here at 1 pm with the shadow minister having the call on Output 5.1, Major Projects.

The committee suspended.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We have a quorum, we will now commence. We are at Output 5.1 and the call is with member for Goyder.

Ms PURICK: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My question is to the Chief Minister again. The *Territory 2030* document references roads which will be identified as of national significance and ones that need upgrading. Can you identify which roads are of national significance and if there have been any upgrades on them?

Mr HENDERSON: Obviously, the national highway network. The Stuart Highway, the Victoria Highway and other highways are roads of major significance and are being upgraded. We are also in the process of putting together a 10-year roads strategy for our regional and remote communities. However, the reality is we are going to need to access significantly increased investments from the Commonwealth government to support the building of that road network in the bush. A first draft has come to Cabinet and further work is being done on it.

Ms PURICK: Thank you. Also referenced in the *Territory 2030* document is the establishment of an independent future fund. Has that work been undertaken? Is it under way and, if so, what does it comprise?

Mr HENDERSON: I believe Treasury is doing some work on that; looking at various models around the world, particularly the capacity for a government-established future fund to be utilised for philanthropic purposes and donations for major corporate entities. We have found no similar structure so there are taxation implications that need to be worked through with the Commonwealth regarding tax deductibility for such an entity. Treasury is doing some work on that, yes. However, I am unsure where that is up to at the moment.

Ms PURICK: I will have to ask that another time. I turn my attention to the offshore petroleum industry. Chief Minister, can you tell me how many petroleum companies have a corporate office in Darwin?

Mr HENDERSON: Petroleum companies?

Ms PURICK: Oil and gas companies, or hydrocarbon companies, have a corporate office?

Mr HENDERSON: INPEX has an office here. ConocoPhillips, ENI, and the second tier operators and contractors have offices here. ConocoPhillips, ENI and INPEX off the top of my head.

Ms PURICK: Can you tell me how many of the oil and gas companies have supply bases in Darwin? These are supply bases attached to petroleum companies.

Mr HENDERSON: I would need a better definition of supply base. That is why the government is working to attract a marine supply base for Darwin.

Ms PURICK: More the logistical supply centre of an oil and gas company. For example, does ENI have a supply base which services its projects and, if so, how many bases are there?

Mr HENDERSON: My understanding is they contract to other suppliers to provide that facility. I do not really want to talk about various companies, but Shorelands would provide offshore supply logistics for a number of platforms out there. There would be other companies like that.

Ms PURICK: What is the department or the unit doing exactly to increase oil and gas companies' permanent presence in Darwin. Do you have a strategy to attract oil and gas companies, to (1) establish a corporate office which involves employment, and (2) have any programs to encourage supply base or partnerships?

Mr HENDERSON: That is exactly why, member for Goyder, we are actively pursuing the development of a marine supply base for Darwin in partnership with the private sector: to attract more companies to establish operations here in Darwin to support the offshore industry, not just only in Territory waters but off northwest Australia. That is exactly what that project is about.

We have three consortia which are now putting in detailed final bids to government for assessment. Those bids close very soon, as I understand it ...

Mr BURGESS: On 29 June.

Mr HENDERSON: On 29th of this month. We are hoping to negotiate with the preferred provider and to award contracts by the end of this year.

Ms PURICK: I have questions on marine supply base, but I will come to those in a minute. Chief Minister, can you tell me what the level of rig tender cargo vessels has been in our port over the last 12 months?

Mr HENDERSON: Sorry, can you say that again?

Ms PURICK: The rig tender cargo vessels. What has been the traffic in? It might be something you have to take on notice in regard to water, fuel, and other vessels.

Mr HENDERSON: I am sure the Darwin Port Corporation has all of that detail, but Mike might have something.

Mr BURGESS: There has been a decrease in rig tender business over the last, I think, four or five months. We have been in close contact with the people contracting the rig tenders about that. Significantly, ENI is one of the major contractors. They have assured us it is a temporary lull. They are waiting for some approvals to come through from the Timor-Leste government new programs. Also one was shifted off the Kitan project on to another project in Western Australia. There has been a lull, but we expect it to recover in the next few months.

Ms PURICK: When the vessels do come into the port then, what is the average turnaround for them? By the time they come, do their business, and get back out to sea? Do have a figure for the average turnaround?

Mr HENDERSON: These are, with all due respect, detailed operational questions. I am sure if you ask the Ports minister, they will be able to provide those.

Ms PURICK: Perhaps I will ask some general questions. We have some prospect of projects out there such as Kitan and Prelude and, of course, we have had Sunrise there for many years now. In regard to Kitan and Prelude, what work is the government actually doing to maximise the economic benefits to the Northern Territory?

Mr HENDERSON: Obviously, with Shell for Prelude, we have been working very hard to promote Darwin to be the service and supply centre for floating LNG projects. We have been very successful in pursuit of Shell because they announced, when they announced final investment decision a few weeks ago, that Darwin would be used as the service and supply point for that particular project. I commend government officials who have been working very hard on that particular strategy because securing that project was a key part of landing our marine supply base business.

Regarding Kitan and other developments in the Timor Sea region, we actively discuss and promote the opportunity for the Northern Territory at every level. At the APEA conference in Perth, for example, in February 2011, we had a very significant government presence in not only a stand - I do not know how many companies I met with over a two-and-a-half day basis, but it would have been at least a dozen doing business in the Northern Territory.

We had a trip to Aberdeen I have just concluded that was very successful, which will see a very decent sized delegation from Aberdeen visit our SEAAOC conference in September this year. SEAAOC is another opportunity. There is an ongoing round of promoting Darwin and the benefits of Darwin, particularly the infrastructure developments that we are doing with the marine supply base to companies.

Ms PURICK: Thank you, Chief Minister. In regard to the Greater Sunrise project, which has had a long and chequered history, can you give any information or detail as to any discussions or any work your government is doing with the Commonwealth government to finalise the arrangements in regard to the shared area such that if that project and project partners wanted to proceed, they could? I know there are still some unresolved issues in regard to negotiations with Timor-Leste, but are there ongoing discussions,

or is there a work program with your government and the federal government and the Timor-Leste governments?

Mr HENDERSON: This is, obviously, a very sensitive issue and I am mindful of the Territory's role in these issues. In discussions around the enforceability or otherwise of the treaty entered into between Timor-Leste and the Australian government, those are issues at a government-to-government level. They are not issues for the Northern Territory to be part of because it is not within our jurisdiction. Regarding good relationships with Timor-Leste and the joint venture consortium, I meet with members of that joint venture consortium on a regular basis. We have regular ministerial exchanges between Territory and Timor-Leste government ministers, the most recent one being a couple of months ago where we had the Deputy Prime Minister and a range of ministers in Darwin.

The strategy I have adopted in this is to try to encourage everyone to see Darwin, in particular, as part of the solution to this conundrum, particularly regarding Timor-Leste and the companies working together with Charles Darwin University to provide training for Timorese nationals to enable them to work on these projects in this region. I really think there is an opportunity in a long-term negotiated pathway in this for Darwin and CDU to be working in partnership with tertiary and VET entities in Timor-Leste, particularly with the companies assisting the Timorese with their aspirations to have workforce involved in this industry. There are more than enough jobs for everyone. The reality is for Sunrise to come to fruition, my reading of it is there would need to be significant jobs provided to Timorese through onshore/offshore. If we can be part of training that workforce with the support of the federal government and the companies, that is a good place for us to be. That is, essentially, where I am at with it.

Ms PURICK: In regard to the marine supply base you touched on before, you mentioned that, yes, there are three consortia which have been asked to come back with more final details. In arriving at this point, which countries did the government officials visit to gain an understanding of the marine supply base industry? It was in a media release of yours in August 2009, that government officials were visiting different countries.

Mr HENDERSON: I will defer to Mike Burgess.

Mr BURGESS: Going on recollection, there was a larger tour last year with the Port Corporation and others ...

Ms PURICK: Where:

Mr BURGESS: I think that was to Norway and Scotland to look at the marine supply bases there, as well as Singapore.

Ms PURICK: In visiting those countries and looking at the bases there, and talking to the people there in industry and government, what are some of the key design issues we are going to confront with our proposed marine supply base?

Mr HENDERSON: We are happy to provide a briefing at an appropriate point in time, member for Goyder. We are actually in the place where we have asked for a solution to be proposed by the consortia. We are making land available at the port. We are directing all the rig tender business away from the port to the marine supply base to underpin the commercial side of this particular deal. We are really leaving it to the private sector to come forward to provide solutions to the supply chain. To speculate in what some of those problems might be in a public forum like this, when we are in such an important time of bids being finalised, might not be helpful. I am more than happy, once a preferred tenderer has been identified and final contract negotiations settled, to brief you on those issues.

Ms PURICK: Thank you. In association with a design issue, has any new road infrastructure been identified that will be required to access to and from the marine supply base area, in addition to the road infrastructure that currently exists? Has additional road infrastructure been identified at this early stage in regard to the work?

Mr BURGESS: I will answer it as best I can, giving respect to the negotiations that are currently going on between different people. You will understand those things are fairly sensitive. In general terms, there is no significant new road infrastructure required to the boundary of the port. There is an analysis going on around the arrangements inside the port boundary to enable the most efficient working. Each proponent, I understand, has different views on that, so that will be part of the process we can work through with them individually.

Ms PURICK: I understand there has been some talk within government about the need - perhaps associated with this supply base and other activities at the port - for heavy vehicle bypass road infrastructure. Is that part of the discussions and the engagement?

Mr BURGESS: At this point, not beyond the discussions that are happening inside the expressions of interest process.

Ms PURICK: There are discussions outside the marine supply base in regard to a heavy vehicle bypass road infrastructure system going to and from the port?

Mr BURGESS: Not at any significant level, no.

Ms PURICK: Chief Minister, you will be aware the waste that comes from the offshore industry includes: naturally occurring radioactive materials, which are called norms; drill cuttings; human waste; hazardous waste; and hydrocarbon contaminated material. Where do you intend to store and manage these kinds of waste, which are not domestic waste?

Mr HENDERSON: They would be issues for whichever contractor chooses Darwin to facilitate that waste removal, to dispose of it. There is a broader issue here. I know DBE is brushing up some work on industrial oil waste per se. Given our growing economy in the Northern Territory, an opportunity for recycling of that waste to be done locally instead of waste products having to be trucked interstate for recycling. There was an analysis done of that a number of years ago when I was the minister for DBE, and I think Mike might even have been the CE at the time. That is being updated. At the time, the economics did not stack up regarding private sector investment, but we might be getting close now. Radioactive waste and human waste would be issues for companies to find solutions for.

Ms PURICK: When the delegations went to the marine supply bases offshore, did you also visit, in association with marine supply bases, industrial waste facilities? We do not have one of them here. If we are promoting a marine supply base with a large volume of traffic coming offshore to onshore that has to bring all its waste back, why is there not any discussions, or facilitation for discussion, from government in regard to development of an industrial waste facility associated with the marine supply base? Perhaps there is not. If there is, can give some details?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, DBE is updating the study that was done a few years ago with a forecast of where this economy is going, factoring in INPEX, the marine supply base, and offshore activity. Work is going on to do that analysis, to determine if there is potential for private sector investment to build such a facility in Darwin. That work is happening in DBE.

Ms PURICK: Thank you, Chief Minister. In regard to another new project, the gaol. When it was announced some three years ago the cost was about \$300m, despite no design being detailed. Given three years have passed, what would be the cost of the gaol in current terms?

Mr HENDERSON: We are looking for a public private partnership and are out to tender at the moment for the gaol. I am not prepared to speculate on that because we are out to tender. Commercial issues are involved and we will have to wait to see what the numbers come in at.

Ms PURICK: I understand the public private partnership proposal. However, can you detail what the cost would be to Territorians for the provision of a new gaol in the Top End?

Mr HENDERSON: Until we see the bids come in and understand what appetite there is within a PPP for private sector risk and the costs involved, I cannot speculate on that. Once it is all known, it will be known.

Ms PURICK: When do bids close for the gaol?

Mr HENDERSON: Bids have closed; it is being assessed now.

Ms PURICK: This is not specifically your portfolio area. However, given the gaol will be a major project can you give me details of the current volumes of traffic for the existing Berrimah gaol? What would be the anticipated volume of traffic for the proposed new gaol at Howard Springs?

Mr HENDERSON: With all due respect, member for Goyder, you would need to ask the Corrections minister those questions.

Ms PURICK: It is one thing to have a major project; however, there has to be planning for the support infrastructure and services. Given all the traffic from the new gaol, all the traffic from the proposed INPEX worker's village, and all the traffic from the Lutheran school, plus domestic traffic will go down the Howard Springs Road, are there plans to allocate funding for the upgrading of not only the road, but the intersection on to the Stuart Highway?

Mr HENDERSON: All that work is being done and modelled. We understand the pressure on that road and will be talking to INPEX about those issues closer to the day of the final investment decision. They are understood and appreciated. Significant traffic measures will need to be put in place to facilitate that extra traffic; we understand that. However, that is still being modelled and conversations are happening with INPEX.

Ms PURICK: One last question on the proposed new gaol. Did the government go through land clearing guidelines when it cleared large tracks of land for whatever purposes and, if not, why not? How could the government allow land to be cleared before the rezoning application had been finalised and declared by the minister?

Mr HENDERSON: With all due respect, member for Goyder, I suggest you ask those questions of the Lands minister. I am not aware of those answers.

Ms PURICK: Chief Minister, I may well do that. What work has been undertaken on the new waste transfer facility meant to accommodate the three Top End municipalities - Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield? Is it planned to put this waste transfer facility on the Howard Springs sand plains area, a sensitive environmental area adjacent to the proposed new gaol?

Mr HENDERSON: With all due respect, in relation to the details of the planning and what sites have been considered, specifically that site - I am not trying to be difficult, member for Goyder - I just do not have that information. The Planning minister will be able to provide that information.

Ms PURICK: I am conscious of the time, Chief Minister. Politics aside in relation to the radioactive waste facility, are you able to give any information as to how the facility will be developed safely in the Territory - OH&S plus the environment? How can we maximise the benefits to the economy given we have to have this facility? It might be a question on notice, Mr Chairman.

I am also interested in any legislative requirements associated with this facility which I would consider a major project, any issues with the transportation of the material to and from the site, any requirements to upgrade or change the Darwin Port, the environmental assessment process, and the role of ANSTO with the Northern Territory government in regard to development of the site.

Mr HENDERSON: The position is very clear, member for Goyder: the Northern Territory government does not support the nuclear waste facility at Muckaty Station. The position of the government is to preserve the integrity of that position. There is no work occurring with the Commonwealth government around any of those issues because I still have not given up hope, given the legal matters that are on foot, we might not get a better outcome for the Northern Territory. I am not compromising my position by negotiating with the Commonwealth government through the back door whilst fighting through the front door.

Ms PURICK: That is fine. I will leave it at that, Mr Chairman.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I believe the Muckaty Station site would be a good site, minister, and it would be ...

Mr HENDERSON: What about in your electorate, Gerry, just in case it gets knocked out?

Mr WOOD: Yes, but ...

Members interjecting.

Mr WOOD: No, minister, you know the reason why it has to be put somewhere because there is a group of people in this world who think it is bad.

Ms PURICK: You could have it in Alice Springs.

Mr WOOD: Yes.

Ms PURICK: I will put it on Wallaby Holtze Road.

Mr WOOD: Yes, see, but ...

Ms Scrymgour: Yours or Gerry's would be good.

Mr WOOD: We will move on.

Mr CHAIRMAN: There is a question?

Mr WOOD: It is a question. Is the waterfront Stage 2 regarded as a major project?

Mr HENDERSON: We would love to see it proceed sooner rather than later. Mike.

Mr BURGESS: We can take those questions now.

Mr WOOD: Yes. I suppose I can start a little earlier. Have all the units and flats in Stage 1 been sold?

Mr BURGESS: I might introduce Pat Coleman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If you could just introduce Mr Coleman, and Mr Coleman if you could just always say your name.

Mr COLEMAN: Pat Coleman, Chief Executive of Darwin Waterfront Corporation.

Mr WOOD: Where are we with Stage 1? Have units been sold, and commercial properties been taken up? Is it, basically, completed?

Mr COLEMAN: Stage 1 is, for all intents and purposes, complete. There are, I think, five or six unsold units at the high end of the market. All other units have been sold. They have been sold for three years, basically.

All of the commercial, as I understand it at today's date, other than one tenancy has now been either sold or let, and is either been fitted out and tenanted or is in the process of going through the planning process.

Mr WOOD: If we have just about sold everything, where are we at with developing Stage 2?

Mr COLEMAN: Stage 2 is a stage waiting to go. It is dependent on market conditions. Market conditions at the moment, particularly for high-end units, are fairly soft. There is a look forward test that is applied to when the development kicks off. That is based on 60% of the value of residential sales. At this stage, as of today's date, the number of sales out of a total of somewhere around about 120 units, is 74, I think - or it could be 78 - have been sold which is about 10 short of the required level of return. The short answer is it is wholly dependent on the residential market.

Mr WOOD: How long would it take, do you think, to get it up and going if you reach your 60% sales?

Mr COLEMAN: Stage 2 has already had planning approval. There are some proposed variations, but they would just be a short process to revalidate. Our estimate is if they had the sales tomorrow it would be about a six-week ramp up.

Mr WOOD: Stage 2 is also, I think, meant to have a marina or a lock. Is it possible that you would start part of Stage 2 before you develop the residential area?

Mr COLEMAN: It is unlikely. We do not have any capacity to force the development of the lock ahead of commercial return. The lock is a very expensive item. I suggest it would be the last thing on the agenda.

Mr WOOD: Right.

Mr COLEMAN: Regarding something being done in advance, we would expect it to be part of the commencement of the next stage.

Mr WOOD: I have to ask you this one, Mr Coleman. Why do you need to purchase parking tickets on Sundays at the waterfront when the rest of the Darwin CBD is free?

Mr HENDERSON: Oh, they are about to change that.

Mr WOOD: Not on Sunday, they are going to change it for Saturday mornings.

Mr COLEMAN: The reason is, you only have to purchase parking tickets generally if you are on street and if you stay for more than four hours. The issue at the waterfront is it is more or less a 24-hour precinct, seven days a week. There are different uses at different times of the day and night. In an attempt to try to manage as best we can, we constantly review whether it is the right approach or not, and we can change it any time we think it is not right. Essentially, we have to manage the needs of people coming to the wave pool in two lots of four-hour sessions on the weekends, which are the peak periods, against people coming for other events and/or to use the restaurants and commercial facilities. It is a difficult thing to do when people are using the parking there for no other reason than it is available; potentially keeping out people who are specifically going to the waterfront to use the facilities which have been provided.

Mr WOOD: Do you know if there is a possibility it could scare people off from going there; paying to go to the wave pool - and I do not have a problem with that - then paying for their car parking?

Mr COLEMAN: Again, it can always be reviewed. If you go to the wave pool for a four-hour session, which is what a session is, and if you parked in the multilevel car park, it would cost you \$3, which is quite cheap by any means.

Mr WOOD: Any idea how much money the Darwin City Council has collected for parking fines since you introduced parking fees?

Mr COLEMAN: Fines? Yes, \$89 000 in fines.

Mr WOOD: What is your estimate for next financial year?

Mr COLEMAN: In fee revenue?

Mr WOOD: Yes.

Mr COLEMAN: \$250 000.

Mr WOOD: That money does not go to the waterfront?

Mr COLEMAN: The revenue from parking, whether it is meters on the street or parking off-street, goes to the waterfront. The revenue from fines, at this point in time, goes to the council because they do the collecting and issuing of infringement notices.

Mr WOOD: On a couple of other subjects, Chief Minister. Has the government any involvement in the planning and development of the detention centre at Middle Arm Peninsula?

Mr HENDERSON: Sorry, member for Nelson, obviously, we have a role in the planning approval process, but I am not sure where you are heading.

Mr WOOD: I did not know whether you are involved in either construction or ...

Mr HENDERSON: No, not at all.

Mr WOOD: You do not have any involvement at all?

Mr HENDERSON: No.

Mr WOOD: I did not know whether you might. I believe the member for Goyder mentioned whether there has been any input to the increase in traffic on that road that would be caused by the detention centre planning?

Mr HENDERSON: That would have all been considered through the consent process.

Mr WOOD: The other favourite one of mine, Chief Minister, is the INPEX workers village. I suppose I will ask it a few times. Will there be a social impact study because, in reality, it is 5000 people moving into the rural area? We spoke about the traffic implications. Big projects have environmental impact statements. The workers village will have some impact on the community, so I am asking whether the government would ask, before this village is set in concrete, that it has a social impact study done before any approvals are given?

Mr HENDERSON: I suppose I am always an optimist rather than a pessimist, and I only think great and bountiful things will flow to businesses in Howard Springs as a result of all these people being there.

Mr WOOD: They will need a four-lane highway down there, but ...

Mr HENDERSON: Great and bountiful things will flow. However, through the EIS approvals for the project per se, which have been given approval by our minister, there is a requirement for ongoing environmental and social impact studies over the life of the projects. These issues may or may not emerge, so there is a requirement for the company to address them as part of that approvals process. Consent has already been given for the development of the village at Howard Springs.

Mr WOOD: It has not been to planning yet? There has been no planning approval per se? There might have been a re zoning - I am not even sure there is a re zoning but...

Mr HENDERSON: I am sure if the Development Consent Authority determined a requirement for the social impact study then that would be a decision the authority would make.

Mr WOOD: I know it can bring some benefits but I would be a fool to say it will not bring some downsides. It is like plonking a small town - we already have issues with the proposals that the planning department has put in regarding 7500 little blocks in the rural area. This has a similar impact on a small area, so it needs to be raised. It would be unfair to the community if there was not some sort of study done.

The member for Nhulunbuy had a similar community established at Nhulunbuy with the expansion of Alcoa and, at times, those places cause some issues. What we need to do in the case of INPEX is ensure we have covered all bases before we give approval for the facility. That is all the questions I have.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 5.1. I note the questions for Output 5.2, Asian Relations and Trade will be answered by the Minister for Asian Relations and for Trade on Wednesday, 22 June 2011.

OUTPUT GROUP 6.0 - GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SUPPORT

Output 6.1 – Support to Ministers and Leader of the Opposition

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee now moves on to Output 6.0, Government Business Support, Output 6.1, Support to Ministers and Leader of the Opposition. I call the Leader of the Opposition

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Chief Minister, my first question is a state of origin-type question. In the last 12 months, how many ex-New South Wales Labor government staffers have been employed in ministerial offices?

Mr HENDERSON: I have to ask what possible issue does where people have come from have to do with the budget estimates? I am not being defensive, but I do not want to identify members of staff personally. People are entitled to their privacy. Where they have come from to work anywhere in the Northern Territory should not be an issue.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will take a moment to clarify. The potential relevance the committee uses is any questions going to the operations or financial positions of the departments or agencies which seek funds in the Estimates. Those are relevant questions for the purposes of estimates hearings; it is about the operations and financial positions.

Mr MILLS: In the last 12 months, Chief Minister, are there any staff who are currently employed in your office or ministerial offices who received relocation assistance to move to the Territory?

Mr HENDERSON: Bear with us for a second. Mr Vivian.

Mr VIVIAN: Through the Chair, one of your written questions was in relation to how much had been spent on relocation costs and our answer was: up until 31 March \$7598. The subsequent question was 'provide a breakdown by business unit' and that was in relation to ministerial offices. I cannot say anymore. I do not know any detail other than that.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Chief Minister, what is the estimated cost of the Chief Minister's Office in Katherine for 2010-11? Could you please provide a breakdown of those costs?

Mr HENDERSON: I will hand over to Mr Vivian again.

Mr VIVIAN: The ongoing cost for the Katherine office is estimated at \$286 000 per annum. You asked for a breakdown as well?

Mr MILLS: That is correct.

Mr VIVIAN: Personnel \$188 000; operational \$98 000.

Mr MILLS: How many staff are currently employed in the office and what are their levels?

Mr HENDERSON: This is a little difficult because, essentially, we are going into privacy issues.

Mr MILLS: Public money is being used in your office.

Mr HENDERSON: I know; we are talking about a small number of people. At the beginning of the year there were two people; we have cut it back to one. That staffing budget would not be for one person, it would have covered two for part of the year.

Mr MILLS: When was it cut back?

Mr HENDERSON: We would have to take that on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.1

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can you repeat the question.

Mr MILLS: I could value add. When was staff cut back and why?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you prepared to take that on notice?

Mr HENDERSON: A decision was taken to cut back. All government agencies have been asked to look at their costs and the Chief Minister's Office is no different to any other government agency. We would have determined we could cut some costs there.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.1. Could you reference that when providing the answer?

Mr MILLS: What were the salary costs last year?

Mr HENDERSON: We do not have that information.

Mr MILLS: Take it on notice?

Question on Notice No 3.2

Mr CHAIRMAN: Repeat the question, thank you.

Mr MILLS: The salary costs for last financial year for the Katherine office?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.2.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, how many meetings have you held in that office?

Mr HENDERSON: From the Katherine office? I cannot be specific; three or four.

Mr MILLS: We will move to the Palmerston office. What is the estimated cost for your office in Palmerston, and what is the breakdown of those costs?

Mr VIVIAN: Could you repeat the question for me, thanks?

Mr MILLS: It is the same as the Katherine one. What is the estimated cost of the Chief Minister's office in Palmerston for 2010-11 and the breakdown of those costs?

Mr VIVIAN: The estimated cost is \$538 000 – personnel \$435 000, operational \$103 000.

Mr MILLS: How many staff are employed there?

Mr VIVIAN: Three employees.

Mr MILLS: What are their levels?

Mr HENDERSON: I would be careful in identifying individuals. We are talking about small offices. You have your global number and it is not normal practice to go into individual people who are employed and what their salaries are.

Mr MILLS: I will not push that. Is there a staffing cap in place at the Palmerston office?

Mr HENDERSON: There is a staffing cap that is supplied across all government agencies, and that also applies in the overall allocation for the Chief Minister's Office.

Mr MILLS: How, then, do you have three in the Palmerston office and one in the Katherine office?

Mr HENDERSON: The Palmerston office is a significantly busy office regarding the issues I deal with. It is the fastest growing region of the Territory.

Mr MILLS: Have you gauged the need for such an expenditure in the community from the community itself, or has it been a political decision to put these officers in place, Chief Minister?

Mr HENDERSON: We have this debate every Estimates. The decision to open access to the Chief Minister via officers in Palmerston, Katherine, and Alice Springs was taken to improve the level of access for people in those regions directly through the Chief Minister's Office to me on a whole range of issues affecting those communities. They have been very successful and, I believe, provide a good service to people in those areas. This is a decision I will continue to support. I do not resile from providing access to the Chief Minister through regional offices in Palmerston, Katherine, and Alice Springs.

Mr MILLS: So, three or four meetings in Katherine. How many meeting have you had in the office in Palmerston?

Mr HENDERSON: I would have had a significant number of meetings. I visit Palmerston with all of the developments - the housing issues in Palmerston, the development of health facilities and other infrastructure - on a regular basis. I would not know how many times I have had meetings in that office. It would be a significant number.

Mr MILLS: I understand you changed location of the meeting room last year so you could have a larger meeting space. Is that because you have more people attending the meetings?

Mr HENDERSON: I have a significant number of meetings in that meeting room with numbers of people ranging from two or three people to half a dozen or more on various issues.

Mr MILLS: Is the office used for any other purposes?

Mr HENDERSON: Not that I am aware of.

Mr MILLS: What would you expect the opening hours to be so people can access this service?

Mr HENDERSON: During government business hours.

Mr MILLS: Is there some tolerance over ...

Mr HENDERSON: It is a small office with a small number of people. If somebody is off sick for any point in time or people out, I imagine the office would be closed - much as an electorate office is if there is nobody there. I would expect it to be open during government business hours but, from time to time, it may not be.

Mr MILLS: Part of the employment duties for an officer working in this office is attending say, for example, school events and markets. Are they paid overtime for doing the markets on a Friday evening?

Mr HENDERSON: No, not to my ...

Mr MILLS: Is this above and beyond the call of duty, Chief Minister, or something they choose to do for the cause?

Mr HENDERSON: People, obviously, do in their own time what they want to do, in the same way any individual does. But, they are not paid overtime.

Mr MILLS: You see having a presence at the markets as a part of the outreach of the office?

Mr HENDERSON: Part of the community engagement strategy for the Chief Minister is to provide information to communities about what we, as a government, are doing in the Palmerston area and to receive feedback from the community in Palmerston.

Mr MILLS: I will go now, Chief Minister, to the office in Alice Springs. What is the estimated cost of your office in Alice Springs for 2010-11, and what is the breakdown of those costs?

Mr VIVIAN: The ongoing costs are estimated at \$633 000: personnel \$353 000, and operational \$280 000.

Mr MILLS: I see. Are there travel costs involved in those numbers?

Mr VIVIAN: Part of the operational costs would include travel.

Mr MILLS: What portion?

Mr VIVIAN: I cannot give you that breakdown.

Mr MILLS: Okay. Is there a staffing cap for the Alice Springs office?

Mr HENDERSON: Again, the staffing cap of staff for the Office of the Chief Minister would be global across all offices, including ministerial offices, so that would apply.

Mr MILLS: How many staff in the Alice office?

Mr HENDERSON: That is changed during different parts of the year.

Mr MILLS: All right. When was the largest number of staff there?

Mr VIVIAN: We have budgeted for four employees.

Mr MILLS: When was the largest period of time?

Mr VIVIAN: I cannot answer that.

Mr MILLS: You do not know or ...

Mr HENDERSON: My advice is we do not believe we have had more than four down there over the last 12 months, so four is the number.

Mr MILLS: Right. Not always four there, though?

Mr HENDERSON: There have been a couple of personnel changes while we have been recruiting from time to time.

Mr MILLS: Is there an operational office of the Chief Minister in Tennant Creek?

Mr HENDERSON: No, there is not.

Mr MILLS: Do you rent any space in Tennant Creek?

Mr HENDERSON: For the Chief Minister's office? I do not know. The advice is, we do not think so.

Mr VIVIAN: The answer is no, we do not.

Mr MILLS: You do not rent. Okay. Do you rent any space at all in Nhulunbuy?

Mr VIVIAN: No.

Mr MILLS: Is there an intention to open one in Tennant Creek?

Mr HENDERSON: If you think it would be a good idea, I might consider it.

Mr MILLS: I understand it was being considered last year.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, but the financial situation across all budgets means it has not been a priority.

Mr MILLS: Are there any plans to expand the presence in any of these offices, Chief Minister?

Mr HENDERSON: Not that I am aware of, no - not that I am planning for.

Mr MILLS: Are you aware of staffers working in these offices?

Mr HENDERSON: I am sorry, I do not understand what your meaning is.

Mr MILLS: Given they are your offices, are you aware of what goes on in these offices?

Mr HENDERSON: I am aware of the work these offices do in providing access for people in those regions to the Chief Minister on a range of issues.

Mr MILLS: Okay. How many meetings, or how many times have you visited Tennant Creek since last estimates?

Mr HENDERSON: I would have to take that on notice. Once or twice.

Question on Notice No 3.3

Mr MILLS: How many official visits has the Chief Minister made to Tennant Creek in the last financial year?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.3.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 6.1.

Output 6.2 – Legislation Production

Mr CHAIRMAN: We now move to Output 6.2, Legislation Production. No questions?

Mr MILLS: No questions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 6.2.

Output 6.3 – Support to Administrator and Government House

Mr CHAIRMAN: We now move to Output 6.3, Support to Administrator and Government House. No questions?

Mr MILLS: No questions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 6.3.

OUTPUT 7.0 – COMMUNITY SUPPORT **Output 7.1 - Community Support**

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now consider Output Group 7.0, Community Support, Output 7.1, Community Support.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, can you explain why the management of the Darwin waterfront has been moved from Output Group Territory Development Community Support?

Mr VIVIAN: It is no longer considered a major project. It is now considered more a community support function.

Mr MILLS: At what point - just out of curiosity - does that occur? Major project, project completed, transfers - is there some means for making that judgment?

Mr BURGESS: In how the project is funded. The project went through a development phase to get it off and running and it required a whole-of-government coordination effort around the facilitation of that process. That is, in many respects, complete. There are now just contractual obligations that are filled through the Darwin Waterfront Corporation and we provide grant funding to that corporation for those purposes.

Mr MILLS: Is that why there is no reference to the management of the Darwin waterfront in the 2011-12 budget papers?

Mr VIVIAN: It is mentioned on page 35, Darwin Waterfront Corporation, under Community Support.

Mr MILLS: Well done! What page is that - 35, is it?

Mr VIVIAN: Yes.

Mr MILLS: That will do for me, thanks.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 7.1 of Output Group 7.0.

We are now moving on to Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Thank you very much for your attendance and we are now changing witnesses to a new department.

The committee suspended.

NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Chief Minister. Could you please introduce the officials accompanying you and, if you have an opening statement, could you please make it.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, a short opening statement, Mr Chairman. I welcome Commissioner of Police, Fire and Emergency Services, John McRoberts; our Deputy Commissioner, Shayne Maines; Audrey Ko, Executive Director Corporate Service; Mick Ayre, Acting Director Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service; Peter Davies, Director of Emergency Services; and Rose Hallet, Director of Finance, is also at the table.

Police, Fire and Emergency Services is a tri-service comprising the Northern Territory Police Force, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Emergency Service. The Commissioner of Police exercises Chief Executive Officer authority over all three entities. The mission of the agency is keeping people safe.

Budget 2011-12 provides record funding of over \$327m to Police, Fire and Emergency Services; a 140% increase since 2001 to keep people safe. \$12.3m of capital works funding is provided to commence construction of the new Berrimah Fire Station, including an urban search and rescue equipment storage facility, and facilities for Darwin's Emergency Services Volunteer Unit. A further \$1.2m is provided to commence recruitment and training of the additional firefighters required for the new Berrimah Fire Station. Budget 2011-12 also provides \$0.7m to speed up the upgrade and replacement of fire and rescue trucks.

Cyclone shelters across the Top End will continue to be upgraded with funding of \$3m provided in Budget 2011-12. This will significantly increase community shelter capacity for those who choose to evacuate from their own homes or do not have a cyclone coded shelter otherwise available to them. Having community shelters, especially in remote parts of the Territory, also provides a central point for information, assistance and welfare provision by authorities.

The government's commitment to helping deliver a safer community also provides increased resources to our police. Funding of \$2.5m is provided in 2011-12 to continue building the capacity of the Forensic Science Branch, including \$1.2m to expand the laboratories in order to better meet current and future demands, funding to recruit an additional six Forensic Science Branch members, and the purchase of specialised robotic equipment.

Budget 2011-12 provides a range of initiatives to tackle alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour, including funding of \$7.37m to maintain Police Beats in shopping precincts in Alice Springs, Casuarina, Palmerston, Parap, Nightcliff and the northern suburbs; \$1.75m to maintain the closed circuit TV system in Darwin, Casuarina, Palmerston and Alice Springs, including funding to employ 10 additional CCTV monitors; \$0.97m to maintain the First Response Patrol; \$1.5m for implementation of police bans under the Enough is Enough alcohol reform; and \$0.8m for nursing staff to be stationed at police station watch houses to provide an increased level of health screening for people in custody.

As at 31 March, police staffing numbers have increased by 42% since this government was elected. This number includes police officers, Aboriginal Community Police Officers and Police Auxiliaries. Firefighter numbers have increased by 37% in the same period.

With these few words, I am pleased to take questions from the committee on behalf of the agency.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions to the opening statement?

Mr MILLS: No.

Mr CHAIRMAN: This is where you ask your clarification questions, member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Clarification, Chief Minister, on where I would ask questions regarding police uniforms, sick leave, and the volunteer coastguard? Where would those three areas be?

Mr HENDERSON: I would be happy for you to ask them up-front; however, that probably contravenes the rules of the committee.

Mr CHAIRMAN: No, questions to the opening can be on anything raised in the opening statement.

Mr HENDERSON: Do you want me to quickly mention uniforms – uniforms, coastguard and what was the other one?

Mr WOOD: Sick leave.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sick leave normally would go into a whole-of-government agency-related questions, which is the next step. I would have to take advice from the Commissioner about which output uniforms might fall into; it might be the same, a whole-of-government agency-related. What is the third one? Volunteer coastguard.

Mr HENDERSON: Can I add to my opening statement and get them over and done with?

Mr WOOD: You could, yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: All three will be dealt with in the next step, whole-of-government agency-related.

Mr WOOD: I will wait until ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you comfortable taking them there, Chief Minister?

Mr HENDERSON: I am happy to take those questions wherever.

Mr CHAIRMAN: This is where we normally take advice from you, so we will deal with them up-front.

Mr WOOD: I will wait for my turn.

Mr CHAIRMAN: In which case we return to the Leader of the Opposition and ask if he has any whole-of-government agency-related questions.

Mr MILLS: Do staffing levels fit into this category or in the next category of Community Safety and Crime Prevention?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, this.

Mr MILLS: Into this category? Okay. First, this relates to a media release that was just issued related to an NT police officer who had a positive blood alcohol reading while driving a police vehicle in Tennant Creek on 10 March 2010. I understand, as of lunchtime, there has been a finding which determines the officer now be reinstated at the same rank as the time of his dismissal. Is there some further information that could be provided on this matter, Chief Minister?

Mr HENDERSON: I will take advice from the Commissioner as to how comfortable he may or may not be in answering the question. Again, I point out we are identifying individuals here, but I will leave that to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you, Chief Minister. Yes, you are correct that a police officer has been offered reinstatement into the Northern Territory Police Force. I dismissed him last year on a public interest dismissal for returning a positive blood alcohol reading whilst driving a police car. The officer appealed to the Police Disciplinary Tribunal. Some 11 months after the appeal was heard, the tribunal handed down a decision which indicated I should reinstate him.

Mr MILLS: You have accepted the findings of the tribunal?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I have accepted the findings of the tribunal based on legal advice.

Mr MILLS: Will there be flowing from this compensation, or any matters of cost that would be afforded to the member?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I do not expect there to be matters of cost, but there will be a reinstatement to his current rank. There is a presumption in law that we would back pay him for the time he was dismissed.

Mr MILLS: What I understand from that, from the time he was dismissed until this decision, he has not been paid?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Chief Minister, how many police officers are currently employed in Alice Springs at the rank of Senior Constable, First Class Senior Constable, Constable First Class and Constable? Basically, a breakdown of numbers in Alice Springs and global, and at rank level.

Mr HENDERSON: I refer to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: In Alice Springs Police Station, there are 126 sworn officers. There are - sorry, what rank?

Mr MILLS: Oh, just the full ranks breakdown.

Commissioner McROBERTS: There are six Senior Sergeants, six Sergeants, 86 Constables, 13 Aboriginal Community Police Officers, and 15 Auxiliaries, and there are then a number of commissioned officers. There are three Superintendents and a Commander.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to advise how those numbers compare to this time last year?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Not in last year, but I can over a longer period.

Mr MILLS: What do you mean?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I have not examined the figures for last year, but I can report there has been a steady increase in the numbers of sworn officers in Alice Springs over the past seven or eight years.

Mr MILLS: Are we able to have a snapshot for the same time last year? Do you want to take that on notice?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We would expect to be able to give you that answer fairly shortly. We have some people monitoring this.

Mr CHAIRMAN: There are two ways we can handle that. One is the answer will come back in later, or we can take it on notice. That way, if it does not come back, it is already recorded.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We will have the answer before we finish.

Mr MILLS: This is regular monitoring? How many NT police were on extended sick leave as at NTG Pay 25?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Seven.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to advise - I should have said this at the start for efficiency – for the same time last year?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.4

Mr MILLS: How many NT police were on extended sick leave as at this time last year?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.4.

Mr MILLS: Could you describe, through the Chief Minister, Commissioner, the efforts that NT Police undertake to have these seven return to work?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We have a very robust arrangement through our employee support services. In the first instance, staff are provided with the necessary medical support. Where staff need to be referred to other medical practitioners or other health practitioners, then that is arranged through the employee support service network.

Mr MILLS: According to the written responses to the generic questions I have received from the department, there are currently 255.5 full-time equivalent Senior Constables. These Senior Constables have a total of 15 440 days of accrued recreation leave. That amounts to an average of 60.5 days of recreation leave, or just over 12 weeks. Do you think that is acceptable and, if not, how would you deal with that?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is not acceptable, but it is a legacy issue and is not unique to the Northern Territory. In the policing industry, we have a leave management plan that is in place to endeavour to reduce the liability, to maintain service delivery standards, and also recognise we need our staff to take advantage of recreation leave so they are able to maintain a healthy work life balance.

Mr MILLS: Thank you Commissioner. Chief Minister, looking at those figures, what does that tell you?

Mr HENDERSON: What does what tell me? Which figures are we talking about?

Mr MILLS: The level of accrued recreation leave. As an employer, what would you conclude from that?

Mr HENDERSON: I take it the Commissioner, who is responsible for managing the police force, and I, as an employer, would expect people to take recreation leave more or less on an annual basis. I do not think it is particularly healthy not to take recreation leave in any given year. It also demonstrates to me a level of commitment to our police force, given those figures. There could be all sorts of reasons why people are saving their recreation leave. They might want to take a trip to Europe, and accrue some additional recreation leave and disappear for 10 weeks. It can depend on individual circumstance as well.

Mr MILLS: All of that may well be the case, but to me it indicates a person who does not take recreation leave is required to work; there are roster duties and the like. Is it possible for anyone who wants to take recreation leave to simply take it, or are their constraints around the timetable?

Mr HENDERSON: That is a management issue, so I defer to the Commissioner. I do not manage the leave rosters.

Mr MILLS: No, Chief Minister. Seriously, what I am trying to get at is, it does indicate something. It is not as if you would like them to take it if they cannot. If there are pressures on the personnel that they are not able to freely take recreation leave when they wish, clearly, there is an issue there that I believe would fall into your court.

Mr CHAIRMAN: In answering a question, the Chief Minister can defer to other witnesses present. It is up to the Chief Minister how they answer the questions. Leader of the Opposition, you are allowed to ask the question. The question has been asked, and it is up to the Chief Minister about the manner in which that question is answered. He has deferred to the Commissioner. We have not yet heard the answer.

Mr MILLS: With respect, the question was not so much – obviously, it is a roster management issue. What I am asking the Chief Minister, as the minister for Police, is what would he, as the employer effectively, conclude from this?

Mr CHAIRMAN: The question has been asked and the Chief Minister is in the process of answering. The Chief Minister has the call and he has deferred it to the Commissioner, so we are now waiting, as a committee, for the Commissioner to respond. Thank you.

Commissioner McROBERTS: I have no evidence to suggest anybody has been denied leave at any time in the last 12 months, or since I have been the Commissioner. It would be most unlikely that leave would be refused. It may occasionally be denied if a person has a substantial court commitment to the process of the justice system. However, typically, people seeking leave are required to do so, so roster management can take place.

Mr MILLS: If someone does not want to take leave - they just want to keep pressing on - how does that affect the timetable and the roster?

Commissioner McROBERTS: They cannot. There are requirements and protocols in place as to the amount of leave liability an employee can have at any one time. As I said, there is a legacy issue here where we are endeavouring to reduce the liability by good governance and accountability around leave.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. How long has this leave management system been in place?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It has been in place for a couple of years now, and I believe we will continue to see a decline in the liability.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. How many officers can take leave at any one time?

Commissioner McROBERTS: That is entirely dependent on the environment. It depends on operational necessities and on the time of the year. We prefer to have the majority of our staff available at peak service delivery times so we can provide the best possible service to those who live, work, and play in the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: Within the fire department, Chief Minister, there is a station officer who has a total of 227 days of accrued annual leave. Taken at a rate of nine weeks annual leave per year - that is an entitlement

for a firefighter - it amounts to a total of five years worth of accrued annual leave. Could you explain, Chief Minister, how this occurs?

Mr HENDERSON: Again, I defer to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: I would need to take some advice on that. I am advised that, once again, this is a legacy issue where it is fair to say that inadequate controls and checks were in place some years ago where people were able to accrue leave like the police force. I have instructed the Directors of both the Fire and Rescue Service and the Northern Territory Emergency Service to ensure there is a sound leave management plan in place to ensure not only is the annual entitlement taken - unless there is very good reason not to - but we are reducing the liability that currently exists.

Mr MILLS: You would assume there has been something like this leave management system in place before. When you describe something that came into place two years ago, is it a revamp of an existing system that was not working, or are you saying there was not a system in place and now there is a system in place?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There has been a system in place for some time. I do not think it was adequately managed to ensure the targets that were set by the senior executive were being met. Since we recently introduced a performance management system across the tri-service, which has been well received by employees, a critical component of all line manager's and senior executive's performance is that the liabilities for leave, amongst other things, is a measurable component of their own job performance.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Commissioner. No further questions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you have any questions?

Mr WOOD: Three questions. Chief Minister, the Police Association has indicated the police uniform will change. Do you know how this will occur, how much it will cost, and who will pay the cost for the change?

Mr HENDERSON: A very astute question, member for Nelson. A very democratic process was put in place by the Commissioner to determine the view of members of the police force. The result was overwhelming and conclusive: members desired a change. As minister for Police, I have said the costs associated with this uniform change would be met from within the existing budget. The Commissioner has a cunning plan to achieve that. I will defer to the Commissioner for his cunning plan.

Mr WOOD: I make a note: cunning Commissioner?

Mr HENDERSON: No, no, I did not say that. I said he had a cunning plan.

Mr WOOD: Oh, sorry. Thank you, Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Member for Nelson, with respect, might I not answer that question? We are currently in a tender negotiation with a number of entities who are keen to obtain this contract. It is a very attractive contract, and ...

Mr HENDERSON: Very attractive uniform as well.

Mr WOOD: I will not comment on that.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We are so close to contract stage it would be unwise, prior to the tender process closing, to talk about that.

Mr WOOD: I can ask you next year. Hopefully, I will be here next year. My next question relates to sick leave. How many members of the police force were on sick leave for stress-related illnesses in 2009-10, and to date for 2010-11?

Commissioner McROBERTS: That is not a question I can answer because there is a degree of confidentiality around officers' sick leave. I do not, nor do I intend to, pry into the circumstances upon which an officer takes sick leave at any particular time. However, we have a good relationship with our employee support services which briefs us on trends so we can monitor the condition of our staff. We are a responsible employer across the tri-service and, if there is suggestion of stress leave or some form of

psychological stress, leave is taken, then we work with employee services to identify how we might deal with that.

Mr WOOD: If the question did not have a type of sickness, could it be answered? In other words, if I asked how many members of the police force are on sick leave for 2009-10 and to 2010-11, could that be answered?

Commissioner McROBERTS: That is a very difficult question to answer because I may have a number of officers on sick leave today, but who are at work tomorrow. Sick leave can be for as little as three or four hours if an officer is feeling sick midway through his shift and elects to go home, one day or, in very few cases, as I described earlier, we have seven employees who have been off for an extended period, typically because of an injury in the workplace.

Mr WOOD: Do you monitor things like sick leave to ensure it is not excessive? If it is excessive, do you look at it and ask why?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, we do because when officers do not report for duty there is a consequential knock-on effect to service delivery. Supervisors, line managers, more senior staff constantly monitor trends of sick leave. It is something that concerns us, both from a service delivery point and an employee welfare point. We need to understand why our officers may not be fit for duty.

Mr WOOD: Compared to other states, would our sick leave levels be similar or vastly different?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I do not know. I am advised by my colleague they are very comparable.

Mr WOOD: This one might be for the Chief Minister - or definitely will because the Chief Minister launched this boat last year. I have to declare a conflict of interest since Commander Butler is my brother-in-law. If I do not ask the question, it would be unfair of the whole service.

On the weekend there was a call-out at approximately 8 pm, I think the pearl lugger broke down. There was a wedding party on the pearl lugger and they could not get back to shore. The Volunteer Coast Guard was called out but it has to moor away from the wharf because it cannot afford wharf fees. It still has to pay quite a bit of money just to anchor in that port area. The people have to row a little boat out to the Volunteer Coast Guard boat and, then, go out and rescue people and come back in, drop those people off, then anchor the boat and rowboat back into the wharf.

I just wondered whether there is any possibility there could be some assistance to allow that boat to be moored somewhere where it is a much easier access, because that would have held them up. It was not a big emergency the other night - there was someone injured - but if it had been a major emergency, then there is a time delay in trying to get out to get to the boat. Would the Chief Minister at least look at that and see whether there is any possibility of assistance to help those people?

Mr HENDERSON: I absolutely will take that on board. Without wishing to understand what the precedent issues are, I would have thought the port should be providing facilities for an important volunteer search and rescue capability the police actually refer to from time to time. I was not aware of that, member for Nelson. I give you a commitment I will take that on board, and we should be able to fix that problem.

Mr WOOD: That would be good. It was an interesting row at 8 pm.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes. It sounds pretty ridiculous to me.

Mr WOOD: Okay, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of whole-of-government, agency-related questions on budget and fiscal strategies.

OUTPUT GROUP 8.0 – COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Output 8.1 – Community Safety and Crime Prevention

Mr CHAIRMAN: We now move on to Output Group 8.0, Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Output 8.1, Community Safety and Crime Prevention.

Mr MILLS: First question, Chief Minister, is I request a breakdown of domestic violence-related offences 1 June 2010 to 31 May 2011, broken down by gender and Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Mr HENDERSON: The Commissioner advises we can provide that information, so I will defer to the Commissioner.

Mr MILLS: Excellent. I am happy, Commissioner, for that to be tabled in the interests of time, rather than read the whole thing out.

Mr CHAIRMAN: It is at your discretion. I am not sure what is in your notes. If you are prepared to table, that is great, but if there ...

Commissioner McROBERTS: I table the statistics. I am suggesting you might like to see alcohol-related assaults and domestic violence-related assaults. I think that was your question.

Mr MILLS: It was actually just a breakdown of domestic violence-related offences, 1 June 2010 to 31 May 2011, broken down by gender, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We need to take that on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.5

Mr CHAIRMAN: Okay, could you just sum that up as a complete question, Leader of the Opposition please?

Mr MILLS: A complete question. Provide a breakdown of domestic violence-related offences, 1 June 2010 to 31 May 2011, broken down by gender, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Mr CHAIRMAN: And you are happy to take that question on notice?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.5.

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, could I just ask what was going to be tabled?

Mr MILLS: Yes, what did we miss out on just then?

Mr WOOD: Yes, I do not want to miss out.

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is a table which shows for the 12 months to March 2006, March 2007, March 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, domestic violence-related assaults in a number of centres around the Northern Territory, which includes Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy, the remainder, and the NT as a whole.

Mr MILLS: If I could ask a question that relates to that?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Could we ask for a geographic breakdown ...

Mr WOOD: Could we ask for it to be tabled? Is that all right, member for Blain?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you comfortable tabling that document?

Mr MILLS: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, how many reports of domestic violence have been received in the previous 12 months to 31 May 2011?

Mr HENDERSON: I can say far too many.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Can we come back to that? We will get ...

Mr MILLS: Certainly, we will take that on notice. Oh, it is there. Commissioner, through the Chief Minister, please list the number of people taken into protective custody for each police station within the Territory for the same period.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We cannot do it each police station now, but I can break it down for the major centres.

Mr MILLS: Are the northern suburbs regarded as a major centre?

Commissioner McROBERTS: That would be Darwin.

Mr MILLS: Darwin as a whole?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: All right, well, we will take that.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Since 1 July 2010 to 14 June this year, for the Northern Territory, there have been 19 765. We break that down into Alice Springs – 3189; Darwin – 8523; Katherine – 5801; and Tennant Creek – 1379.

Mr MILLS: Palmerston is in Darwin?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Right. Thank you. Can you provide a list the number of people taken into protective custody and then delivered to a sobering-up shelter, by region?

Commissioner McROBERTS: For the period 1 July 2010 to 14 June 2011, 4161 protective custody incidents were returned home; 11 133 were taken to a sobering-up shelter, for a total of 15 294 that were not taken to a watch house.

Mr MILLS: You said domestic violence is just protective custody?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Protective custody.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. I would like to ask some questions about the Ochre Card, just going into a different area, so I flag that ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do we accept Ochre Card into this output?

Mr MILLS: I thought if we followed that theme, the ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Did you have questions on that theme, member for Nelson?

Mr WOOD: Yes, one about intoxication.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Did you want to ask that at this stage then, while we are on the topic?

Mr WOOD: Yes, is that all right?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, as long as you – just on the Ochre Card.

Mr WOOD: I have two questions on the Ochre Card, so we might end up asking the same ones.

Mr MILLS: We could.

Mr WOOD: Has there been any confusion with the definition of who a drunk or intoxicated person is, in relation to some of the problems that might have occurred in the new year in Alice Springs? Are there some definitional problems within the force that may have caused fewer people to be picked up?

Mr HENDERSON: I defer to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, there were, member for Nelson. There was some confusion over the term 'seriously intoxicated'. As a result of that, we approached the Chief Minister, and recent amendments in the parliament have now clarified that for us. We are satisfied it is an easier definition for our operational officers to operate with.

Mr WOOD: Did that contribute, in any way, to some of the problems we had in Alice Springs? In other words, were more people left on the streets than may have been, if the definition was different?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is possible, but I do not know conclusively. I can reassure you that where police detect offences, regardless of the definition of protective custody, police take action for the offence.

Mr WOOD: Bouncing off the issue from the member for Blain, you have medical personnel at the watch house to look after people who are taken there when the sobering-up shelters are full?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Not as yet. Once again, we approached the Chief Minister late last year and sought approval to go to tender for the employment of a nursing practitioner at Alice Springs, Katherine, and Darwin. We are currently negotiating a bilateral tender with the Health Department to employ those staff in the near future.

Mr WOOD: As you would know, in Darwin especially, there was a lot of publicity about itinerants and people hanging around places like Fannie Bay shops and parts of the CBD. Under the new alcohol strategy the government has introduced, what role do you see the police playing in making that alcohol strategy work in relation to itinerants? What will be the practical on-the-ground action police officers will have to take in carrying out this alcohol strategy? Are there any changes such as more paper work they will have to do with this new strategy?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We have been very much a part of the negotiations to get to where we are today or, indeed, where we will be on 1 July. We see the alcohol reforms as a useful initiative to address those people who are constantly taken into protective custody for abuse of alcohol. It is important to note there is a distinction between people being taken into protective custody and itinerants. There is nothing wrong with being an itinerant, providing one is conducting oneself lawfully. Police are not tasked - nor should they be, in my opinion - to sweep the streets of people because they choose to live on the street. Police are expected and duty bound to intervene when an offence has been committed or where somebody is so intoxicated they present a danger to themselves or others.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Returning to you, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MILLS: Commissioner, through the Chief Minister, how many Ochre Card applications have been received by Safe NT?

Commissioner McROBERTS: As of today, we have received 34 774 applications.

Mr MILLS: How many relate to employment and how many for volunteer purposes?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I do not have that data. We do not actually necessarily separate it for category. The application and screening process is the same.

Mr MILLS: Okay.

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is just that the volunteer is cheaper than employment.

Mr MILLS: I understand. So, 34 000 ...

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is 34 774.

Mr MILLS: Okay. That is applications received. How many have been processed to date?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Issued, 32 738. There are 2036 still being processed.

Mr MILLS: There would be no break-up of whether they are for employment or for volunteer purposes? How many of those outstanding relate to teachers?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Once again, we do not break it down. We go through a robust screening process to issue a card. Regardless of the category of employment or volunteerism, it does not matter.

Mr MILLS: Would this be a question, Chief Minister, which the minister for Education could answer?

Mr HENDERSON: Possibly. I can say those numbers are very good given the large volume and the work issues initially in recruiting for that agency. Of the 2000-odd still outstanding, a number would be with agencies down south waiting for screening authority determination. I have not been briefed, as the Chief Minister, that there is a significant problem regarding the outstanding numbers. Some time ago there was a large backlog; however, the team has done an amazing job to process 32 738 - average 13 days to get a card, which is pretty good.

Mr MILLS: Given there is no identification as to whether they are for processing for employment or for volunteering, is there a means whereby those in areas such as teaching are prioritised? Are they able to be recognised as they come in so priority can be given to those who work directly on a full-time basis with children?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I am advised the majority of government agency employees seeking cards do so through their agency and are part-processed to the agency prior to them being sent to Safe NT. Therefore, there is a reduced amount of work required by our staff - the form is filled out correctly and all the required points of identification are sound because somebody at the government agency has done some quality control over the application.

Mr MILLS: Therefore, the differentiation between the employment stream and the volunteer stream occurs outside your operation?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I would like to think it is a partnership between us and other government agencies to process these applications as quickly as we can. The fact that government agencies pre-screen to some degree reduces the workload of Safe NT which, therefore, enables it to dedicate more time to members of the public who walk in off the street seeking a card.

Mr MILLS: Can you advise when the backlog will be cleared?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We do not have a backlog.

Mr MILLS: There are 2000 to go. I understand; they are coming in all the time and ...

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, we are turning cards around in 13 days. The reason we have a number that have not yet been issued is because we have identified some issues where we either require the applicant to provide additional information, or there are some applicants who need to appear before the screening authority to demonstrate why he or she should be issued a card.

Mr MILLS: Would you be able to advise how many cards are processed at the volunteer discount rate?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It would be a very significant manual process to paper check 34 774 applications.

Mr MILLS: Have there been any appeals against refusal to issue an Ochre Card?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There are some matters before the screening authority that I am not at liberty to comment on.

Mr MILLS: No appeals?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No appeals as yet

Mr MILLS: How many uniformed staff have been allocated to Safe NT for the processing of Ochre Card applications? You have done a good job; you have cleared the mountain. How many people did it take to clear that work?

Commissioner McROBERTS: On a day-to-day basis, it is all civilian employees. There have, at various stages during this year, been some additional staff tasked to assist in reducing the backlog so we can provide people with cards in the most timely manner. I do not know what those figures are, but we are talking a number of staff assisting for a day or two here and there to particularly look at matters that need to appear before the screening authority, and do some quality control.

Mr MILLS: Where does this work actually take place?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The NT Safe facility is in Smith Street, next door to the NAB building. However, there is capacity, as I said earlier, Leader of the Opposition, for government agencies in particular to provide us with bulk applications, some of which have already had some work done on them. When we are addressing a backlog we look around the agency for staff who might be able to enter data for some of the applications. So, it is all hands on deck for the purpose of a very worthwhile initiative to ensure children are safe.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Commissioner, you are able to provide that the turnaround time average is ...

Commissioner McROBERTS: At the moment, it is 13 working days.

Mr MILLS: Thirteen working days. Are you able to - perhaps Ms Ko would be able to answer this. Have you calculated the cost per card of the whole process?

Ms KO: This is only direct revenue and costing. Some indirect cost has not been factored into that equation. The direct costing is about \$24.

Mr MILLS: What were the indirect costs you referred to?

Ms KO: Say, for example, the screening authority. Much of the work is done by the organisations, but that is not directly related to Safe NT. Also, there is some in-kind support from other agencies to provide some of the data input operators. Really, it is a direct costing at the time, how much we pay the staff, and the running costs of the office.

Mr MILLS: That makes sense. Thanks, Ms Ko. Are you able to then provide how much this actually costs for the physical card – bits of plastic?

Ms KO: Maybe about \$5, but I can take it on notice and get back to you.

Mr MILLS: No, I will just catch up with me some time.

Mr HENDERSON: That \$24 is pretty cheap to keep kids safe. I have to say they have done a remarkable job to bring these in at \$24 a card.

Mr MILLS: It is okay, Paul. It is okay.

Mr HENDERSON: They have done a fantastic job. It is much better than I would have thought, actually - very good job.

Mr MILLS: I am just curious at what these cards cost. I am not having a go at anyone.

Mr HENDERSON: Twenty-four dollars is pretty good.

Mr MILLS: All right. So, it keeps kids safe?

Mr HENDERSON: It certainly is the aim to ensure people who should not be near children, either through community groups or employment, are not near children. If they have a police record and they have had a conviction, they will not get near children.

Mr MILLS: I understand that, Chief Minister, but does it actually keep kids safe? Do you have any way of substantiating that?

Mr HENDERSON: That is the whole policy intent ...

Mr MILLS: I know that.

Mr HENDERSON: The recommendation that came through numerous reports was to introduce a screening process to ensure people who were employed to care for children in any way or who, through community organisations, look after children, are fit and proper people to do that. I can say if a number of people get knocked out by the screening authority, then even if it is only one person who gets knocked out, that is a good result.

Mr MILLS: I understand all of that. In its inputs and outputs, results from what we put into it ...

Mr HENDERSON: It does not actually commence in the legal requirements until 1 July.

Mr MILLS: That will do with me on Ochre Cards.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you have any other questions in that output?

Mr MILLS: Just on themes, I know the ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you have a few other questions for Ochre Card?

Mr WOOD: Ochre Card is covered.

Mr HENDERSON: Mr Chairman, I am not sure how this works? Two minutes comfort stop?

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will take a five-minute break. The committee is happy to take a break.

The committee suspended.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: We are in Output 8.1, Community Safety and Crime Prevention. Michael Gunner has vacated for a while, so I am Deputy Chair. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, can you describe the role that Police, Fire and Emergency Services play in relation to immigration detention facilities?

Mr HENDERSON: Sorry, in?

Mr MILLS: What role does Police, Fire and Emergency Services play in relation to immigration detention facilities?

Mr HENDERSON: I will defer in a minute to the Commissioner. We have an MOU with the Australian government in regard to the existing facilities in the greater Darwin region. In regard to the proposed new facility, we are working through those issues with the Commonwealth government. I hand over to the Commissioner for details on that.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you, Chief Minister. I wonder if I might invite my colleague, the Deputy Commissioner, to talk about this. He has been intimately involved in the negotiations.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Thank you, sir. The Northern Territory Police provides a response to public order matters that may occur outside of the perimeter. If a person escapes, there is an arrangement for us to assist in returning people to the facility.

The responsibility for investigating offences within the facilities primarily rest with the Australian Federal Police. This has been an issue that has been much discussed. I attended a meeting in Canberra on 19 April this year with a number of my jurisdictional colleagues and the AFP to discuss those arrangements.

There was a workshop held in Darwin about four weeks ago to discuss risk management issues. There has been a great deal of planning in respect to the roles of the Northern Territory Police in responding to incidents at immigration centres. There is still ongoing discussions as to the role Northern Territory Police will continue to apply.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Deputy Commissioner. Is there reference to the additional cost to policing in the Northern Territory in that MOU?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: NT - there is a cost recovery process.

Mr HENDERSON: Full cost recovery across all government agencies for any services provided to these facilities in the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: Does that mean if there is a breakout and Territory police respond, you are able to identify costs, work out the costs and a bill is sent to the Commonwealth?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: That is correct. That is what happened in August and September last year; we billed the Commonwealth for the services of the Northern Territory Police.

Mr MILLS: Are they paying their bills?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: They pay very well, sir.

Mr HENDERSON: They have more money than we have.

Mr MILLS: It is good to hear. How many police were involved in the riot at the Darwin detention facility last year?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: There were two incidents. There was one at the end of August and one at the beginning of September. With the 84 people who broke out of the Coonawarra detention centre, there were probably about 120 police - I do not have the exact numbers. The issue of policing and policing numbers is one we continue to discuss with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to work out better ways of doing it. Yes, a significant number of police were deployed. In addition, the Australian Federal Police deployed members of their Operational Response Group to provide support to Northern Territory Police.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Were any police injured during that episode?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Not that I am aware of, sir.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, what negotiations have taken place in relation to the proposed new detention facility at Wickham Point? You say an MOU is being worked on at the moment. Have you any more information?

Mr HENDERSON: No, only at a whole-of-government level. Given the size of this facility those negotiations are being oversighted by the Department of Chief Minister across all government agencies. I will be receiving a briefing from DIAC officials within the next week or two.

Mr MILLS: Has the Commonwealth requested Police, Fire and Emergency Services personnel, and or resources, to be dedicated to the new facility?

Mr HENDERSON: Not to my knowledge. Shayne.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: No, that is not the case. It is still very much a matter of national jurisdictional discussions, with each of the jurisdictions having diverging views on the best way to respond to the issues the immigration centres currently present.

Mr MILLS: In the current situation, a couple of riots were responded to and contained, and then there was cost recovery. I am sure in risk management there would be a point where, if the potential risk increases, it pushes us into a place where we would need to consider additional resources?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: That has not matured yet. However, there are discussions in that vein to be held with DIAC. I am also mindful there is a collective approach to this particular issue across all policing jurisdictions across Australia. The Australian Federal Police has capability to deal with certain investigations; however, but the actual model to respond to large-scale matters on the mainland is still being discussed.

Mr MILLS: It appears to me - and I am not sure whether I am right or not - you would expect with the increased risk there is an increased likelihood of greater resources and police presence in the Territory as a result of this? Would that be a fair conclusion?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Our discussions have not matured to that stage yet. We are still in the process of mapping the risks. The extent of that risk is the responsibility of the second tier service provider which provides security services for DIAC. I can assure you those discussions are taking place and have not matured to a point where we discussed resourcing or capability issues specifically for the Northern Territory Police. However, they are matters we are mindful of and, being responsible for deploying to any incident that would occur at a detention centre, matters we will continue to discuss with DIAC prior to the opening of the facility.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. I assume, obviously, we are not working in a vacuum, and there are other detention centre facilities that have placed a demand on local response in other places?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: That is correct.

Mr MILLS: When you are having these discussions, are you able to learn whether the resources to manage that in other states has resulted in an increase in police personnel?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not aware of any police jurisdiction that has received extra personnel, with the exception of South Australia some years ago. My understanding was they received an additional FTE as a liaison person. However, as I said, it is a very intensive discussion I am having with policing jurisdictions as to how these are installations will be managed.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Mr Maines. The last answer would be intense negotiations. I can appreciate that. I am sure you are there representing our argument well. What is the time frame and when would there be a conclusion to those negotiations?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I tried to give you a definitive time frame.

Mr MILLS: On that line, you said the Commonwealth paid, and paid well. What did they pay?

Commissioner McROBERTS: \$149 000.

Mr MILLS: That is for the two incidents?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Did you bill them separately or does bulk-billing apply here? Two separate accounts, or that was the total?

Commissioner McROBERTS: One account for \$149 000 for both incidents.

Mr MILLS: I will go into CCTV questions. Chief Minister, how many CCTVs are currently in operation in the Northern Territory?

Mr HENDERSON: A very significant number, but I defer to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: There are 109 in the greater Darwin region, and I think there are 40 in Alice Springs. In total, we have 157.

Mr MILLS: You are referring to Palmerston there too, are you?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Palmerston, Casuarina bus interchange, and Darwin CBD.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to break that down by suburb? Where they are spread?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Palmerston, Darwin is the CBD ...

Mr MILLS: No, where the CCTV cameras are by suburb.

Mr HENDERSON: It is not really by suburb. It is Darwin CBD, the Casuarina business district and bus exchange, and the Palmerston CBD and bus interchange. In Alice Springs, it is through the town centre area.

Mr MILLS: Right. None actually out in neighbourhood centres?

Mr HENDERSON: No.

Mr MILLS: No.

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, could I just ask through you about the new park and ride facilities that are going into the rural area? Are they going to be connected to the CCTV cameras as well?

Mr HENDERSON: There are no current provisions to do that. I hope we do not see the same sort of issues in the park and ride facilities that we see from time to time at the Casuarina bus exchange and the interchange at Palmerston. They are much larger facilities.

Mr WOOD: I thought the tender for the park and ride was that there would be CCTV cameras.

Mr HENDERSON: I might be wrong. If I have misled the committee, it is inadvertent.

Mr WOOD: Mr Mills will start an inquiry if that is the case.

Mr HENDERSON: I am advised by the Police Commissioner that my answer is correct.

Mr WOOD: They may be recording CCTV.

Mr MILLS: In the 2010-11 Budget, you allocated \$1.44m for CCTVs in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs. How many new cameras were installed in 2010-11 financial year, and where were they located?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There have not been any new ones installed this financial year. We are currently in the process of a risk analysis to identify where additional cameras may be installed. It is a complex issue of where a camera can go, based on the proximity of both the fibre-optic cable and a device known as a fibre-optic ring. For example, if a camera sight is close to fibre-optic cable, hence a fibre-optic ring, it is considerably cheaper to install than one that is a reasonable distance away from fibre optic. You could be talking many thousands of dollars difference in cost. We are trying to work out, at the moment, through a risk analysis environmental scan, where we will get best value. That is not to say we will only go to cheap locations. If there is a need or a camera at a particular place, we will make that recommendation.

Mr MILLS: If I get this right, Chief Minister, the budget last year highlighted the expenditure of \$1.44m for CCTV cameras, and we have learnt that none of those have actually been put in place.

There are two issues I see, Commissioner: (1) the identification of the correct place for a camera in dealing with crime issues; and (2) where it would be most efficient for it to go in terms of the optic fibre. How do you determine where a camera should go regarding crime issues?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The first thing we apply is a crime prevention analysis as to what is it we are trying to achieve through the camera. Typically, we want to get the best value out of the camera because of the number of reported incidents in that locale.

Mr MILLS: But it has taken 12 months to get around to the next budget and none of those decisions have been made. What is the hold up?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There has been considerable work done in enhancing what I would describe as a centre of excellence for CCTV monitoring. We are now monitoring all cameras, both across the greater Darwin region and from Alice Springs, at the Peter McAulay Centre in Berrimah, which is a 24-hour seven-day-a-week specialised facility. We continue to do the scoping work to bring more cameras online as soon as possible.

Mr MILLS: I gather then the \$1.44m allocated in the last budget has been spent?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, we have employed an additional six staff to monitor the cameras. We now have about 150, as I said, which need a significant resource injection to ensure the cameras are being monitored real time. The real benefit of CCTV is that you are able to intervene before an incident escalates, rather than simply using it as an evidentiary tool post-incident.

Mr MILLS: Therefore, that increased allocation has not purchased cameras; it has increased the monitoring capacity?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Also the licence fees for the software that is required for it to expand the facility at the Peter McAulay Centre, and to scope out where the additional cameras will go.

Mr MILLS: Given I believe there was an allocation for an additional \$1.75m in this budget for CCTV monitoring, would we anticipate additional cameras being installed this financial year?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Right. Numbers?

Commissioner McROBERTS: That depends on our analysis of preferred sites and the cost to put cameras there. I believe it is fair to say that no two cameras have cost the same amount of money. It depends on what infrastructure is required to place a camera; if there is already some infrastructure there such as a pole we can leverage off; the amount of lighting in the area; and whether there is an upgrade to lighting required. It is a complex issue to ensure we have cameras that do what we want.

Mr MILLS: So, the expenditure last budget was to increase the monitoring capacity. That increased capacity does not have to be enlarged greatly now; that money can now be spent on additional cameras? Is that a reasonable conclusion?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It depends how large we want our CCTV network to be. At the moment, we have the resource allocation right, and we have sufficient staff 24/7 operating the cameras real time. If we were to go for a large-scale increase in the number of cameras, we need both the infrastructure in the monitoring centre so we can actually view the cameras, and to increase the number of people to be able to monitor them real time, if we want to get the best value out of our cameras. You can have 100 cameras that are doing nothing but recording and, if an incident occurs, you can back capture and interrogate the images for the purpose of identifying people and as part of a prosecution. Ideally, what we want to do and we are seeing successfully is the operators are skilled in identifying the potential for something to occur and task a police vehicle to that locale before an offence does occur. That is the real benefit of CCTV.

Mr MILLS: I understand all you have said regarding whether there is a pole, lighting is required, or optic fibre is there or not, but are you able to give us an average cost of a camera, given all those factors?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, unless we simply look at the number of cameras we have installed and we divide the number of cameras with the total cost.

Mr MILLS: That is what I am after, really.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We would have to take that on notice.

Mr MILLS: Yes.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Once again, this is a manual exercise where we have to go through and add every single one of them up.

Mr MILLS: I just thought, you have 157, and you divide that number by the total cost against that item. Ms Ko, I am sure you could ...

Ms KO: I am doing it now for you.

Mr MILLS: I am sure you could.

Ms KO: I am doing it now for you.

Mr HENDERSON: It would be a bit more than \$24 though.

Ms KO: I think we can only do a direct costing.

Mr MILLS: Yes, that is right. It is just a useful figure. The work undertaken for the installation of cameras to date, was that done by a Territory-based firm?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We will have to take that on notice. I am advised there may have been two or three different companies during the life of the project.

Mr MILLS: I am happy to have that taken on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.6

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Could you repeat the question, please, Terry?

Mr MILLS: Was the work for the installation of cameras to date undertaken by a Territory-based firm?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: That is question No 3.6.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Any further questions?

Mr MILLS: Yes, I certainly do.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. The average cost of a camera and the associated ...

Mr MILLS: Licensing.

Ms KO: Infrastructure.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, \$18 300 per camera.

Mr MILLS: We have these cameras in three locations across the Territory, but are there any plans for installation in Tennant Creek or Katherine?

Mr HENDERSON: There are no plans at the moment to do that. That is the answer. The commitment was for Darwin CBD and Casuarina, the most highly populated and trafficked areas of the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: I will not go further with that. Who monitors the cameras for Darwin and Palmerston?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We have employed civilians to operate the 24/7 specialist monitoring facility.

Mr MILLS: Training is provided by NT Police?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Alice Springs has the same system?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, the cameras' data feed goes direct into Berrimah. The Alice Springs console is a discrete console where only the cameras for Alice Springs are monitored at that particular place.

Mr MILLS: In Alice Springs?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, in the Berrimah facility, we have discrete consoles. The operators operate at three work stations with modern, state-of-the-art technology. They can look on a large screen at a particular camera or they can have a number of cameras visible at any one time. They can track people from one camera to the other. We decided because we wanted to ensure Alice Springs geography was well known by the operators, we have a discrete monitoring facility for Alice Springs.

Mr MILLS: That discrete monitoring operation for Alice Springs is in Berrimah?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: You may have answered this, Commissioner. Is monitoring conducted on a 24-hour basis?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: And real time?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Is there also capacity to retrieve?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We record everything. For example, we regularly have operational officers who have responded to an incident reported after the event. We can then ask our operators to go through the tapes and see if there is any information. If someone is prosecuted for an offence we may deem that vision will be of benefit as part of the disclosure and prosecution processes.

Mr MILLS: How many people are involved in the monitoring of these cameras?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There are 10 staff currently monitoring, and there is on-the-job training by our staff at the joint emergency services coordination centre.

Mr MILLS: Is it accredited training? Any special qualifications? Do you advertise for these positions? Is it difficult to find people wanting to sit and watch TV?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, we are finding sufficient applicants for those positions. My personal observation in talking to them is they find it a very rewarding career and are developing the skills on the job to predict the behaviour of people and what they might be getting up to.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, you have allocated \$1.75m in Budget 2011-12. Of that amount, and given we have heard that \$1.44m from last budget did not result in the purchase of any additional cameras, what portion of the \$1.75m is revoted works?

Mr HENDERSON: I would have to take that on notice. My advice is there was no revoted money. There should be available \$600 000, or thereabouts, for the purchase of additional cameras. The Commissioner has advised they are currently undergoing a risk analysis and profile as to where the Commissioner will recommend to me those cameras should be deployed

Mr MILLS: Is it likely any cameras will be placed in the northern suburbs or the suburbs of Palmerston?

Mr HENDERSON: I will take advice from the Commissioner on where he feels they would best be deployed. I have not received that advice yet.

Mr MILLS: It appears to me, Commissioner, you are at work identifying hot spots and where to strategically place these items. What stage are you at in that decision-making process?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We are still going through a range of options that will be put to the Chief Minister in the next few weeks. However, we are validating all the data so it is an evidence-based approach to any additional cameras that are installed. I want to be able to say for every camera we install there is good reason for putting it where we put it. The fact is everyone would like a camera on their street corner - or perhaps some people would not like a camera on their street corner. However, I need to demonstrate good return for investment based on empirical data and the expected return on investment.

Mr MILLS: Is any proportion of this allocation as a result of direct Commonwealth contribution?

Mr HENDERSON: Not the current. Previously, there was some Commonwealth money, but not in this current allocation.

Mr MILLS: Was that previous allocation from the Commonwealth captured in the \$1.44m? It was over and above? What did that buy? That was in the Solomon election, I presume?

Ms KO: We do not have that in the current year; in the previous year. We have about \$2.3m in previous years.

Mr MILLS: The previous one year?

Mr HENDERSON: Oh, two years.

Ms KO: We run off a couple of times. Yes, I would say between 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Mr MILLS: And that was \$2m?

Ms KO: \$2.25m.

Mr MILLS: \$2.25m?

Ms KO: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. What requirements were placed on the Territory government regarding the expenditure of that \$2.25m?

Mr HENDERSON: There was funding required from the Territory government. There was a proposal that went forward to the Commonwealth government and the Territory government was required to co-fund. I do not think there were any other requirements. That is my memory of it.

Mr MILLS: Requirement to co-fund?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, we put money in. This was the initial roll-out of CCTV. I believe in the Darwin CBD is where we started. It was co-funded with the Commonwealth government. We built on that funding once the infrastructure was put in place.

Mr MILLS: Just going to the evidence-based approach to determine location of cameras. I am not sure whether I am reading the member for Karama's newsletter correctly, in an article that talks about delivering more police for the Territory. Am I correct in taking from this that it creates the impression there will be an additional presence of camera monitoring in the Karama electorate?

Mr HENDERSON: I have not seen that particular document. I do not know what you are referring to.

Mr MILLS: There are no plans to have these located at this stage, apart from what the Commissioner saying, on empirical assessment of data, for these to be placed in suburbs?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, the Commissioner has undertaken some work in regard to where these should be located. I will receive advice as to that as we continue to roll out police cameras across the Territory.

Mr MILLS: The location of a Police Beat, for example, in Karama. Was that ...

Mr HENDERSON: That was a government decision. That was a funded government decision.

Mr MILLS: I am sure it was funded by the government, but was the decision to have it located there as a result of empirical data collection and determination that was the right place to put that facility and spend that money?

Mr HENDERSON: Conversations were held, not only with the current Commissioner but previous Commissioner, in regard to the location of Police Beats. I have to be very careful what I say here. There has been, from time to time, where we have required a more permanent police presence in Karama, and those instances have been well documented in the media. In profiling of risk that police respond to in crime, again, from time to time, Karama has certainly been right up there.

Mr MILLS: Karama is a suburb, as is Moulden, for example. I am sure there are media reports; I accept that. Can you advise what empirical data was gathered to determine this being the right location, apart from *NT News* headlines?

Mr HENDERSON: No, this was a decision, an election commitment by our government to place a Police Beat in Karama, as it was a commitment to place a Police Beat in Palmerston, Alice Springs, and Katherine.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: I do not know whether that is right.

Mr HENDERSON: Those are commitments the government has made and the government has delivered on ...

Mr STYLES: It was forced on the government.

Mr HENDERSON: It was not forced on us at all. It was not, and we do ...

Mr STYLES: It was and you know it.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: You had no intention of putting a Police Beat in Katherine.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The call is with either the shadow or the Chief Minister.

Mr HENDERSON: I know the Leader of the Opposition is on the public record saying he would close the Police Beat in Casuarina and has called that a waste of money. That is fine. If that is his position, that he believes that Police Beats are a waste of money, he can go to the next election and say, as part of your savings plan to restore the budget to surplus, you are going to close the Police Beats in Katherine, Alice Springs, Casuarina and Palmerston. These are decisions that governments take, as well as decisions that governments take also with advice from government agencies.

Mr MILLS: That is really the point of the question, Chief Minister. Like the old Sesame Street song: one of these things is not like the others, one of these things just does not belong. You have the name of towns - Palmerston, Alice Springs, Darwin - and then you have Karama, which is a suburb. It is quite different from all the others.

Mr HENDERSON: As I have said, there is ...

Mr MILLS: It is the odd one out.

Mr HENDERSON: It is not the odd one out, because there is a Police Beat in Nightcliff, if you are not aware of that as well, member for Blain. You can understand, if you lived in the Nightcliff electorate with all of the issues that are faced through that shopping precinct and around the foreshore, why you would have a Police Beat in very heavily-trafficked pedestrian areas.

Mr MILLS: Right, but ...

Mr HENDERSON: Karama is a shopping centre and a precinct that, unfortunately, from time to time has required significant attention. A Police Beat will be welcomed by the taxpayers and residents of Karama.

Mr MILLS: Of Karama and of Nightcliff.

Mr HENDERSON: And of Katherine, and of Alice Springs, and ...

Mr MILLS: Yes, we are talking about towns again there, not the suburbs in them.

Mr HENDERSON: And in Palmerston.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, what other suburbs have Police Beats in them?

Mr HENDERSON: I have just said Nightcliff has a Police Beat.

Mr MILLS: So those two suburbs?

Mr HENDERSON: Parap also has - thank you for reminding me. If you were to speak to the traders in Parap, there are all the issues the traders have faced in Parap with antisocial behaviour over many years, and alcohol-related issues that have been well documented. I am surprised if you have not heard of the problems that have been in that Parap area. A dedicated police presence has certainly seen a reduction in that type of behaviour and it has been welcomed by the traders in that area.

Mr MILLS: Oh, I am sure it has, Chief Minister ...

Mr HENDERSON: Absolutely, so we will continue to roll them out as the budget allows us to.

Mr MILLS: Right. In all the other suburbs that Labor members hold. The only three we have at the moment are those that are held by Labor members ...

Mr HENDERSON: No, that is not true. There is a Police Beat in Palmerston where there are no Labor members present, one in Katherine and one in Alice Springs.

Mr MILLS: There are several suburbs in both. Obviously, you can see it; we have the three centres ...

Mr HENDERSON: If you want to go to the next election saying you are going to close those Police Beats, fine. We are very proud to have delivered enhanced policing services where they are needed ...

Mr MILLS: For the members for Nightcliff, Fannie Bay, and Karama, the Treasurer.

Mr HENDERSON: If you want to go to the next election saying you are going to close those Police Beats, that is fine; that is your prerogative. As the Police minister and the Chief Minister, we made a commitment to roll out Police Beats across the Northern Territory where an enhanced police presence on the ground, working with communities, would reduce crime and antisocial behaviour. Any analysis of issues in and around Parap, Nightcliff, and Karama would support the need for those police facilities there. You would be living under a rock if you did not understand what those issues are. We will continue to support Police Beats in those areas. If you want to go to the next election and say you will close those Police Beats, that is fine; that is up to you.

Mr MILLS: Yes, okay. I believe you are just losing a bit of credibility. I have toned it right down to one, and for a very good reason. We really started this discussion about use of empirical data to determine how a decision such as that is made: why three Labor members would have Police Beats in their suburbs?

Mr HENDERSON: No, it is to do with, if you understand ...

Mr MILLS: Tell us about the empirical data.

Mr HENDERSON: As I have said, you would need to live under a rock not to understand the significant issues ...

Mr MILLS: To live under a rock or be a Country Liberal Party member who does not ...

Mr HENDERSON: I have answered the question. If you want to go to the next election saying you are going to close those facilities because you do not believe there is empirical data to support police on the ground in those communities, then you are more than at liberty to do so.

Mr MILLS: With the CCTV, can you give us more information about the training these people monitoring receive, Commissioner?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The staff who are employed in the monitoring centre are recruited. I am just not sure whether I ...

Mr MILLS: Keep going please, I will pick it up.

Commissioner McROBERTS: The staff are employed for the purpose of monitoring it. We have been monitoring cameras now for a couple of years. They are taught how to use the equipment and, over time, with on-the-job training, they are taught how to recognise behavioural patterns of people. The real issue is ensuring we have camera operators real time, both monitoring the cameras and, when a job is received at the JESCC (Joint Emergency Services Communications Centre), or a police patrol is on the way to an incident, the camera operators can zoom in to see what is going on and provide preliminary advice to the attending unit prior to them getting there as to what can be observed at the scene.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Commissioner. If I wanted to send a strong message that I am serious about law and order in the city of Palmerston, what would I need to do to have a photograph taken with you standing outside a police station? What steps would I have to take, Mr McRoberts, to have a photograph?

Mr HENDERSON: Regarding the tenor and the tone of these proceedings, we are considering the budget appropriation to this agency. What do photographs with the Police Commissioner have to do with the matter at hand the committee is supposed to be debating? I fail to see a link.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I remind the members of the committee we follow the lead of the Senate and have adopted a report of their procedure committee in 1999, in which the following test of relevance was determined and is the test we use:

Any questions going to the operations or financial positions of the departments and agencies which seek funds in the Estimates are relevant questions for the purposes of Estimates hearings.

We are here today debating the budget that has been laid out by the Treasurer, and questions are meant to be about that.

Mr MILLS: I accept that, but we are talking about community safety and crime prevention. I am very proud and supportive of the efforts of the police in our community. I am just wondering how one sends that clear message as a member in making use of police resources to convey that message by way of a photograph in a newsletter, for example.

Mr HENDERSON: I suggest that is not an issue for debate here in budget allocated to the police department. If you want a photograph, go and stand outside the Police Beat in the Palmerston shopping centre; that should convey the message. However, I know you have a plan to close that because you do not support Police Beats. That may be a reason why you would not have your photo taken ...

Mr MILLS: Would I need permission to have a photograph with a constable outside the Police Beat in Palmerston?

Mr HENDERSON: Not outside the police station. The Commissioner has made a ruling on that issue. That is not an issue for a debate here in the budget allocated to the police force.

Mr MILLS: What is the ruling? What is the ruling on that matter?

Mr HENDERSON: You well know the issue of politicising our police force. There was an issue in the last Commonwealth election to this effect.

Mr MILLS: Therefore, I assume permission was sought by the member for Karama to have a photograph with the Police Commissioner out the front of the police station?

Mr HENDERSON: I am not aware we are actually in an election period at the moment.

Mr MILLS: It is okay? I or any member can get that done? What process might you go through?

Mr HENDERSON: The issue here is the budget for the police ...

Mr MILLS: Correct.

Mr HENDERSON: Let us get back to the issue of debating the budget for police.

Mr MILLS: It is using the resources of our police force to convey strong and clear messages. I am just wondering what process one ...

Mr HENDERSON: I have given you my answer. This is a ridiculous question and I am not going any further.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I remind members of Standing Order 114, repeating questions. A question fully answered cannot be renewed. You have asked your question, the Chief Minister has answered it, and we have done that a couple of times.

Mr HENDERSON: I will answer it again and again.

Mr CHAIRMAN: There comes a point where I suggest if a question is asked more than once and is given the same answer, we move on.

Mr MILLS: Was permission sought by the member for Karama or the member for Nightcliff to have the photograph with the Police Commissioner published in the newsletter?

Mr HENDERSON: I am not answering that question because it has nothing to do with the allocation of the Police budget. I urge you to move on.

Mr MILLS: I have done with CCTV.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you have questions on CCTV, member for Nelson?

Mr WOOD: Yes. Chief Minister, in relation to CCTV cameras, some years ago in the rural area we had a major problem with hoon activity. I have written to and begged people to see if it was possible to have portable CCTV cameras at hot spots. It was a fairly serious issue at the time and some criminal activity was occurring. Is it possible for portable CCTV cameras to be placed in areas which may be of concern to residents due to either criminal activity or hooning-type activity as a means of reducing that threat to public safety?

Mr HENDERSON: I am unsure how technology is evolving in relation to mobile CCTV cameras. It does not sound like a bad idea at all. I defer to the Commissioner; he may have some ideas.

Mr WOOD: The Mayor of Ipswich has been using them.

Commissioner McROBERTS: I will share with you some information, then ask my Deputy Commissioner to comment on a more operational issue.

We have heard loud and clear, through a number of fora, the concerns of residents in the rural area. In fact, so much so I believe some people in the rural area wish they had never raised it. Nevertheless, our traffic police - in particular, since we re-established a Traffic Command some months ago - have been paying considerable attention there. There have been many infringements and charges laid.

Mr WOOD: Have they also been looking at quad bike behaviour?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes. It has severely curtailed the activity of many of the rural residents in their ability to go to the pub and enjoy an afternoon, then go home on their quad bikes.

Mr HENDERSON: You had better be careful here, Gerry, they might blame you.

Mr WOOD: I believe the majority of people would probably appreciate that.

Commissioner McROBERTS: It brings to bear the old saying, be careful what you wish for. I reiterate and give you a commitment: we have heard the concerns of those residents and are doing something about it.

In relation to hooning specifically, since 1 July 2009 until 31 March this year, there were 77 hooning-related offences detected, and there were 42 48-hour impounding of vehicles. We are active in dealing with that issue.

In response to your question about mobile cameras, they may not be the most satisfactory way of dealing with hooning in a rural area. We are talking a very significant investment to install a camera, albeit temporarily, for perhaps one or two hooning incidents a week. We believe a better way is to apply education, high visibility policing and, ultimately, enforcement to change driver behaviour.

Mr WOOD: My next question goes off the CCTV camera issue. In regard to the behaviour of people on quad bikes and also off-road bikes, has the government given any consideration to an education campaign which tells people they are required to wear a helmet and their vehicles are to be registered if they are driving on a public street? I gather, under the law, this is any public place not just the road. Many people are ignorant of the fact they are breaking the law even if they are driving through the forestry land without registration, helmets, and at a reasonable speed. Is there any campaign to educate people about what is required for driving off-road vehicles?

Mr HENDERSON: Again, without obfuscating here, the Minister for Transport would probably have a better awareness of public campaigns, because they are normally run through that particular department around road safety, and not run through the police. There is, obviously, a committee of senior public servants that looks at road safety issues. However, in advertising campaigns and where the priorities should be, so ...

Mr WOOD: I could ask that, yes.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, I think so. I have a bit more information, whilst we are on CCTV, that throws up a couple of questions. It is in regard to the park and rides. Apparently, unbeknown to us, construction of the new facilities at Coolalinga and Humpty Doo are nearing completion. Both facilities have already had

CCTV cameras installed. These cameras will be recording when the facilities open due in July. However, they are not linked to the police monitoring system and will be used by the Department of Transport. If there is an incident they can go back.

Having been made aware of this, we need to be talking to the Department of Transport, given the infrastructure is out there, about a better solution. However, they are there, but they are not connected to the police system as of yet.

Mr WOOD: It would be good if they were connected, because the one issue people are going to have in the rural area is leaving their vehicle all day at a car park to catch the bus into town. The way to convince people this is a good idea ...

Mr HENDERSON: CCTV is there. It will be recorded and, if somebody gets their windows broken, they will be on candid camera.

Mr WOOD: It would be nice if you catch them on the job.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, I will take that issue up and get back to you.

Mr WOOD: Especially as the Humpty Doo Police Station is just down the road from the Humpty Doo one.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Have you finished on that ...

Commissioner McROBERTS: You might indulge the Deputy Commissioner to share with you what he is doing as an initiative of CCTV in general with the other cameras.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am sorry, Commissioner?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Using other cameras that are already in place.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: There is an opportunity for us to actually link into other cameras. We are actually exploring the capacity for us to link in to existing CCTV cameras where people have security vision. That is a project we have initiated.

Mr MILLS: And from an iPhone. When you get to an application on your iPhone ...

Answer to Question on Notice No 3.6

Commissioner McROBERTS: I have answers to questions on notice, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Certainly, yes.

Commissioner McROBERTS: All the work for the CCTV project so far has been undertaken by a Territory firm, one company.

Mr MILLS: Good to hear.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Could I also share with you two other questions we undertook to answer?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Commissioner McROBERTS: One is that you asked of the establishment of the Alice Springs Police Station. We are talking about the police station on its own here. At 31 March 2010, there were 120 sworn officers. At 31 March 2011, there are 126 sworn officers.

Answer to Question on Notice No 3.4

Commissioner McROBERTS: You asked a question about extended sick leave for the same period last year. I report that there are seven on extended sick leave on 31 March this year. At the same time on 31 March 2010 there were 13.

Mr MILLS: Thirteen?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Have you concluded on CCTV?

Mr WOOD: CCTV yes, but I have not concluded on this section.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The flexibility in the committee is where a theme has been perceived by the shadow. Now you jump in, but you cannot actually take the call.

Mr WOOD: No, that is all right. I will wait for the member for Blain to set the theme.

Mr MILLS: Our next theme is public housing.

Mr WOOD: Oh, public housing?

Mr HENDERSON: My ears have pricked up at public housing.

Mr MILLS: Yes. Chief Minister, the number of ICAD calls made by residents of Territory Housing in Palmerston in response to an incident at Territory Housing?

Mr HENDERSON: Sorry, ICAD calls?

Mr MILLS: It is a hotline call.

Mr STYLES: Calls to the call centre.

Mr HENDERSON: Okay.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We would have to manually interrogate the datasets.

Mr MILLS: Right. The data is not immediately available?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is not, and it may not be particularly accurate because we do not actually discriminate against where a call is received from - whether it be public or private housing.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to then provide information as to the responses to incidents in ...

Mr WOOD: Can I just ask a question? Is that coming under the next item, 9.1?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Response and Recover Services?

Mr MILLS: No, it is to do with law and order issues around public housing.

Mr WOOD: Okay. I thought it was the telephone ...

Mr MILLS: Community safety.

Mr WOOD: Okay.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Commissioner, this would still be in this output, Community Safety and Crime Prevention?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes, we are in the right output.

Mr MILLS: Given that it is not possible to identify whether it is someone phoning in relation to an incident around public housing, we accept that that is the case, is it?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes. We do not record the classification of the occupancy of the premises. If you call for police assistance to report something or seek our attendance, we do not ask you whether you live in public housing or private housing.

Mr MILLS: So, there is no way of determining the level of response that is required for incidences, say in blocks of public housing units, certain hot spots? It is just you are responding to incidents?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Okay, we will go to schools then. How many sworn police officers are involved in school-based policing?

Commissioner McROBERTS: In Darwin, Casuarina and Palmerston, there are 11. I need to get the data for the other centres of Katherine and Alice Springs.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will put it on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.7

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can you repeat the question?

Mr MILLS: How many sworn police officers are involved in school-based policing in Katherine and Alice Springs?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.7.

Mr MILLS: Are all schools involved in school-based policing?

Mr HENDERSON: I do not know.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Are you asking specifically if there is a police officer for every school? No.

Mr MILLS: I could see that by the numbers. Does one police officer cover three or four schools and, thereby, all schools have access to a school-based constable?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: That is my understanding. Some schools may choose not to participate, if they are a private school, or ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the benefit of Hansard, Mr Maines, if you could introduce yourself every time you speak. It just helps them marry it up later in the transcript.

Mr MILLS: Of those 11 officers in Darwin and Palmerston who are involved in school-based policing, is 100% of their time dedicated to school-based policing? How is that determined, the proportion of time to school-based policing and to other duties?

Commissioner McROBERTS: On an as needs basis. Occasionally, we have events in the Territory whereby we deploy those staff to assist for a short period of time. There are a number of benefits to that: (1) we have additional staff to be able to respond to major events; (2) it gives those officers an opportunity to maintain the complete suite of skills necessary to be an operational police officer; and (3) they can often assist at major events because of the knowledge they have of young people who might be frequenting them. For example, at an event like *BassintheGrass*, we may deploy some school-based officers in an operational or semi-operational capacity.

Mr MILLS: How often are these officers rostered on a normal shift, apart from one-off events like *BassintheGrass*?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The majority of their time is taken up with their core business of school-based policing.

Mr MILLS: Do they report to the school first, or do they report to the local police station first?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, for good governance and accountability. Bearing in mind these officers are police officers who are providing a service to the school and the wider community, some time last year, I required those officers first of all report for duty at the police station closest to the schools they service, so they could take briefing from a supervisor on what might be going on in the suburbs they cover, what burglaries may have occurred, which young people may be wanted by the police for various things, and get a thorough understanding of what is going on in their patch. We felt that was a good way they could provide a more complete and holistic service to the school and the wider community. They then go to the school, or service the schools they are responsible for and, at the end of the shift, they are required to go back to the police station so the officer can share with his or her police colleagues issues of relevance.

Mr MILLS: How many times have police been called to attend incidents at NT government schools?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We have to write a computer program and run it.

Mr MILLS: Do you mean that data does not exist in a readily retrievable form?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is not in a discrete dataset that we can simply go and retrieve now. It is in the bucket of data, and we need to run some filters.

Mr MILLS: I see; you would have to actually write a program to retrieve that. I will leave that for now. Commissioner, through the Chief Minister, how many sworn officers are devoted to community policing such as Neighbourhood Watch?

Commissioner McROBERTS: To community policing or Neighbourhood Watch?

Mr MILLS: Neighbourhood Watch.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Two.

Mr MILLS: Two. One in the north and one in the south?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, they both work out of the same office.

Mr MILLS: What percentage of their shifts do they spend outside of an office or a police station?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I do not know.

Mr MILLS: Can you describe their engagement, or the engagement strategy of police, with Neighbourhood Watch?

Commissioner McROBERTS: In recent times, it has improved considerably. There was a change in the president and the board of management. I, as has the Deputy Commissioner, met with a couple of the executive of Neighbourhood Watch to demonstrate our commitment to it as a useful initiative.

Mr MILLS: What level of resources, apart from two officers, is dedicated or allocated to Neighbourhood Watch?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There is an operating budget of about \$150 000 per annum, plus a vehicle.

Mr MILLS: Anything on Neighbourhood Watch?

Mr WOOD: No.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to identify how many times police have been called to an incident at a hospital?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Similarly, sir, we would have to write a program and run it.

Mr MILLS: Same with bus stations, transit at the terminals?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes. There is always some difficulty in being confident of any of that sort of data because an incident may take place at a bus station, or near a bus station, but the person does not report it to police until later on and does not explain, for example, that it occurred at Royal Darwin Hospital. They might talk about the roadway that passes Royal Darwin Hospital. We can get a figure, but I cannot put my hand on my heart and say that is absolute, because it is a recording issue.

Mr MILLS: I would like to go back to the collection of empirical data to determine where resources should be best placed. How does that work if there are hot spots? How do you determine, given incidents in discrete areas, where the resources should be placed? Tell me a bit more about the empirical data that is used to inform a decision where say a camera or additional resources could be placed.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We do not only rely on offence data. We rely on intelligence reports from our officers in the field and from members of the community. We rely on information that is shared with us from a variety of sources.

Mr MILLS: Operation CitySafe was a strong, clear announcement about zero tolerance in response to violence in the CBD in particular. What was the allocation to that campaign and that operation?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I would have to take the numbers and get back to you. I made a decision late last year to change the focus of Operation CitySafe, which relied on a finite number of officers patrolling the CBD, and turned it into a rolling operation which brought to bear all the resources of the Northern Territory Police, including specialist areas such as traffic, detectives, technical response group officers on a regular basis - primarily Friday and Saturday evenings - targeting areas of antisocial behaviour and addressing themes. If a particular theme was occurring, based on intelligence and our task and coordination group model, those officers are deployed. It enables us to bring together a far greater number of officers than we could do under the previous model.

Mr MILLS: Would you have to take on notice the funding for the previous model?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: The funding was \$2m.

Mr MILLS: That was the previous model?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am advised it is \$2m.

Commissioner McROBERTS: A discrete number of additional staff were recruited to create CitySafe.

Mr HENDERSON: That was a discrete budget allocation in the budget announcement.

Commissioner McROBERTS: The Deputy Commissioner and I formed a view last year we could do better, and we wanted to do better, to ensure the stigma previously attached to Mitchell Street would no longer continue. I am very pleased to say we have seen some significant improvement in the reputation of Mitchell Street and our entertainment precinct. That is largely because we have rolling, dedicated operations using a wide variety of resources to ensure there is a highly visible police presence at peak demand times.

Mr MILLS: When did the first approach, which had a \$2m funding allocation, commence?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Prior to my appointment as Commissioner.

Mr MILLS: Are there savings in having this new approach?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There are no savings because we are still committed to CitySafe. However, what the Deputy Commissioner and his direct reports have now done is committed staff on a regular basis to enhance CitySafe or the existing resources.

Mr MILLS: I am trying to be clear on this. There was a \$2m funding allocation for the operation and then the nature of the operation changed. Has that \$2m allocation for the original operation transferred to the changed operation?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: We have enhanced the original operation. What was originally committed to it was able to provide a level of service. We have now enhanced that by bringing more resources to bear to target the issue of antisocial behaviour.

Mr MILLS: In the original model there were dedicated officers who patrolled?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes.

Mr MILLS: How many were there?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Twelve.

Mr MILLS: That was their beat, their patch, and they worked in that patch?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Was it as a result of outcomes it was determined that was not an appropriate approach?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: It is an ongoing assessment of what outcomes we are achieving. If we have 12 people, effectively I do not have 12 people because, at any one time, I will have three on leave and three involved in training on a particular week. My 12 may come down to being six on a Friday and Saturday night. If you are asking me if that is the best way to deploy resources to target antisocial behaviour, no, it is not. There needed to be a consolidated approach to deploying all the resources of the Northern Territory Police to attack what was perceived as a significant antisocial behaviour issue.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to tell me the number, or the actual presence on the street, Deputy Commissioner, is the same now as it was under the former model?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Probably more so. It is an ongoing operation. It will depend on resourcing requirements at a particular time. It will depend on the theme and what events are currently being run.

Mr WOOD: You still have the horses?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: We still have the horses, yes.

Mr HENDERSON: Very highly visible and well appreciated. I get a lot of good feedback.

Mr MILLS: Were there any problems with the original model that prompted the change?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not sure you would class them as problems. It is about reviewing the way you do your business. You do not continue to do your business in the same way just because that is the way you have always done your business. When you had a look at the way you are doing business, there is time to look at forward refinements. How do I improve business? How do I get more people on the street? How do I ensure there is a greater level of visibility? How do I bring in the resources of specialist areas which were not necessarily being deployed on those Friday and Saturday nights? By bringing those people in and ensuring they are highly visible, bringing detectives in to target investigation issues, bringing the mounted police in to coordinate with those officers from CitySafe, the new traffic patrols now patrolling that particular area.

Mr MILLS: Are you saying that could not have occurred before?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not saying that at all, sir.

Mr MILLS: Where are the 12 officers now?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: The 12 officers still exist. Whether they are actually attached - Operation CitySafe as a unit has a smaller contingent, but those officers have been put into areas that

complement our issues of antisocial behaviour on Mitchell Street. They are still attached to the Darwin Metropolitan Command.

Mr MILLS: Were there any complaints from the community about the original model?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: About specifically the model? Not that I am aware of.

Mr MILLS: Were there concerns about the operation of the model, the 12 dedicated officers working on the beat?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not aware of any public concerns about the operation of the model.

Mr MILLS: Is there an assessment done on say, AHA, for example? What level of engagement is there with the Australian Hoteliers Association with regard to the change from one approach to another approach? Do you involve the AHA?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am talking about operational policing in the deployment model. Why would I necessarily be engaging with the AHA?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Just a reminder of the test of relevance, obviously, about the operations or financial positions of the departments. Obviously, you are talking about an operation and it is within the scope of the budget. To what extent a conversation with someone is, that is, obviously, not necessarily ...

Mr MILLS: I am trying to understand how a decision is made to change from one to the other, and whether stakeholders are engaged in that decision-making?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Certainly, there are decisions made. There are officers at Commander level who engage with the licensees in Mitchell Street discussing the issues, discussing the operations of their premises. There was engagement made with the command team, with the various business areas that were going to be involved in the new approach. I personally addressed all of the officers from specialist crime and special services. I met with the officers from Darwin metropolitan area. That consultation did take place.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Are you able to answer questions regarding - maybe I did ask by calling it the hospitals. You do not differentiate where call-outs have been made to hospitals, as well as schools?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The location of the incident is recorded when the job is entered into our PROMIS system and the job is dispatched, but we do not run a weekly report, for example, on the number of jobs that were dispatched to hospitals or to schools. We have all the data in our dataset, but we would actually have to go and write the program to show us all the reports where the term 'hospital' features.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. I will leave it there for that output group.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nhulunbuy, did you have a question to Output 8.1?

Ms WALKER: Yes, I did, thanks very much. Chief Minister, you may want to answer this yourself or refer it to the Commissioner. It is with regard to the introduction of precinct banning notices. Are you able to tell us how many of those notices have been issued and whether or not we are able to form a view that they are proving to be a useful and effective tool?

Mr HENDERSON: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. Given that we were just talking about Mitchell Street, it is a timely question. In discussions with the Police Commissioner and Justice, the whole issue of Mitchell Street and what further tools could be provided to police to ensure a reduction of antisocial behaviour and violence in Mitchell Street, delivered the whole legislation around a precinct ban to allow police to ban people from certain areas for up to 48 hours. In briefings I have had from the Police Commissioner, we have seen a very significant use of those precinct bans and, obviously, a consequential reduction in regard to violent and antisocial behaviour, along with the enhanced policing effort the Deputy Commissioner has just spoken about. For details of police use of the legislation, I will hand over to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you, Chief Minister. As of Monday morning this week, there have been 250 banning notices issued in the Northern Territory.

Ms WALKER: Sorry, is that 215 or 250?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Two five zero. The three prescribed areas at the moment are Mitchell Street or Darwin CBD, Palmerston and Alice Springs. The fact we have issued 250 demonstrates that operational police officers find it a useful tool in their kit bag. When I see banning notices issued, I see two particular benefits. One is that, typically, a person is moved on from an area before they are charged with an offence and, therefore, enter the criminal justice system, and probably wake up the next morning with some degree of regret. Also, very importantly, I see banning notices as potentially preventing someone from becoming a victim of crime, because police have recognised an incident is escalating, the person has not taken notice to move on, so a banning notice is issued. I would like to think if we have stopped one person from being assaulted out of those 250, or one person from having a criminal record that he or she might not otherwise have had, they are a very good thing and will be continued frequently.

Ms WALKER: That 250 is over what period of time? It is up until Monday; but when did it actually come into effect?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It commenced in October last year. The breakdown, at Monday or Tuesday, was 85 in Alice Springs; 131 in Darwin City; and 34 in Palmerston.

Ms WALKER: No more questions.

Mr WOOD: In relation to the Budget Highlights, it says \$30.75m is under the Closing the Gap national partnership, including the provision of remote policing. How many extra police were appointed during the period of the Closing the Gap national partnership, which I presume is still operating, including ACPOs?

Mr HENDERSON: Obviously, it was a significant contribution for the Commonwealth through the Northern Territory Emergency Response and the allocation of police officers through a significant number of communities throughout the Northern Territory. The answer is 62.

Mr WOOD: Do we still have Commonwealth police officers, or has it all now been taken over by Northern Territory police officers?

Mr HENDERSON: They are all now Northern Territory sworn police officers.

Mr WOOD: Will we be able to still keep those 62 extra police officers?

Mr HENDERSON: We are currently in negotiations with the Commonwealth to determine the funding locked into the existing NTER legislation that expires next year. There are, obviously, very serious negotiations under way with the Commonwealth to ensure that funding continues for those 62 officers.

Mr WOOD: Would I be right to say those police officers would be mainly stationed at Themis stations? Therefore, the future of those stations would depend on whether we can get funding for the police, or are there other matters that come into calculation when working out the future of these officers?

Mr HENDERSON: For me, funding is the No 1 priority - to secure ongoing funding from the Commonwealth. For the specific locations, I will defer to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: It would be difficult for me to retain 18 police stations without support from the federal government.

Mr WOOD: I travelled around. I saw that you have a police office at Alpururulam and one at Peppimenarti - I have seen that one. Some of those communities are isolated. There is no guarantee those offices may continue unless adequate funding comes from the Commonwealth?

Mr HENDERSON: We are not in the position of picking up that funding off our own budget. As I said, the whole issue of the NTER and where it goes post the middle of next year is currently being negotiated with the Commonwealth government. As the Chief Minister, I believe, given the Commonwealth has funded those positions in the emergency response, they have a commitment to keep that funding ongoing.

Mr WOOD: Okay.

Mr HENDERSON: It is a large amount of money for us to find out of our budget.

Mr WOOD: When I was travelling, people who ran the Night Patrol approached me with concerns about how they fitted in with police operations. I am not trying to apply this just to that particular community, but are there any formal agreements between police, Night Patrols, and, in the case of Darwin, First Response Patrol? Is there any formal relationship on how the three bodies - or two bodies, in some cases - operate?

Mr HENDERSON: I will defer in a moment to the Commissioner operationally. The First Response Patrol is actually funded through the police budget and reports within the police structure. In Alice Springs, particularly, we have a patrol coordinator who has been appointed under the Alice Springs Transformation Plan to better coordinate Day Patrol, Night Patrol, and police activities in Alice Springs. For across the rest of the Territory, I will defer to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you, Chief Minister. It is fair to say that Night Patrols are more successful in some places than others. It really depends on the ability to attract people to be involved in the Night Patrol, and their level of enthusiasm for the concept. Our police officers, particularly in remote centres, do the best they can to strike up an effective relationship and protocols with Night Patrol because there is no doubt an effective Night Patrol often reduces the need for police to respond to incidents, and they can often deal with issues before they become offence based. But, the reality is we are dealing with individuals, we are dealing with people, and we have to continue to work on some of the communities to have a Night Patrol that is functional and effective.

Mr WOOD: Is there any formal training for Night Patrol people, so they know clearly what their responsibilities are? In other words, they know what they should be dealing with and when they should pass that responsibility over to police?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There is no formal training as such, but there are arrangements with various land corporations and Aboriginal bodies, and they have a close relationship with police and Aboriginal Community Police Officers, in particular. It is fair to say there is a thorough understanding of what is expected of them. I do not think they are not effective because they do not understand what they should be doing; it is more a case of is there a commitment of the individuals in a particular community to the Night Patrol.

Mr WOOD: A couple more questions. Before I ask them, does diversion come under this section?

Mr HENDERSON: Juvenile diversion?

Mr WOOD: Yes, as I could not work out whether it is part of Crime Prevention.

Mr HENDERSON: It is the next output.

Mr WOOD: The next output. I will ask a question; it is not meant to be so much about diversion per se. What is the future of Wongabilla?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The future of PCYC is subject to the outcome of mediation and a local court action between two or more of the disciplines that have previously existed. There is, it is fair to say because it is on the record in the court, some conflict between two of the disciplines in particular to the extent that one has been locked out of the premises it previously occupied. Until that is resolved and we can recommence negotiations with PCYC, it is difficult for me to tell you what might be because that incorporated body needs to decide where to from here.

Mr WOOD: Wongabilla is part of PCYC?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Humpty Doo Police Station has been there for quite some time. The Chief Minister was not Chief Minister then. He and the previous Chief Minister opened that about 10 years ago, and there was a promise the hours of operation would be reviewed. Considering the increase in population in the rural area, has there been a review of the opening hours of the Humpty Doo Police Station?

Commissioner McROBERTS: There has not been a review as such for the Humpty Doo Police Station. However, it is worth putting on the record that the Humpty Doo Police Station patrol area extends to the Cox Peninsula, particularly Belyuen, Mandorah and Wagait Beach. With the Deputy Commissioner, I

recently met with two local citizens to discuss how we might provide a better policing presence. We are currently in negotiations and going through some due diligence to occupy premises there. We hope to have a more frequent police presence on the Cox Peninsula serviced out of Darwin which will reduce the need for Humpty Doo to attend as frequently as it does. We will do some partnership policing there, both from Darwin and Humpty Doo, which I hope would allow Humpty Doo police officers to spend more time close to the Humpty Doo township.

Mr WOOD: That picked up a question I was not going to ask because I had forgotten about it. It was whether there would be a police presence at Belyuen and Mandorah. There are concerns that when an incident occurs police cannot come across and it is a long way to come from Humpty Doo. You are looking at setting up a temporary type office in the area so police could even stay on the weekend if that was feasible?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We are in negotiations. I do not want to over-promise and under-deliver. There is already overnight accommodation ...

Mr WOOD: That sounds like a politician. Remember that, Terry.

Mr MILLS: Do not worry.

Commissioner McROBERTS: There is already overnight accommodation for our officers at Belyuen community within the community proper. However, there are no office premises there at the moment. We have met with two local residents, we have heard their concerns, we are satisfied their concerns are sufficient that we have a greater police presence there, and we are in negotiations with a third party to use some premises on a part-time basis.

The reason I am somewhat cautious at the moment is, as I am sure you are aware, there are limited power facilities there. We need to do some due diligence on what it will mean for computer infrastructure and whether or not our staff can operate as a fully-functional police facility. We are committed to having a temporary facility there and providing a Police Beat-type service. However, I caution that I need to ensure what I am asking my staff to do is reasonable.

Mr WOOD: My last question - through the Chief Minister, the Deputy Commissioner might be able to answer this. I thank you for the response. There was an incident in Humpty Doo recently where a resident felt the response was not adequate. I do not know if you can give us some indication, without naming names or anything, if that particular incident has been investigated and if there has been an outcome?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am sorry; I am unable to tell you the outcome. I asked for a briefing for the incident on Tuesday. I am still awaiting that. But, yes, I agree with you, the response was inadequate and inappropriate.

Mr WOOD: I was wondering whether I could ...

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I would be happy to give you feedback, if you like.

Mr WOOD: Okay. I will not make that a question. Thank you very much.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Chief Minister, an election promise from 2008 was a Police Beat in the Bagot Community. What has happened with that? Is there a time frame around it, and when is it going to happen?

Mr HENDERSON: As I said, there is another period to go, and another budget to go in regard to this current term of parliament. We have committed to honouring our election commitments.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: So, you are committing to including that in the next NT budget?

Mr HENDERSON: We are committing to honouring our election commitments, and we report on a regular six-monthly basis to the parliament. Those commitments are made over a term.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Okay, so we can expect to see it going by August of next year?

Mr HENDERSON: We are saying we are committed to our election commitments.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 8.1.

Mr HENDERSON: Can I just have two minutes?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Okay. We will reconvene at 4.30 pm, which is a three-and-a-half minute break.

The committee suspended.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will recommence. Commissioner, you have an answer, I believe, to a question on notice.

Answer to Question on Notice No 3.7

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. The question was how many school-based officers are there in Katherine and Alice Springs. I can report there are two school-based officers in Katherine and six in Alice Springs.

**OUTPUT GROUP 9.0 – GENERAL POLICING, CRIME DETECTION,
INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION
Output 9.1 - Response and Recovery Services**

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee is at Output Group 9.0, General Policing, Crime Detection, Investigation and Prosecution, Output 9.1, Response and Recovery Services. Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: Commissioner, through the Chief Minister, how many 000 calls have been received in the past 12 months to 31 May 2011?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Year to date, there were 25 300 total 000 calls for police. That cannot be right. I am sorry, this table is not tabulated correctly; there is a formula error. I can tell you, however, that total calls to police for this financial year to 14 June have increased by 15 040, from 178 239 in the previous year to 193 279 this year.

Mr MILLS: Do you have data on when a call is made and the service - whether it is police, ambulance or fire - attend and cannot actually locate the source of the call; if it is a hoax or a false alarm?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Once again, we would have to run a program to determine the number of CAD tasks dispatched where we have not been able to resolve it.

Mr MILLS: That is not available. When was the mapping system that is utilised by police, ambulance and emergency services last upgraded?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I do not know. Ms Ko?

Ms KO: We did actually do some upgrades about 18 months ago. I can find out exactly, but it was about 18 months ago.

Mr MILLS: Got that, thank you. Is it every 24 months or so that there is an upgrade?

Ms KO: We would like to do it quite often because otherwise it would be outdated. The last one is 18, so the next one probably within a couple of years.

Mr MILLS: There would be a development, say, in the new suburbs?

Ms KO: Yes. So, assuming most of this will come online, that is when we normally do our update.

Mr MILLS: What were the most recent results of the national survey of community satisfaction with policing with regard to the Territory?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I am very pleased to say that the results are outstanding.

Mr HENDERSON: A very good question. Very pleased.

Commissioner McROBERTS: I am pleased to say last year, people who were satisfied or very satisfied with police services in the Northern Territory increased from 58.7% the previous year to 61.4% last year. People who were satisfied or very satisfied with police in the most recent contact, we improved 2% to 79.8% last year.

Mr MILLS: Very good, I am glad I asked the question. How does that compare with the national average, Commissioner?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is below the national average. One of the highlights I required when I took over as Commissioner is that the Northern Territory will be recognised nationally as a quality provider of policing services. I have asked our senior executive - and they have all responded - and our entire management team to focus very heavily on customer service.

In the last 12 months, results speak for themselves: people across almost every single category were more satisfied with police. We have not only increased in all the areas that are important in customer service, but we have decreased in areas where people were concerned about their personal safety. I believe they are encouraging results, but I am never satisfied with the current results, and the team are now required to do even better next year.

Mr MILLS: How many investigations are currently on the books?

Mr WOOD: Sorry, have we skipped one?

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are at Output 9.1, Response and Recovery Services.

Mr WOOD: You have to be on the ball here, I tell you. You will get trampled on. You thought I was asleep here, didn't you, looking at all these numbers? But, I am not.

Mr MILLS: But you do not have any questions, do you?

Mr WOOD: I do, just a couple. Chief Minister, one of the key deliverables in Budget Paper No 3 is the proportion of other general calls answered within 20 seconds. It said that is 80%. How do you get that figure if the call was never answered?

I will give you a case. When I was in Alice Springs, I reported to 131 444 and the number rang out. If it rang out, how would anyone know it rang out? How does someone come up with a figure that 80% of all calls were answered within 20 seconds?

Mr HENDERSON: Before I flick to whoever wants to answer that, one of the issues facing our police force in the call centre - and you can see that in the escalating number of calls going into the desk. You can see the figures when they are tabulated. Now that virtually everyone has a mobile phone, for every one incident, where previously you might have got one or two calls, you are getting 10 to 20 calls. There is a huge increase in volumes of calls to the JESCC as result of the proliferation of mobile phones. Commissioner, regarding the 20 second rule, I will defer to you as to how you crack that.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you. We have an automated system whereby when a call comes in we are able to track, on every call, the amount of time it takes us to answer that call. If the call is not answered, we call that a call drop, and we cannot measure it.

Call drops can be for a variety of reasons, one of which is that we do not get to it quick enough, which is unsatisfactory. We acknowledge that and we are addressing that very issue. However, there are times when people ring and, for a variety of reasons, choose to discontinue the call of their own volition.

Mr WOOD: It is a bit of a ball park figure really, is it?

Commissioner McROBERTS: No, we ...

Mr WOOD: If someone hangs up.

Commissioner McROBERTS: We are required to measure, on a national benchmark the calls we receive.

Mr WOOD: In the case we had in Alice Springs where there were problems with the 131444 number, has that been sorted out now?

Commissioner McROBERTS: We believe so. At one stage last year, our call drop rate was as high as 34%. It is now down to 8% because of some very good work which has been done in resourcing the JESCC.

The call issue out of Alice Springs was probably a reluctance for sea change. One of the reasons we decided calls are best answered in Darwin is we have a 24-hour, seven day a week centre of excellence as a call centre. We have trained professionals who deal with that. We also have technology which enables us to record every single call that goes in there, not only for a quality control perspective, but if there is a call drop we at least have something to interrogate the tape, to work out what sort of response is required.

It was somewhat unusual to have a call centre in Alice Springs but not one in Katherine, or a call centre in Tennant Creek. You get a far better return on your investment in people and resources if you centralise in a professional call centre environment. That is exactly what we have done. Yes, there was some reluctance for that to occur; however, we believe we are now demonstrating that we are providing a better quality service to the residents of Alice Springs by taking all their calls in the professional call centre in Darwin.

Mr WOOD: The issue put to me is in some of the remote communities where there is probably some difficulty for a call centre person to have an understanding of the layout - it could be Willowra or somewhere - they are now not permitted to ring directly to that police station and must go to the 131444 number.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Yes.

Mr WOOD: In a little town like that, the police station is here, over here I have an incident, and I have to go all the way to Darwin. From a layman's point of view, it seems strange. How would your operators understand the layout of Willowra, for instance, if they have to deal with an issue there?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is knowledge over time, and it is referring to other colleagues in the call centre if necessary. There are still a significant number of police officers in the call centre, many of whom have been stationed throughout the Northern Territory during their career. There is plenty of support in the call centre. There is also access to the watch commander to seek professional police operational advice.

I can say about constantly calling small police stations that there is a quality of service issue, and an occupational safety issue. I cannot have police officers being woken at 2 am, 3 am, 4 am, 5 am - all night - for non-essential calls. There is then an expectation that they report for duty the following morning and perform at optimum levels. We know many of the calls received in remote police stations, particularly during the run-off, are to check on the condition of roads and what the tide is doing. It is not satisfactory to have officers, particularly those with a family, constantly woken in the middle of the night for those sorts of things.

The other thing is we wanted to ensure our service response was appropriate. Sometimes, an officer may deem a response as adequate; the watch commander may have a differing view. To ensure we have a consistent level of service across the Northern Territory - whether you live in Fannie Bay, Willowra, Papunya or Yuendumu - there is a quality control mechanism to ensure we follow protocols for responding.

Mr WOOD: What mechanisms are there for training those people in the call centre so they have a concept of where the community is? I will give you an issue the minister for Roads will go crook at me about. If I was to tell you I lived at Ampilatwatja and you tried to spell it, you would not get anywhere close to it. It is the same with Santa Teresa's Indigenous name, which is pronounced 'Ginger Porta' but starts with an L - Ltyentye Apurte. Is there an issue if people are not trained well enough? When they punch in the name of the community which may have an Aboriginal name, do they have some idea where it is in the Territory, so the location can be found quickly?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Sure, but that is not a problem that is unique to the Northern Territory. That exists in every jurisdiction in Australia and, indeed, every jurisdiction anywhere in the world. The call centre concept is not new, nor is it unique to the Northern Territory. In fact, there are some police forces, particularly in the United Kingdom, that do not have a call centre. They contract to a third party provider with some other police forces. It is about training, awareness, and ensuring there is adequate supervision

in the call centre. It is a learning experience, as the longer people are on the job, the better they get at it. Can I tell you now that every single call taker knows every single remote community or outstation? No, I cannot. However, what we can do is recognise that this a challenge for us and, in being committed to top class customer service, we continually upskill our people and that is part of the training.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Mr Chairman, if I may just go back to a question asked previously. Quite staggering figures: 87 418 calls to 000; 198 621 other calls; a total of 286 000 for this year to date. The previous year was 87 368 calls to 000 and 202 096 other for a total of 289 464.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes the consideration of Output 9.1.

Output 9.2 - Investigations

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now move on to Output 9.2, Investigations.

Mr MILLS: Commissioner, with maybe the Chief Minister, what is the reason behind the police's newly-formed Failed Prosecution Review Panel?

Commissioner McROBERTS: That is to ensure there is satisfactory governance accountability around the prosecution that fails, so we can identify why it failed and, in particular, whether or not there are prospects for the matter to proceed, particularly where there is a nolle prosequi entered or, indeed, whether it is a lack of skills issue, and whether or not we need to introduce some skills enhancement for our people. It is part of good business practice. If something in our business fails, we want to know why. We have an obligation to the community, particularly victims of crime, where a prima facie case is established, we will prosecute in conjunction with the DPP. We do not like to see prosecutions fail, so a good part of our business is to review, wherever a prosecution does not succeed, with a view to continuous improvement.

Mr MILLS: I can understand the frustration, Commissioner. When was this panel formed?

Mr CHAIRMAN: The Deputy Commissioner might be able to help.

Deputy Commissioner MAINE: It was formed in the last two months, I suspect. The Commissioner of Crime Specialist Services and the recently appointed Superintendent for Prosecutions meet on a weekly basis to discuss prosecutorial issues. It came up as the Commissioner alluded to, about good governance and ensuring if we lose a prosecution, there needs to be some understanding as to what the issues were and why it happens.

Mr MILLS: I think you just referred to the members of the panel. Could you just advise who comprises the panel?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Assistant Commissioner Crime Specialist Services, I think Commander for Crime, Superintendent for Prosecutions.

Mr MILLS: And terms of reference?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: To review failed prosecutions.

Mr MILLS: Is there additional cost to run this panel?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: It is part of their core governance in running their business.

Mr MILLS: And reporting is made then, on a case-by-case basis upstream, up the line? Yes. How many cases are currently before the panel?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not able to tell you, sir. I can take it on notice.

Mr MILLS: Right, okay. I thought maybe you are just able or you do not want ...

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: No, not at all.

Mr MILLS: Okay.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will take that on notice?

Mr MILLS: Yes.

Question on Notice No 3.8

Mr CHAIRMAN: Could you just ask the question again?

Mr MILLS: How many cases are currently before the Failed Prosecution Review Panel?

Mr CHAIRMAN: And that is question No 3.8.

Question on Notice No 3.9

Mr MILLS: How many failed prosecutions have there been in the past 12 months to 31 May?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am probably going to have to take that on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That will be question No 3.9.

Mr MILLS: Next one, perhaps will be on notice too.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes.

Mr MILLS: How many prosecutions in total have occurred in the past 12 months to 31 May 2011? On notice?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Will I read it again?

Question on Notice No 3.10

Mr CHAIRMAN: One more time.

Mr MILLS: How many prosecutions in total have occurred in the past 12 months to 31 May 2011?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.10.

Mr MILLS: Will all failed prosecutions be referred to this panel?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: It depends. There may be valid reasons given when a person is found not guilty; that does not mean the prosecution has failed. It is where there are identified issues where the prosecution may not have been effective appropriately, where there are deficiencies perhaps in the investigation. Just because a person is found not guilty of an offence does not mean it is a failed prosecution.

Mr MILLS: Do I assume that there is a particular incident in the rural area that – no, do not take it personally – has given rise to the need for a panel such as this?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not sure what you are alluding to, sir.

Mr MILLS: All right, I will not go any further. I look forward to that other information coming through. I will leave it at that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you have questions to Output 9.2, Investigations?

Mr WOOD: Yes, I have, in relation to the annual report. On page 39, Chief Minister, it says:

Identifying and targeting proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth remains a priority for the NT Police.

What input do police have to identifying cases that go to court under the *Criminal Property Forfeiture Act*? To add to that, 19 restraining orders and 11 forfeiture orders were granted. Does this mean eight went to court but were unsuccessful?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It does not necessarily mean the prosecutions were unsuccessful. The defence counsel may argue successfully that the property was not gained by illegitimate means, or the circumstances of the accused may be such that the court was not willing to issue an order. Without looking at each one on a case-by-case basis, it is difficult for us to provide advice on that.

Mr WOOD: What input do you have into property forfeiture cases?

Commissioner McROBERTS: When a person is charged with an offence and the investigators form a view that the illegitimate activity has led to the individual having certain assets, then there is legislation which enables us, through the DPP, to apply to the court to have assets seized.

Mr WOOD: On page 39 again of the annual report, under Child Abuse, it says:

The Child Abuse Taskforce (CAT) is a multi-agency task force, consisting of members from the NT Police, AFP and NT Families and Children. The CAT is responsible for the initial assessment of reports of child abuse in the NT ...

Can you just explain how police are involved in the initial assessment of those reports?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: It is a multi-agency process where complaints are made. Complaints can actually come into the police in a number of ways. If it is a child abuse, that is referred to the Child Abuse Taskforce. There will be an assessment of the investigation with Northern Territory Families and Children, and a determination made on the level of investigation required for that particular incident.

Mr WOOD: The last question is in relation to the Remote Community Drug Desk on page 40 of the annual report.

Mr HENDERSON: I thought you said 'community drug test'.

Mr WOOD: Sorry, desk, not test. Does that come under this section? In relation to Groote Eylandt; alcohol abuse has dramatically reduced but cannabis abuse has taken over. Are there plans to try to combat that problem?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes, we actually run a number of operations with the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk targeting illicit substances going into remote communities. We have drug detection dogs, which are regularly used and deployed at airports in remote locations. We have had a number of goods seizures of kava, cannabis, and people bringing alcohol into communities.

Mr WOOD: In the case of Groote Eylandt, do you do sea patrols?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Sea patrols?

Mr WOOD: When I was there, people said that is the way it comes in from the mainland.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not aware of any specific intelligence about people bringing it in by sea. I have been at Groote Eylandt when police have been at the airport conducting searches.

Mr WOOD: That is all.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson flagged a question around juvenile diversion. Which output is the right output to ask that? Next one?

Mr MILLS: I have just a couple still in this category.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Oh okay, we are happy to, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MILLS: Just a couple because I did actually start on this and I was cut off; I was in the wrong area. How many investigations are currently on the books?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Are you talking about current investigations, active investigations, ongoing investigations, across the entire Northern Territory, because there is a fair bit of data?

Mr MILLS: Probably why the number of telephone calls that have been made broke them down.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: If you are talking about an active investigation?

Mr MILLS: Right, okay. How many investigations are not being actively pursued?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I am not quite sure. Have the investigations been finalised? There are matters that will get to a point where the investigation is finalised because there are no avenues of inquiry. I am not quite sure ...

Mr WOOD: You got yourself in a nice little mess.

Mr MILLS: Yes, I should have let it go, shouldn't I? I thought there would be like a list of investigations that is your current workload - matters that are still alive, that you need to be working on.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes, that is correct.

Mr MILLS: Is there a number attached to that?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: There will be a number of current investigations. You are asking for the entire Northern Territory?

Mr MILLS: Yes.

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: I will have to take it on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.11

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can we actually sum that up as a question?

Mr MILLS: Yes, and I will value add, just so I do not have to ask others after it. How many investigations are currently on the books in the Northern Territory and by category?

Mr CHAIRMAN: And, are you happy to take that question on notice?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: For arbitrary information.

Mr HENDERSON: Sorry, Leader of the Opposition, can I just get some advice as to how difficult it may be to pull that information together?

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there is an issue around the data set, is there a way to phrase that question in ...

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: If you are asking about current active investigations across the entire Northern Territory, we will be able to produce that from PROMIS.

Mr MILLS: I will have that then, thank you very much.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can I get that question one more time?

Mr MILLS: Current active investigations across the Northern Territory by category.

Mr HENDERSON: No, I think 'by category' is where the problem will be.

Mr MILLS: Current active investigations across the Northern Territory. I will let go of the 'by category' and replace it with 'region'. Is that possible?

Deputy Commissioner MAINES: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Good.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.11.

Mr MILLS: I will leave it, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 9.2, Investigations.

Output 9.3 – Services to the Judicial Process

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee is now proceeding to Output 9.3, Services to the Judicial Process. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MILLS: No, I am fine.

Mr WOOD: My question to the Chief Minister relates to a statement on page 46 of the annual report which says:

The rate of repeat offending diminishes considerably when youth are diverted through a formal Youth Diversion Scheme in contrast to youth who are dealt with through the formal judicial court system.

Chief Minister, you might have to pass this to the Commissioner. I am interested to know the Commissioner's philosophy on crime prevention programs such as Youth Diversion Programs being conducted by police officers.

Mr HENDERSON: I am happy to hand the question to the Commissioner. However, I have seen the analysis regarding the effectiveness of the Youth Diversion Programs. Those numbers are very robust in relation to the vast majority of kids who come into contact with the justice system; they hit diversion and we do not see them again. It is a policy that is working in reducing young people getting into contact with the police. In relation to the police and a philosophical position, I will hand over to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Thank you, Chief Minister. I am on the public record as stating I am a strong advocate for diversion. There is clearly a need for generational change if we are to reduce the level of offending we have seen in past years. There is no doubt diversion does work. If young people are to have a reasonable future as citizens, then whatever we can do, whatever investment we can make to divert them out of the criminal justice system, is an investment well worth making.

Mr WOOD: Do you think the diversion program should be the role of police officers or NGOs?

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is interesting you should ask that because we met with the chair of a committee recently to discuss that very issue. The Deputy Commissioner and I will be debating this with our senior colleagues in the near future regarding what the future holds in diversion. Suffice to say, there will always be a role for police to play. It depends entirely on a policy decision in how much we play and how much others play. However, police in the diversion process have been very influential and have, no doubt, had the ability to influence young people to change their ways.

Mr WOOD: *Four Corners* had a program running for three weeks on the Brahminy program. My personal feeling was I was a little shocked; however, that is the first time I had seen it. I was interested in what the police thought about that program. Do they have any statistics to show whether that program is achieving? I am just feeling out what the Chief Minister thought about that particular program.

Mr HENDERSON: In relation to that particular program - I am on the public record in saying this - we are looking at the appropriateness of continuing to see youth diverted into that program. Inquiry is not the right word, but we are reviewing the program and the effectiveness of that program. I do not want to go - I am not talking about the *Four Corners* program, I am talking about Alan Brahminy's program at the moment. We have had a significant number of complaints as a result of that TV footage. It is a very difficult area to operate in. Referring young people into that particular program is under consideration as a result of the *Four Corners* program.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That concludes consideration of Output 9.3.

OUTPUT GROUP 10.0 – ROAD SAFETY SERVICES
Output 10.1 – Road Safety Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: We now move onto Output Group 10.0, Road Safety Services, Output 10.1, Road Safety Services.

Mr MILLS: Commissioner, through the Chief Minister, what is the current status of the Major Crash Investigation Unit?

Commissioner McROBERTS: The Major Crash Investigation Unit is functioning under the new Traffic Command that we established in February this year. From all accounts it is functioning very well. We have seen a significant renewal of enthusiasm by the officers who are attached to the new Traffic Command and what, I believe, are some outstanding results.

Mr MILLS: How many investigations have been conducted in the past 12 months?

Commissioner McROBERTS: I will have to take that on notice.

Question on Notice No 3.12

Mr CHAIRMAN: Please repeat the question.

Mr MILLS: How many investigations have been conducted by the major crash investigation unit in the past 12 months, 31st of May?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.12.

Mr WOOD: Just one question in that area, Chief Minister. How many lock-down campaigns around the arterial roads in and out of Darwin CBD did police conduct in 2009-10, and to date in 2010-11?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Regarding this whole issue of lock-down campaigns; we do not particularly have lock-down campaigns. We are now focused more on an anywhere-anytime approach. We do not want to be too prescriptive as to where we will be at any particular time. Random breath testing operations can be conducted out of the boot of a patrol car, or they can be the result of a much larger-scale operation. We are significantly committed to random breath testing and removing drink-drivers from our roads as a way of reducing the road toll in the Northern Territory. I am very pleased to say we are seeing a large number of random breath testings. Sadly, we are seeing still too many drink-drivers, but the good news is we are slowly getting the message across that drinking and driving do not go together.

Mr WOOD: You still work with people like MVR officers, say, on long weekends?

Commissioner McROBERTS: Not as frequently as we possibly could. We want rolling operations so we can be anywhere anytime. We still participate in national campaigns on the Stuart Highway, in particular, that are staged annually. However, generally speaking, we are a standalone business that gets on and runs random breath testings on a regular basis, and the statistics prove it. So far this year, we are up to about 153 000 random breath tests. Our road toll is very pleasingly - and I am always cautious about talking about it because, typically, something goes wrong - but year to date, we are eight. At the same time last year, we were 17. We are very committed to highly-visible policing presence on our roads.

Mr CHAIRMAN: You are finished, member for Nelson?

Mr WOOD: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: that concludes Output Group 10.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 11.0 – FIRE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE MANAGEMENT
Output 11.1 - Fire Prevention and Response Management

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee now proceeds to Output Group 11.0, Fire Prevention and Response Management, Output 11.1, Fire Prevention and Response Management.

Mr HENDERSON: Mick Ayre will be joining us at the table as the Acting Director of Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service

Mr MILLS: Mr Ayre, welcome. How many volunteer firefighting services are currently operational in remote communities throughout the Territory?

Mr AYRE: How many volunteer members?

Mr MILLS: How many services?

Mr AYRE: We have in excess of 12 volunteers brigades.

Mr MILLS: Okay, and that information, I am sure, would be in the annual reports, would they not?

Mr AYRE: Yes.

Mr MILLS: How many volunteers are currently registered?

Mr AYRE: Just over 200. It varies, of course, from week to week. New volunteers sign up and some resign each week but, generally, around 200.

Mr MILLS: What initiatives are currently in place to attract, hold, and increase participation of volunteers in remote communities in these services?

Mr AYRE: We generally rely on local people to recruit into their own brigades. We do occasionally experience an increase in volunteer numbers to brigades as a result of some major incident - perhaps interstate, perhaps in the Territory. We do not do a lot of active recruiting for volunteers because we tend to find that our numbers are relatively stable, but we are certainly always welcoming the volunteers. Regarding recruitment, we have a pretty well ongoing program of recruitment into brigades through the volunteers themselves.

In their training, we provide them with a base level of training for fire management - for bushfire management in particular, not for structural fire generally. In some areas where we have the need, and the volunteers are focused on other incidents such as assisting in a road crash, we provide them with some level of training, usually provided by paid staff in the major centres who go to the local towns and brigades and offer them individual or small group training for road crash rescue work.

Mr MILLS: Thank you.

Mr WOOD: Two quick questions. Additional funding for resources showed \$1.7m, including the new Berrimah Fire Station. Has a decision been made where the Berrimah Fire Station will go?

Mr AYRE: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Where will it go?

Mr AYRE: It is going to go on Berrimah Road. The land is very close to the Ausfuel depot; basically next door to that. I have here the actual lot - 4241 Berrimah Road.

Mr WOOD: It is not on Tivendale Road?

Mr AYRE: No, it is on Berrimah Road.

Mr WOOD: That is a long way from Wongabilla. Wongabilla people might be happy, a little bit anyway ...

Mr AYRE: I believe they are.

Mr WOOD: The other question is in relation to the false alarms and this new legislation passed. I presume that Robertson Barracks comes under the table on page 55 of the annual report - there is a list of NTFRS emergency responses? Under System Initiated False Alarms, it shows 1076 false alarms in the Darwin area. Does that include Robertson Barracks? If it does so - because I am recalling figures I saw during the debate - has there been a reduction in calls from Defence in relation to false alarms since that legislation was brought in?

Mr AYRE: The legislation has not yet taken effect; that will be from 1 July this year. In preparation for this, the Community Fire Safety Section of the Fire and Rescue Service has been in contact with every one of the 842 organisations, companies and building owners, including those in the Commonwealth and Defence facilities, that are connected to the Northern Territory fast alarm monitoring system. What has happened is each one of those organisations has been provided with a chart showing the number of unwanted false alarms that have occurred in that particular business entity over a period of the last 12 months. Using an extrapolation of the current proposed fees for unwanted false alarm charging has indicated what that would generally cost those organisations.

Mr WOOD: That is a good hint.

Mr AYRE: Regarding a reduction, the effect of those discussions has been a significant decrease in the number of unwanted false alarms already, which was the principle of the charging of the fee. In Robertson Barracks, we are already seeing some reduction in the numbers there. My understanding is there are over 200 separate buildings connected through the alarm system, so they naturally have higher than normal - if you want to call that normal - number of alarms coming from that institution. We are working with the Defence establishment to reduce that number, and they are doing their very best to ensure the maintenance of those systems is improved so the number of unwanted false alarms is reduced.

I must also say the Commonwealth provides us with some funding every year for response to their facilities. That, therefore, suggests it will probably be unlikely we will be charging them for unwanted false alarms, unless we have negotiated that with them first.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 11.1.

OUTPUT GROUP 12.0 – EMERGENCY SERVICES

Output 12.1 - Emergency Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will move on to Output Group 12.0, Emergency Services, Output 12.1, Emergency Services.

Commissioner McROBERTS: Mr Chairman, while we are changing outputs, may I answer another question on notice, please?

Mr CHAIRMAN: You may, indeed.

Answer to Question on Notice No 3.8

Commissioner McROBERTS: It is an answer to question No 3.8. The Failed Prosecution Review Panel commenced in March 2011 to review why prosecutions are unsuccessful. There are three people on the panel: the Commander Traffic and Specialist Services Command, the Superintendent Prosecutions Division, and a Director of Public Prosecutions representative. The panel meets every six weeks. There have been two meetings held to date, and there are two cases so far for the next panel in July 2011.

Mr HENDERSON: I introduce Peter Davies, the Director of Emergency Services to answer any questions the committee has on this output.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister. Welcome, Mr Davies. It is a specific question which relates to an issue around publication of information material and signage across the Territory. Is there an allocation for translation services to translate safety signs and so on in the Northern Territory?

Mr DAVIES: The translation services are part of the department of Local Government, I understand, and I am not aware of their funding arrangements. I used them last year in translating for us community service announcements into nine Aboriginal languages, which were part of the touch talking boards, and also radio announcements you might have heard during the cyclone season that are ongoing.

We also are going to use the same service again to do flood announcements in nine Aboriginal languages for the Central Australia and flood-prone areas.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. What is the amount of money allocated to that service?

Mr DAVIES: My understanding is - and you might want to take this on notice - is they have an amount of money they can use for that sort of thing, but it is not coming out of my budget; it comes out of the department's budget. We do not have a discrete amount of money within our budget, but we do allocate money for pamphlets, community service announcements - all that sort of thing.

Mr MILLS: So it is a service you avail yourself of, you do not have to ...

Mr DAVIES: I do not believe we paid for it this time, though we would have been prepared to pay for it. In fact, with the talking boards, because they are quite expensive, we got a grant from the scheme which the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth run together.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. How many volunteers?

Mr DAVIES: About 360. Once again, that is going up and going down. It has gone up by about 65 since the start of the year, reflecting the events. This is the first year the Northern Territory Emergency Service sent people across to Queensland to assist there, and also New Zealand. That created a lot of publicity for us, by word of mouth.

Mr MILLS: Are the numbers up, down, or stable?

Mr DAVIES: Up 60 to 70, as we speak.

Mr MILLS: Right.

Mr DAVIES: I do caution these numbers go up and down, but the trend is upwards certainly.

Mr MILLS: I appreciate that; the trend is upwards. How many of these serve in remote locations?

Mr DAVIES: I would have to check, but I say there are about 100 here in Darwin and Palmerston and the rest are in remote locations. I will take that on notice and get exact figures for you.

Mr MILLS: That would be good, thank you.

Question on Notice No 3.13

Mr CHAIRMAN: Please repeat the question.

Mr MILLS: How many emergency services volunteers are in remote locations?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question No 3.13.

Mr MILLS: The facility we are familiar with here in Darwin is going to be upgraded, I understand. What is the future of the facility in Palmerston?

Mr DAVIES: Just a correction. We are moving into the Berrimah Fire and Emergency facility on Berrimah Road. That is where the Darwin volunteers will be moving to. The facility at Palmerston was recently upgraded to include an urban search and rescue range in conjunction with the fire brigade, which has recently been built. As far as I am aware, at this stage, it is an ongoing facility and we will be bidding and competing with everyone else across government to upgrade the facility as time goes by.

Mr MILLS: The upgrade - that facility is the old Darwin Hospital.

Mr DAVIES: That is my understanding, yes.

Mr MILLS: An upgrade would most likely be a replace, I would assume.

Mr DAVIES: It is very old and I would have thought it is beyond economical repair. Once again, we have to compete with everybody else.

Mr MILLS: Is there a bid in for an upgrade for that facility?

Mr DAVIES: Our bids, over the last couple of years, have focused on the Darwin volunteer unit and also remote locations. For instance, the Daly River has a new facility. We are putting a new training room into the Alice Springs facility, which is Hermannsburg. The unit at Hermannsburg bid for and, basically, paid for their own facility to be provided. We are also looking at the growth towns and working our way through putting facilities where there is nothing.

Mr WOOD: You can tell me whether this question is relevant - in relation to the shelter that was not a shelter at the Darwin Showgrounds.

Mr DAVIES: The Foskey Pavilion?

Mr WOOD: During the cyclone, yes. That was an area you covered.

Mr DAVIES: The Foskey Pavilion was used as a refuge for homeless people during inclement weather. It is not a cyclone shelter.

Mr HENDERSON: It was never a designated cyclone shelter.

Mr WOOD: I said a cyclone shelter, but it is not a cycle shelter.

Mr DAVIES: It is not a cyclone shelter.

Mr WOOD: Were Emergency Services people responsible for looking after that?

Mr DAVIES: No, we were not, Children and Families were leading the welfare group. To put it in perspective, the cyclone plan has a number of different groups. There is a welfare group led by Children and Families, which took the lead and developed that facility in a very short space of time. They did a great amount of work. With police, we gave a little assistance as well as a few other departments. However, it was basically the Department of Children and Families with help from the Department of Defence.

Mr WOOD: That answers that question. That is all the questions I had.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 12.1 Emergency Services. Are there any non-output specific budget related questions? In that case, we have concluded.

Chief Minister, thank you very much for your time. We appreciate you coming along today.

The committee suspended.
