

The Estimates Committee of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly convened at 8.30 am.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I call the Committee to order. Good morning, everyone. As Chairman of the Estimates Committee, I formally declare open this meeting of the Estimates Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory on this Tuesday 26 June 2007, and I extend a welcome to everyone present.

While this is the 6th sitting of the Estimates Committee and procedures adopted throughout the sittings have become accepted practice, there are a number of areas regarding the conduct of the public hearings I should place on record. I table a copy of the Resolution of the Legislative Assembly dated 20 June 2007 which refers to the Schedule of the Appropriation Bill No 2 2007-08 and related budget documents.

The role of the committee is to now examine and report on the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in that bill. Members of the Public Accounts Committee are considered to be members of the Estimates Committee. Other members of the Assembly may participate in the public hearings provided that the composition of the committee never exceeds seven members. The membership shall always consist of three government members, three opposition members and one Independent member.

To assist *Hansard*, I will advise the membership of the committee at the commencement of every session, and I will acknowledge for the record when there is a change of membership of the committee throughout the hearings.

At the first meeting of the Estimates Committee, the member for Port Darwin, Ms Kerry Sacilotto, was appointed Deputy Chair of the committee in accordance with paragraph 8 of the Terms of Reference. The committee has accepted the Standing Orders Committee suggestion that a minister should restrict their opening remarks to a maximum of five minutes. Members will be in a position to question the minister or Speaker on issues that may have been raised in the opening remarks, but where an issue can be directly related to a particular output within the budget, that matter can only be addressed through the interrogation of individual output groups as they relate to the appropriate portfolios of the agency.

I advise that representatives of the media are present and are able to report and rebroadcast proceedings of this hearing, having obtained written permission from the Speaker in accordance with paragraph 32 of the Terms of Reference.

To clarify the operations of the committee over the next four days, I advise that in accordance with the resolution of the Assembly, particulars of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill (No 2) 2007-08 will be considered Output Group by Output Group, and Output by Output within each Output Group.

I wish to place on the record that members of the committee have reviewed the schedule of appearance over the last three years, paying particular attention to areas within agencies that may not have been provided adequate appearance time before the committee to date. As a result of this review, and by mutual agreement between all members of the committee, the decision has been taken to allocate priority status to the Darwin Port Corporation. I will address this matter when the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport appears before the committee on Thursday 28 June 2007.

As there is a total of 45 hours which has been scheduled for ministers and agency officers to appear before this committee, I take this opportunity to remind all members it is incumbent upon them to maximise their time over the next four days so that all agencies are provided with a time frame which will enable thorough investigation of specific issues within their particular Output Groups.

The order of Output Groups is set out in the schedule of ministers' appearances which has been provided to all members. Over the next four days of public hearings, we will work through this document as the agenda for the Estimates Committee.

It should also be noted that to allow questions to be addressed to ministers with principal administrative responsibility for particular portfolio areas, it has been necessary to set out in the schedule so that it varies somewhat from the listing of agencies in Budget Paper No 3. Where a

minister will be available for questioning on Output Groups that sit within other portfolios, these have been clearly identified in the schedule, and I will be reinforcing the fact that questions regarding those particular Output Groups need to be addressed at the time the minister is appearing before the committee as once an Output Group has been completed, it will not be revisited.

The previously accepted method of allocating questions throughout the public hearings has worked well in the past and the same process will be adopted during these Estimate Committee hearings. I propose to invite shadow ministers to ask their questions first followed by members of the committee, Independent members and, finally, members addressing electorate issues.

Procedures for dealing with questions taken on notice are contained in the Estimates Committee Information Manual 2007, copies of which are available at the back of the room. I take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of the process I will be adopting when a question is taken on notice. When a minister or the Speaker indicates that they are unable to answer a particular question during the committee process or that they will provide the answer at a later time, I will immediately request the member who raised the matter to clearly and concisely restate the question. This will allow agency officers who are present to note salient points of the topic at the same time as the question is being relayed to the minister or Speaker. This process will also assist Hansard and the committee secretariat staff when they come to processing the formal question for the chairman's signature. I will then ask the minister or Speaker if he or she accepts the question taken on notice. If it is accepted, I will immediately allocate a portfolio specific number, which will clearly identify that particular question. Agency officers and ministerial staff should take note of the question number and ensure it is clearly identified in any response tabled by the minister during the public hearing process or at some later date.

It is proposed that there will only be a half-hour for meal breaks over the period of the public hearings. We will be breaking between 1300 and 1330, 1 pm and 1.30 pm, for lunch and 1800 and 1830, which is 6 pm to 6.30 pm, for dinner during these public hearings.

The schedule of questioning will be strictly adhered to. In the event that questioning of a portfolio concludes before the allocated time, the next minister will not commence before their scheduled time. There are many agency officers involved in these hearings and the last thing the Estimates Committee wants to be responsible for is a feeling of uncertainty as to when officers may be called to assist their minister during the questioning process.

Witnesses should be aware that evidence given to the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, I remind witnesses that the giving of false or misleading evidence to the committee may constitute a contempt of the Legislative Assembly pursuant to powers and privileges legislation. Officers should also be aware that when they are requested by their minister to provide answers to questions, they are not required to comment on matters of policy.

For the purposes of the efficient recording of *Hansard*, I request that ministers and the Speaker introduce those officials who are accompanying them at these hearings, and that where a minister or the Speaker may refer a question to an officer, the officers clearly identify themselves at that time for the *Hansard* record.

I take this opportunity to thank staff from the Legislative Assembly and Committee Secretariat staff who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure the operation of the whole Estimates Committee process can be delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

The committee will now proceed with consideration of the estimates of proposed expenditure for the Department of the Legislative Assembly in accordance with the schedule.

First, I should notify *Hansard* of the members of the committee here this morning: Mr Gerry Wood, member for Nelson; Mr Ted Warren, member for Goyder; Ms Kerry Sacilotto, member for Port Darwin; Ms Jodeen Carney, Leader of the Opposition and member for Araluen; and Dr Richard Lim, member for Greatorex; I believe Mr Terry Mills will be coming shortly but will be seated here, and myself as Chair.

I welcome Madam Speaker and invite her to introduce the officials accompanying her. In relation to the proposed expenditure contained within the Appropriation Bill 2007-08, Madam Speaker, do you have an opening statement?

DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, first, I would like to introduce the staff who are accompanying me: the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr Ian McNeill; the Deputy Clerk, Mr David Horton; Mr Rex Schoolmeester, the Chief Financial Officer; and Ms Vicki Long, Director of Parliamentary Services.

I am pleased to report that my department has achieved its programmed outcomes within the financial allocation, adjusted throughout the period to compensate for wage increases, CPI and variations to members' entitlements by the Remuneration Tribunal Determination.

I would like to draw your attention to the department's Portfolio Budget Statement, which I tabled last week in parliament. This document, produced annually, has proved to be a useful planning tool for the department as well as providing detailed financial performance information. The document is now posted on our web site to allow cross-reference with the department's annual report.

It should be noted that 55% of the department's allocation is managed funding under the provisions of the Remuneration Tribunal and is considered to be non-discretionary. Therefore, the balance of discretionary funding is relatively small. The major variations between the 2006-07 estimate and the revised 2006-07 estimate are outlined on page 36 of the Portfolio Budget Statement. The increase of \$1.154m includes provision of funding for the efficiency dividend for members and electorate officers, and an increase of electorate officer salaries and additional funding to cover the full-year operation of the Statehood Steering Committee.

Moving to the work of the department, apart from the routine of parliamentary sittings, significant planning and execution was required for the conduct of the regional sitting in Alice Springs and more recently the APEC conference, which involved the largest security exercise ever conducted in Darwin.

In addition, members will note that we are continuing to expand and enhance educational programs ranging from encouraging the general public to attend their parliament, particularly for Question Time, and an extensive outreach program most notable by the program leading up to the Alice Springs sittings when parliamentary staff visited 25 regional schools and 1415 students from the Yulara region, Mutujulu, Tennant Creek, Neutral Junction, Hermannsburg, Wallace Rockhole and Alice Springs attended.

During 2006-07, there was an increase in school student visits to parliament house from 2740 in 2005-06 to 3013 in 2006-07. The number of public visitors in 2006-07 reached 7555 and around 1600 people took advantage of the Saturday morning guided tours.

The Alice Springs sitting was an outstanding success with approximately 2400 members of the public and around 1400 students attending over the three days.

APEC was conducted successfully in Parliament House at essentially no cost to the department other than the staff directly involved.

I would like now to address issues surrounding the maintenance and operation of the building. As has been highlighted in the past few years, the building is now entering its first phase of major maintenance and refurbishment, and I am pleased to note the additional funding allocated for minor new works and repairs and maintenance programs for 2007-08. Minor new works has been allocated \$403 000, and repairs and maintenance \$512 000. Of significant importance is the allocation in 2007-08 of \$3.8m in capital works to carry out upgrading and related works for the building information and telecommunications and building systems cabling. This project will ensure the operation of the building into the next decade and pave the way for the upgrade of building systems such as the security system and the sound and vision system. The department has already commenced planning for the upgrade with the objective of completing the task within a six month period from late 2007 to early 2008.

Turning to member services, Information Technology continues to cause some problems for members, mainly relating to service delivery by outsourced service providers. Delays in the resolution of IT problems have led to frustration for some members and electorate officers.

Yesterday I met with representatives from our IT service providers and DCIS with the aim of working through a few of these issues. My department will continue to monitor and facilitate resolution of the issues, as it is working to put in place ongoing mechanisms to ensure an improvement in services to all members.

Mr Chairman, I am pleased to advise the department now provides quarterly statements and monthly financial statements to members. We have also streamlined the payment of members' bills to improve timeliness of payment and communication to members. We have also sought feedback by way of an external client survey to validate performance standards set in our Portfolio Budget Statement and linking objectives, strategies and outcomes. This data is currently being compiled for the 2006-07 year and will be undertaken on an annual basis.

Mr Chairman, I would like to take the opportunity to thank officers of my department for their efforts over the past year. I am now very happy to take questions in relation to resource allocation and expenditure in 2006-07 and that forecast for the coming year.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Are there any questions relating to the Speaker's statement?

Ms CARNEY: Yes, thanks, Mr Chairman. Good morning, Madam Speaker and staff. May I say for the sake of the Parliamentary Record how good it is to see you here this year. What a long way you have come from this time 12 months ago. It is nice to see you.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: We are obviously on output 1.1, Parliamentary Services?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Actually, we are dealing with the statement that has been made. We will come to output 1.1

Ms CARNEY: No, questions in relation to the statement, sorry.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do any other members have questions in relation to the statement? The committee will now proceed to consider the estimates of proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2007-08 as they relate to the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory. Once again, the Assembly has provided additional information to that provided in Budget Paper No 3 in the form of a Portfolio Budget Statement for 2006-07. This was tabled in the House on 21 June 2007. It may be worthwhile for members to use that document as a reference to their consideration of the Assembly's Estimates.

Output 1.1 – Assembly Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: I now call for questions on Output 1.1 - Assembly Services. Are there any questions?

Ms CARNEY: Thanks, Mr Chairman. Madam Speaker, the estimated cost of sitting hours in the Portfolio Budget Statement tabled in the Assembly last year increased from \$1.611m in 2005-06 to \$1.647m in 2006-07. Is there an increase predicted for 2007-08?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, if you refer to page 10 of the Portfolio Budget Statement, it has the figures outlined there, and there is a marginal increase. As you would be aware, a lot depends on how many sitting days there are and how many days for Estimates, so there are variations from year to year.

Ms CARNEY: And I am correct in saying that the estimate is \$1.668m for 2007-08?

Madam SPEAKER: That is correct.

Ms CARNEY: Albeit a relatively minor increase, is the increase a direct result of an increase in wages? If there are other factors, can you tell me what those are?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the advice I am receiving is that there is no increase in wages because of the way that Treasury provides money for wage increases, so that is not the case. It would be a marginal increase in goods and services.

Ms CARNEY: A marginal increase in goods and services, such as?

Madam SPEAKER: I might ask Mr Schoolmeester, Chief Financial Officer, to answer this question.

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: The difference between the CPI and the budget papers was 4.4%, less the efficiency dividend of 3% for this year. There has been a 1.4% increase in goods and services and that has always been provided for in the estimates.

Ms CARNEY: So, it is just as a result of efficiency dividends that there has been an increase in the allocation, correct? Is that what you are saying?

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: No, the efficiency dividend is one part of it. There has been a 3% wage increase forecast in the budget papers, with a 3% efficiency dividend. We did not receive any money or increase for the wages component. What we did receive was the 4.4% increase in CPI, less the 3% efficiency dividend, and we received a marginal increase in the goods and services.

Ms CARNEY: I see. The estimated number of sitting hours for 2005-06 was 370 and that was reported at Estimates last year. Last year, however, it was predicted that the number of sitting hours would reduce to 320. That figure of 320 is contained in Budget Paper No 3 at page 47. Can you tell me why it is that there has been a 50 hour reduction in sitting hours? I believe it is because of the Estimates, but I think it is a reasonable question to ask in any event.

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, I will ask Mr Rex Schoolmeester to answer this question.

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: Last year at the Estimates hearing, we advised that the figure should have been 320 and what we have in fact done is catered for one extra Estimates hearing as there were two in 2005-06. There are basically 50 hours allowed for each Estimates hearing, so the 320 is the correct figure of a normal sitting year, the 34 days including the four Estimates days.

Ms CARNEY: But each year would be different in terms of the number of sitting hours. Some days it is not very many; other days it could potentially be 13 or 14.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, on page 10, we are estimating 320 hours for 2007-08.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. What was the number in 2006-07? It was 320?

Madam SPEAKER: The revised budget, as advised on page 10 of the Portfolio Budget Statement, was that, in 2006-07, it was 320 as well.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Does the estimate of sitting hours include committees when they sit?

Madam SPEAKER: The estimate does not include committees such as Substance Abuse or Environment, but it does include this committee.

Ms CARNEY: So it includes sitting in the Chamber and Estimates; it does not include committees.

Madam SPEAKER: No.

Ms CARNEY: I will have some questions in relation to committees shortly. I will ask the following question because I believe it is important, notwithstanding that I have a fair idea what the answer is going to be. The average cost for sitting hours used to be published in the budget. That is, the average cost to Territorians for parliamentarians for sitting and doing their work in the Chamber. Last year they were not. The average cost per sitting hours do not appear in this year's budget papers, either. My question is: why not?

Madam SPEAKER: Average cost per sitting hour is actually included in the Portfolio Budget Statement, Leader of the Opposition, on page 10, and has the original budget at \$5100, revised budget \$5200, and estimated \$5200.

Ms CARNEY: But my question is why are they not published in the budget paper? I doubt that Territorians will be running up to parliament to collect their copy of the Portfolio Budget Statement that was tabled in the Chamber last week. I doubt that too many Territorians will, equally, be wading through the budget papers, however, I suspect a few more will be looking at the budget papers. I just do not understand why the average cost for sitting hours is not publicly available in the budget papers.

Madam SPEAKER: I have been advised that Treasury advised that the cost measures should be removed from the budget documents for all agencies.

Ms CARNEY: When you say 'all agencies', sorry, I do not understand why you say 'all agencies' in relation to the Assembly.

Madam SPEAKER: I will pass to Mr Schoolmeester.

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: NT Treasury have advised that we did not have to publish the cost measures at this stage because I think they are still under review. The Treasurer would be the best person to advise as to why they are not included. We have not included them; we have decided to include them in a supplementary paper.

Ms CARNEY: Okay.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, too, in some ways, you cannot compare the figures from year to year. For example, in a year where there is an election, it could be that there are fewer sitting days, and then you might have a lot more in the next year. In fact, I think that happened in 2005-06. If you are then comparing them with the year before, it looks like there is a significant increase but, in fact, what has actually happened is you have had the same number of sitting days; it is just that it has happened over two financial years. In some ways, it is not a good figure to be looking at for accuracy of how much the sittings cost.

Ms CARNEY: I appreciate that this has been the Treasurer's decision. Notwithstanding that concern, Madam Speaker, the figures could still be published with the relevant notations. In any event, I will move on.

I note that in 2005-06, the average cost of sittings hours was \$4349, in 2006-07 it was \$5147, and in 2007-08 it is \$5200. Is that about as accurate as you can get, \$5200? The reason I ask is that we have quite specific figures - \$4349 in 2005-06, \$5147 in 2006-07 and then a rounding up, it appears, to \$5200. What are the calculations to get to that reasonably round figure?

Madam SPEAKER: These are rounded figures, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So that must be the first time we have used rounded figures as opposed to the other figures.

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask Mr Schoolmeester.

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: If you wanted to get down to the actual figures, on page 41, if you basically add the funding for procedural advice and the record of proceedings, which are parliamentary related, those two costs divided by the number of sitting hours actually equals the average cost per sitting hour. So you can actually get down to the lower numbers.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Thank you. Is it possible to publish the number of hours each committee sat? I am going to ask you some specific questions about committees, but is there an hourly figure of how long each committee sat in 2006-07?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, we do have those figures. The number of hours sat by each committee, Public Accounts Committee was 53; the Substance Abuse Committee ...

Ms CARNEY: Sorry to interrupt, Madam Speaker. Do you have that in table form? It might be easier. Are you prepared to table it? I would like to know for each committee.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, I am happy to table the document. It is called *Committee Per Hour Expenditure*. It has more information: it has the average cost of the committee secretariat, direct committee costs, direct costs includes staff travel to meetings, transcripts and meeting costs, etcetera; additional salary of office for the Chair; member committee travel; number of hours sat, hourly rate based on hours committee sat, and the alternative hourly rate calculations. So this is where, if you looked at a committee and how many hours it sat and you divided it by those costs, of course that is quite a large amount, but if you look at it on a weekly basis, as obviously the staff of those committees are working during that time, it has that figure as well.

Ms CARNEY: That would be very helpful, thank you, because it might cut short some other questions I have prepared. So if I could have a look at that sooner rather than later, that would be good. I move on to parliamentary committees anyway, while I am waiting for that information.

I will ask some of my other questions regardless, but I will try to take into account the information contained in this. There are a total of nine parliamentary committees, as you know, six of which are standing committees and three of which are sessional. In respect of the standing committees only, I would like information on how many times each of the standing committees sat. I will give you all of the information and that will assist, I think. How many times each standing committee sat, where they sat, namely in Darwin or somewhere else; can you table or provide a list of the attendance of members? Did any of the committees have any study tours interstate and if so, where, when and what was the cost? What costs did each committee incur including travel, consultancies, expert reports and the like?

Madam SPEAKER: It was a very detailed question, Leader of the Opposition. Would you mind going through the first one and I may take some of them on notice.

Ms CARNEY: I thought it was useful to give you the complete overview in any event.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Perhaps if I ask the Leader of the Opposition for the purposes of *Hansard* to restate the question.

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, it may be I will answer some of the items. I will go through them one by one and then I will take them on notice if I am unable to provide the information.

Mr CHAIRMAN: All right.

Ms CARNEY: Thanks, Mr Chairman. Madam Speaker, there are a total of nine parliamentary committees, six of which are standing committees and three of which are sessional. In respect of the standing committees, how many times did each one sit?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, are you interested in the House Committee as well?

Ms CARNEY: Just the six standing committees. I do not think that includes the House Committee, does it? I do not have the list.

Madam SPEAKER: It is a standing committee. The House Committee is a standing committee.

Ms CARNEY: It is a standing committee.

Madam SPEAKER: But just the six that are the separate reference committees? It is not including the Standing Orders Committee or anything like that.

Ms CARNEY: We should do all committees, Madam Speaker, even though, all standing committees, so we have the PAC. What's the SAC?

Madam SPEAKER: Substance Abuse

Ms CARNEY: Substance abuse. That is a sessional committee.

Madam SPEAKER: Right. If you look at page 16 of the Portfolio Budget Statement, it actually shows you the number of meetings that have been held in 2006-07 and the number of references estimated for 2007-08 and the number of meetings estimated for 2007-08 as well. So it covers was Public Accounts, Substance Abuse in the Community, Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Environment and Sustainable Development, Sport and Youth, and Subordinate Legislation and Publications.

In relation to the House Committee, which is not included in this document, it has never been included before. As you'd be aware, Leader of the Opposition, as a member of House Committee, we do meet on the first Monday of every sitting ...

Mr WARREN: Through the Chair, Madam Speaker, could you speak up a bit. I am having difficulty hearing you.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, member for Goyder.

Ms CARNEY: So in relation to the committees listed on page 16 of the portfolio statement, we have the information on how many times each one sat in 2006-07, correct?

Madam SPEAKER: There are the number of meetings held, so, for example, Public Accounts met eight times, Substance Abuse met seven times, Legal and Constitutional, etcetera.

Ms CARNEY: Can you tell me whether all of those meetings were held in Darwin? I assume they were. I am only talking about the standing committees. I want to get to sessional committees later because they are very different sorts of committees. So we are talking about Public Accounts, Subordinate Legislation, House, Legal and Constitutional Affairs. They are all standing committees, aren't they?

Mr WARREN: I think Substance Abuse is a Standing Committee.

Madam SPEAKER: No, it's sessional. Leader of the Opposition, not that I am aware of. Certainly, the House Committee has not met anywhere except in Darwin. In relation to the Public Accounts Committee, Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Subordinate Legislation and Publications, while I do not believe they have met anywhere other than Darwin, I would like to take that question on notice.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. I will ask the question on notice, Mr Chairman.

Question on Notice 1.1

Mr CHAIRMAN: All right. Leader of the Opposition, restate your question, please.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the standing committees, were all meetings in 2006-07 held in Darwin and, if not, where were they held?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, having already advised that the House Committee only met in Darwin.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of Hansard, I allocate that question number 1.1.

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the standing committees, do you have or can you table or can you provide a list of the attendance of members?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I do not have that information, but I am happy to provide it.

Question on Notice 1.2

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, for the purposes of Hansard, can you please restate the question?

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, in respect of standing committees, do you have or can you table or can you provide a list of the attendance of members?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: I am.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 1.2.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. In respect of standing committees, did any of the committees have any study tours interstate and, if so, where and when and what was the cost?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I do not have that information. I am happy to take it on notice.

Question on Notice 1.3

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, can you please restate the question?

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the standing committees, did any of the committees have study tours interstate and, if so, where, when and what was the cost?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: I am happy to take that question on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of Hansard, I allocate that question number 1.3.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the standing committees, what costs did each committee incur including travel, consultancies, expert reports and so on, and if you have that information, can you table it?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I refer you to page 16 of the Portfolio Budget Statement. It says, at the top, the resources of all committees is pooled into a central pool, which services the needs and requirements of each committee. Only the expenditure that can be directly attributed to a particular committee is recorded against that committee. Estimated expenditure for 2006-07 for each committee is as follows:

• PAC, including Estimates	\$ 7000
• Substance Abuse Committee	\$ 8000
• Legal and Constitution Affairs Committee	\$ 2000
• Environment and Sustainable Development	\$16 000
• Sport and Youth	\$ 2000
• Subordinate Legislation	\$ 8000

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, I appreciate that, however, I am wanting to not so much get a nett figure, although I thank you for it, but I would like to know how much of those figures is divided into travel, consultancies and expert reports.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I would like to take that question on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, will you please restate the question?

Question on Notice 1.4

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the Standing Committees, what costs did each committee incur, and can you provide a breakdown of travel, consultancies, expert reports and other costs?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: I am, however, can I just comment that travel is counted under individual members rather than in committees ...

Ms CARNEY: In that case, should I restate the question?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Madam SPEAKER: ... except for travel of the Secretary and staff of the department. I am just advising you that member travel is not included in that.

Ms CARNEY: Do you mind, Mr Chairman and Madam Speaker, if we leave the question the way it is and you will provide the information?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, I am happy to; that is fine.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 1.4.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the Sessional Committees, I had questions in relation to each one, but I will lump them together because it is probably going to be easier. In relation to all of the Sessional Committees, do you have or can you provide a list of the attendance of members?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, it is the same as for the other committees. I do not have that list but I am happy to provide it for you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, could you restate that question for *Hansard*, please?

Question on Notice 1.5

Ms CARNEY: In respect of Sessional Committees, do you have or can provide a list of the attendance of members?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: I am happy to take the question on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, I allocate that question number 1.5

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the Sessional Committees, how many of the meetings involved travel, both interstate and intrastate, and what was the cost of the travel for 2006-07?

Madam SPEAKER: Once again, Leader of the Opposition, I do not have that information with me. In relation to member travel, that would be recorded against the members, not against the committee, but I am happy to take that it on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, if you could restate the question, please?

Question on Notice 1.6

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the Sessional Committees, how many of the meetings in 2006-07 involved travel, including intrastate and interstate, and what was the cost of the travel?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, once again with that proviso that member travel is counted separately against members and not the committee.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question, question number 1.6.

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the travel of members as a result of committee work, would those figures be available to all other members? Each month, of course, most members get a list of travel and other expenses. How would the opposition obtain or get a handle on the travel costs for members in respect of each committee?

Madam SPEAKER: There is a code. The RTD has a particular code for committee travel, so that members' travel would be identified as committee travel in the same way that other travel was identified in intra-Territory, interstate.

Ms CARNEY: So what we would do is look at how many meetings there were, where they were and then track back under the RTD how much it cost. Is there an easier way?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you would be aware that in February year, I tabled in the sittings a document relating to all members' travel. That, in fact, includes all of that information about the kind of travel they had. If it was about committee travel, it would have been identified as committee travel, whether it was the annual interstate trip or any other kind of travel as identified by the RTD clause.

We do that annually from January to December and then it is tabled in the February sitting of parliament, together with mobile and satellite phone information. That is an audited version. As you would be aware, as they travel, members have to enter into METS whether they have travelled or not. Therefore, at the moment, we would not have an accurate picture of the travel because some people are still travelling for the financial year, and some people still have to acquit their travel. I advise you to look at that document relating to that which was tabled in February.

Ms CARNEY: What I am after in relation to all of these costs is that it is important for Territorians to be able to neatly identify the costs of the committees, particularly the sessional committees, to see whether they are getting value for money. We want to know what is the cost of running the committees before we even get to the outcomes of those committees.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, would you like me to extrapolate committee travel from the document I tabled in the February sitting?

Ms CARNEY: That would be of great assistance, Madam Speaker. Perhaps, for future reports, if it could be included as a matter of course, that would be of benefit to everyone. Thank you.

Madam SPEAKER: I would be happy to do that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Would you like to have that as a question on notice, Madam Speaker, or ...

Madam SPEAKER: I am just happy to table the information, I think, unless you would like it to be a question on notice.

Ms CARNEY: No, I do not think so.

Madam SPEAKER: We can just provide that information for you because it is already done, basically.

Ms CARNEY: And include it in every reporting document that you table.

Madam SPEAKER: Quite.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, great. That is a good idea.

Mr Schoolmeester: Calendar year.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, it is a calendar year, because, as I said, we do not have the other information yet because it is incomplete.

Ms CARNEY: Sure. No, that is great. Thanks, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the sessional committees, were any costs incurred for consultancies, expert reports and other expenses? If so, what were those costs?

Madam SPEAKER: Excuse me, Mr Chairman, would it be possible to have that question again from the Leader of the Opposition? I am just trying to clarify the data.

Ms CARNEY: Sure. In relation to the sessional committees, were any costs incurred for consultancies or expert reports or other expenses? If so, what were they?

Madam SPEAKER: We will have to take that notice, sorry.

Question on Notice 1.7

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, if you could just restate the question for *Hansard*.

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, in relation to sessional committees, what costs were incurred for consultancies, expert reports or other expenses and, if any, what were they?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you happy to take that on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, I am happy to take that question on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 1.7.

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, are you aware whether all of the reports issued by each of the sessional committees were tabled in the Assembly?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, as far as I am aware they were all tabled in the Assembly. Of course I have to say that as I am not a member of any of those committees, I would not know of written reports that were not tabled. I believe they were all tabled.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the Substance Abuse Committee, on page 16 of your portfolio statement it says that it held seven meetings in 2006-07, eight meetings are going to be held in 2007-08 and it has one reference. Do you know, in your capacity as Speaker, why the Substance Abuse Committee continues to meet and how do you, as Speaker, if at all, measure the outcomes of that committee?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, my role as a Speaker is to ensure that funding is provided for the committees and that they are running in a fashion which is appropriate for the parliament. The references themselves come from the parliament and not from the Speaker. I think that would be a matter to be debated in the parliament, rather than seeking an answer from the Speaker.

Ms CARNEY: On page 16 of the portfolio statement it refers, for all committees, to the number of meetings held. Where do you find out how many hours each committee sat for?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that was in the document I tabled earlier. It has the number of hours for each committee.

Ms CARNEY: I see. Thank you, Madam Speaker, we will go through that information. I do have some more questions on committees, but because of time I will move on to the Alice Springs sitting. What was the cost of the Alice Springs sitting last year? How did that compare with the previous sitting? Can you table a list of cost and comparisons for previous sittings?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Perhaps while people are looking for the answer, can I ask people to switch off any mobile phones that they may be using or put them on silent.

Madam SPEAKER: The cost of the Alice Springs sitting in April of this year was \$193 835. This included a community concert which was \$32 512, and the Alice Springs School Art Award, which was \$5000. These were separate and new things in relation to the sitting. I believe that costs for the previous two sittings, the 2003 and 2005 sittings, were tabled last year, but I am happy to table those again. The difference in the two relates mainly to the concert and the art award.

Ms CARNEY: So the sittings before in 2005, what was the figure?

Madam SPEAKER: \$156 870 and, if you excluded the concert and the art award, the cost this year would have \$156 323, virtually the same, but we had the community concert and the art award on top of that.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Does the figure you provided to me include advertising expenses?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so it is an inclusive figure. In relation to the Alice Springs sitting, at the first sitting we had, I think from memory there was a counter, an automatic counter or something like that at the front door to count the number of visitors. Was that present in 2007 sitting and, if so, do you have a comparison between sittings as to the number of people who attended?

Madam SPEAKER: As I said in my opening statement, we estimated - it was not as scientific as the counter in the 2003 sitting, but we estimated from invitations that went out and from the number of people at Question Time, because we had hospitality in relation to that, that there were 2400 people who attended the sittings themselves, plus another around 1400 students, which was a separate figure, so there was an increase of people who attended the sittings in Alice Springs.

Ms CARNEY: But you based that on the number of invitations sent out?

Madam SPEAKER: Oh, no, the number of people who responded and who attended. Certainly for Question Times and the opening session, there were around 400 people at each one of those. We did a proper calculation of how many people and we estimated it was 2400 people over the three days plus the 1400 school students.

Ms CARNEY: But there is actually no detailed comparison. We had an electronic counter in 2003, and I think we had it at the 2005 one.

Madam SPEAKER: No, I do not think there was at the 2005 one, either. It is quite complicated because of course, you have people such as ourselves going in and out and so we might be counted, Leader of the Opposition, 30 or 40 times which, of course, would make the figures very inaccurate, particularly if all members, the 25 members, are all going in and out 30 times. It would be unhelpful. This went on the number of people who could fit into the Chamber, plus the invitations people responded to and head counts during particular parts of the sitting as well.

Ms CARNEY: I guess that is going to be the same way the numbers are going to be calculated in future years if you are all happy with that now.

Madam SPEAKER: I have to say that is probably the easiest way for us to do it, because it is inaccurate, the sort of figures where you do have people like myself coming and going all the time and that is the way we added it up and the figures do not look all that strange.

Ms CARNEY: The member for Braintree was seen going through the electronic door often in 2003, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: I have no comment to make on that, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the \$193 000 cost for the 2007 sitting, that cost, in addition to advertising and the concert and the art and so on, includes the Legislative Assembly staff going down, their TA and so on, all of the Legislative Assembly equipment? Do you have a breakdown of those costs? That is the first question?

Madam SPEAKER: I am happy to table this document. Yes, it does, it includes all the different expenses.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. For the sake of the parliamentary of *Hansard*, it does not include the costs for the staff of government or Leader of the Opposition's office to get to Alice Springs, does it?

Madam SPEAKER: No.

Ms CARNEY: So both of those staff and other costs to get to the sitting come from the respective budgets of government and opposition?

Madam SPEAKER: That is correct.

Ms CARNEY: So if the opposition had the sort of budget that the senior ministerial office had, in future we might be able to get more than two staff, two staff, to go to the Alice Springs sittings, correct?

Mr CHAIRMAN: I think you are asking the Speaker to ...

Ms CARNEY: It was a bit cheeky, Mr Chairman, but I could not resist.

Madam SPEAKER: It is outside my portfolio area, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: I asked, in your absence, the Chief Minister a similar sort of question last year. She did not smile like you did. I will move on, but before I do, can I just have a look at that tabled document? Okay, thank you. I will finish with that output area, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions on Output Group 1.1 from any other committee members?

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, last year's budget included a Parliamentary Outreach Program. What activities were done as part of that program, at what cost, and has it continued in to the new financial year?

Madam SPEAKER: Parliamentary Education is probably one my passions as the Speaker. It certainly has continued in 2006-07. Part of its role, apart from being involved with the Alice Springs sitting, which was a very significant thing where the Parliamentary Education travelled throughout Central Australia, and I would have to say, Mr Wood, I was very pleased to visit with the staff of that unit the Central Australian area. We visited Yulara, and we had students from Mutitjulu and Nyangatjatjara College, Imanpa and Docker River come to a Parliamentary Education program, which we had at Nyangatjatjara College, which was very well attended. We also attended a launch of that program at St Philips College in the following days. There was a significant program of parliamentary education in relation to the sittings, where 25 schools attended and 1500 students were involved in that, so it was a huge part of the work of that part of the parliament this year.

In addition, the Parliamentary unit visited the Gove Peninsula and conducted role plays in Nhulunbuy Primary School, Shepherdson College and Yirrkala CSC. It conducted two road shows, that was what I was talking about before, in the Barkly and the Central Australian regions. It developed strategies and activities appropriate to a range of cultural and cross-cultural contacts. It conducted information sessions for teachers, students and community groups about the role and processes of parliament. It provided practical assistance to teachers, looking to incorporate Parliamentary education into their teaching and learning program, and it developed educational resources for teachers and students.

Mr WOOD: How many people go out with the Parliamentary Outreach Program? Is there a set number of staff?

Madam SPEAKER: There are four staff in the unit, Mr Wood, however they do not usually all go at the same time. It is usually one or two of the staff, and sometimes I accompany them as well.

Mr WOOD: Is there a separate item in the budget for that outreach program?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr WOOD: What is the cost of running that program per year?

Madam SPEAKER: There is an allocation of \$25 000 to do that, and that is how much it costs.

Mr WOOD: In regard to the Alice Springs sitting, a number of people put forward the idea that the Alice Springs sitting be held annually. Has your department looked at the cost of running it annually, or is it not something that has just been discussed?

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Wood, I have to say that that is a policy matter for the government, whether or not the sittings are going to be held in Alice Springs annually, and no, the department has not looked at how much it would cost annually. Given the figure that it was this year, I imagine it would be much the same cost.

Mr WOOD: This is a policy question, I suppose, but why do we have restrictions on the broadcasting of parliament, either on radio or television? In other words, we allow it at certain times, but at other times, unless it's given an exemption by yourself, it does not happen. Why cannot we have the broadcasting of parliament on radio or television at any time while the parliament is sitting?

Madam SPEAKER: The rules in relation to broadcasting are laid down in our standing orders. The standing orders are agreed to by the whole of the parliament. If that is a matter of concern to you, member for Nelson, I recommend that you write to the Leader of Government Business in his role as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, and suggest that. Then it can be debated in that forum of the committee and, then, if it was agreed to, it would be debated on the floor of the parliament.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, you are able to give exemptions as to when radio or television can operate from within the House?

Madam SPEAKER: I am, but I follow protocols and conventions that have been used either in this parliament or in other parliaments.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, what was the cost of *Hansard* this financial year? What changes have occurred, and are any proposed changes being highlighted for *Hansard*? I am thinking of technological change.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nelson, I draw your attention to page 13 of the Portfolio Budget Statement, which has the cost of *Hansard* recorded. The original budget was \$632 000, the revised budget for 2006-07 was \$643 000, with an estimate of \$645 000 for 2007-08. I am sorry, what was the next part of the question?

Mr WOOD: What changes have occurred in the means of collating or collecting *Hansard*, and what proposals do you have in light of technological change?

Madam SPEAKER: The advice that I have received is that it is business as usual, Mr Clerk said to me.

Mr WOOD: Oh, right.

Madam SPEAKER: If there are particular issues in relation to *Hansard* that you are concerned about, member for Nelson, you can raise those and I can answer them as best I can.

Mr WOOD: I was looking through the annual report for 2005-06, which is the only annual report we have at the moment, and I noted there was some mention of upgrading technology within the Assembly.

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask the Clerk, Mr Ian McNeill, to answer this question.

Mr McNEILL: Mr Chairman, during the year we did upgrade the FTR recording system, and it is probably appropriate, if you are requiring an exposition of the actual technical details, that perhaps we should take that on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I ask the member for Nelson to re-state the question for the purposes of *Hansard*.

Question on Notice 1.8

Mr WOOD: Yes, Mr Chairman. I was asking Madam Speaker whether I could have a detailed report on changes to technological developments within the Legislative Assembly, especially in relation to the recording of *Hansard*.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: I am prepared to do that, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 1.8.

Mr WOOD: That is all my questions, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do any other members have any questions in relation to Output 1.1? That concludes Output 1.1.

Output 1.2 – Member and Client Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to Output 1.2 - Member and Client Services. Are there any questions?

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Madam Speaker, on page 46 of Budget Paper No 3, it gives a figure of \$12.185m for Member and Client Services. In order for Territorians to work out how much government, albeit the Assembly, pays to support the members of parliament, would you simply divide \$12.185m by 25? It does not include salary, however, and that is a separate item, but I am wanting to get to what is the average cost per year of supporting and maintaining a member of Legislative Assembly because Territorians might be slightly interested in that.

Madam SPEAKER: I draw your attention to page 24 of the Portfolio Budget Statement, resource allocation to Member Services, \$6.815m; and the electorate office support, \$4.38m. Is that what you are after?

Ms CARNEY: No, I want to know much per member it costs our fellow Territorians. We have a figure of \$12m and that is for members plus their electorate office. I assume that it probably would be as simple as dividing it by 25 plus adding salary. In the absence, I might say, of any other information, I suspect that is the only conclusion you can draw.

Madam SPEAKER: There are two documents. One relates to the expenditure for members and this includes a total figure of goods and services, travel, motor vehicles, that sort of thing ...

Ms CARNEY: If you could table that, it would be great.

Madam SPEAKER: ... and there is another document which relates to the general figure of costs in relation to electorate offices, which is once again a general figure.

Ms CARNEY: I think both of those figures will assist. Thank you.

Madam SPEAKER: I will get them tabled straight away.

Ms CARNEY: I will move on because I am very keen to get to non-output specific areas, which I predict will take a little while. Can you advise whether the information that you are about to table for the costs of members includes motor vehicles?

Madam SPEAKER: It does, in the general information and payments. It's under goods and services.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, I will have a look at that and ask you some more questions. How many vehicles were purchased for members in 2006-07, and how does that compare with the preceding two years? Question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, I will take it on notice. I'd just say, though, that there is a regular program with NT Fleet of the cars being replaced. I am wondering whether that should actually be a question for the minister in charge of NT Fleet.

Ms CARNEY: Can I come to that anyway ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Perhaps if I ask the Leader of the Opposition to restate this question, and then I will ask you, Madam Speaker, if you are prepared to take that on notice.

Ms CARNEY: I will preface it like this: given that the information you just tabled includes the costs of motor vehicles, my question is: how many motor vehicles were purchased for members in 2006-07 and how does that compare with the preceding two years?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, but I think there needs to be a rewording of the question. None of the vehicles are actually purchased at all. They are all leased and that is all dealt with by NT Fleet. We pay for the lease but it is an NT Fleet arrangement and, understandably, Leader of the Opposition, there is a regular program with the replacement of vehicles and it is around 40 000 km, I think, or up to three years.

Ms CARNEY: Can I come back to that? I will restate the question as follows: given that you have tabled information regarding the lease costs of vehicles to members, my question is: how many vehicles were leased for members in 2006-07, and how does that compare with the preceding two years?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, but I think the issue is that all the vehicles were leased in the year. Do you mean how many new leases were signed in 2006-07? Is that what you mean?

Ms CARNEY: If that is easier for you I am happy to ...

Madam SPEAKER: I am just trying to clarify ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: My concern is that the purpose for restating the question is for *Hansard* to have a clear record of what the question is. I am going to have to ask the Leader of the Opposition to restate the question because it has been amended after it has been restated.

Ms CARNEY: And I will amend it further. How many vehicles were leased for members in 2006-07 and how does that compare with the preceding years, and how many new leases were commenced in 2006-07?

Madam SPEAKER: Can I just, before taking it on notice, can I say that to my best knowledge, all 25 members have a car which is leased for them, so that there would always be 25 leases.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Well, do you take it on notice, or is that your answer?

Madam SPEAKER: Well, there would not be any more cars than that. There are only 25 members and 25 cars and you replace one lease with another.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. How many, if any, vehicles were returned before they clocked up 40 000 km or before they were held by a member for two years in 2006-07?

Madam SPEAKER: I do not know.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. On notice?

Madam SPEAKER: I will have to take that on notice.

Ms CARNEY: Okay.

Question on Notice 1.10

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can you restate the question, Leader of the Opposition?

Ms CARNEY: How many, if any, vehicles were returned before they clocked up 40 000 km or before they were held by a member for two years?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that on notice?

Mr WARREN: Just on a point of clarification, Mr Chairman, is it 40 000 km?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, can I hold that question, member for Goyder, because the Speaker has agreed to take this question on notice as restated, so I will allocate the question as it stands and accepted by the Speaker number 1.10.

Ms CARNEY: Thanks, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Now, in terms of the clarification, Madam Speaker, just quickly for the member for Goyder, and excuse me, Leader of the Opposition, but just quickly, is it 40 000 km or some other?

Ms CARNEY: Yes is the answer.

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Schoolmeester is saying to me that there may be a slight difference in the 40 000 km for 4WDs, but it would be probably better for us to just take the question on notice so that we can get the accurate answer.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, no. I do not want to do that. I thought it was a quick answer. If it is not, then I will allow the Leader of the Opposition as per convention to continue questioning. Member for Goyder, if you have a question at the end, then I will invite other members as per the convention. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, sorry, I do actually have the answer to that one now. Ms Vicki Long, Parliamentary Services.

Ms LONG: The number of kilometres for 4WDs is 70 000.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, was the member for Sanderson the only member who ordered a car, used it for a bit, then did not like it, then wanted another one, and got another one, or were there other members who did the same?

Madam SPEAKER: In relation to the member for Sanderson's car, the reason why it was returned and, in fact, is being used by the Legislative Assembly now, was in fact for safety

reasons. The member for Sanderson has a particularly short Electorate Officer who was actually unable to see properly out of the particular car.

Dr LIM: Mine is even shorter.

Madam SPEAKER: Well, I don't really want to draw too much attention to the Electorate Officer, but apparently there were quite significant difficulties, both in the seating arrangement in the car and the ability to actually see out of the mirrors and there were quite a few dangerous situations, and the member for Sanderson approached me about it. We knew that the Legislative Assembly was looking for the particular kind of car which he had and it was therefore agreed that he could get a different vehicle.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Can I ask you this very specific question? What was the vehicle the member for Sanderson ordered that he wanted to be replaced?

Madam SPEAKER: It was a Holden Utility, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: I have seen a lot of motor vehicle advertising and I have never seen a rider when advertising Holdens, whether they be utes or anything else, that short people should not use them. How tall is the Electorate Officer? Less than three feet tall?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, it is not really within my portfolio knowledge of how tall the – but she is shorter than me, and I am 5'3".

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, my point is that this was a commercially available vehicle that does not, to anyone's knowledge, have exemptions for short people, and I put it to you that the member for Sanderson got his Holden ute, did not like it, and then wanted it replaced. Do you accept that that is in fact what occurred under the cover of having an unusually short electorate officer?

Mr WARREN: A point of order, Mr Chairman! Asking for opinions of the minister right now is not answering questions, and it is getting frivolous when it is talking about people's stature and opinions about cars and things like that. It is totally out of her portfolio but it is also asking for opinions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I note your concerns, member for Goyder, and, in the event that the Speaker advises that it is outside her portfolio and will not answer, I will accept that answer. However, for the purposes of openness, I will give the Speaker the discretion to answer and if I believe it is an opinion outside myself, regardless of what the Speaker thinks, then I will rule on that.

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, the replacement of the vehicle was based on safety issues as it is an electorate car.

Ms CARNEY: Members of parliament, just like other public servants, are not allowed to smoke in their vehicles. Did any vehicles need specialised cleaning to remove the smell of smoke in 2006-07? If so, which vehicles, who did they belong to and what was the cost?

Madam SPEAKER: I will pass the question to Ms Vicki Long.

Ms LONG: I am not aware of any such requirement, however, we will check on that if you wish.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, if you could restate the question for the purposes of *Hansard*?

Question on Notice 1.11

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, members of parliament, just like other public servants, are not allowed to smoke in their vehicles. Did any vehicles need specialised cleaning to remove the smell of smoke in 2006-07? If so, how many, who did they belong to and what was the cost?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that Question number 1.11.

Ms CARNEY: That concludes my questions, because of time, in relation these outputs.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions?

Dr LIM: In relation to Member and Client Services, I notice in the portfolio statement on page 24, and pages 25 and 27, there was a restoration of efficiency dividends for members and electorate offices. I wonder if you can explain for me the amount of \$125 000 and how is that calculated? What were the efficiencies that were implemented to reduce that, or to bring that money together?

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask Mr Schoolmeester to answer that question.

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: The efficiency dividend is basically calculated on employee costs and [inaudible] costs for members who receive [inaudible]. On top of that, the members also had their annual base salary increased by 7%. The Treasury provided the top up for that, which was another 4%. We also, in line with the CPI, we had to pay commitments under the RTD, therefore the allocation was reduced down because we would not have been able to cover the same amount of travel or any of those costs. So basically, we received 4.4% in 2007-08 for that.

Dr LIM: There was, in fact, an increase of allocation from Treasury to top up for the Assembly to provide the services?

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: Yes.

Dr LIM: Thank you. Going to the expenditure report for members 2006, I thought maybe the member for Nelson and a few of us who live well south of the track probably will incur a greater cost to manage our services. By looking at the cumulative figures for each of the members under Employee Expenses, I am surprised to find myself to be particularly low, probably second only to the member for Sanderson; whereas many members who live in Darwin have expenses of over \$200 000 regularly. What would the cause of that be?

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Greatorex, would you mind clarifying which document you are looking at?

Dr LIM: The expenditure report for members 2006-07 that was just tabled.

Madam SPEAKER: The first column called Employees Expenses includes fringe benefits taxes as well as functions they have attended, plus expenses for offices, which includes the Leader of the Opposition and the Whip. The other one, the Goods and Services, includes costs for members' travel and motor vehicles, which is the cost for ...

Dr LIM: No, I was asking about the Employee Expenses column only. I am looking at employee expenses for salaries section only. You have me, for instance, a member with – what do you call it? – office duties as the Opposition Whip and it still only \$262 000 Employee Expenses, whereas other members are well above that. I am puzzled as to why that would happen.

Madam SPEAKER: That employee expenses is, in fact, the members' salaries, not the electorate ...

Dr LIM: Ministerial ...

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, so if you want to look at the

Dr LIM: ... higher allowance – not higher allowance, the condition of salary ...

Madam SPEAKER: Employee expenses, in this case, means the member's salary, so that obviously those of us who are office holders – as you just mentioned, you are the Whip, member for Greatorex, for the opposition, so that would include your salary for that, plus FBT. The cost for electorate officers is in the other document which I tabled ...

Dr LIM: I am not asking about electorate offices, I am looking at employee expenses for members.

Madam SPEAKER: This is strictly about members. The first column is about members' salary, FBT, electorate allowance and other matters, and is for 11 months.

Dr LIM: My observation is that just about every member of government has significant employee expenses, compared to the Independents and those in opposition. We can obviously understand that, perhaps, the member for Katherine was unwell for quite some time as well and would have incurred other costs following her accident and surgery. I wonder how that came about.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Greatorex, this is ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sorry, Madam Speaker, but the figures that are being referred to are different from the column that I understand you are referring to. Could I just clarify: employee expenses are a direct cost to members. Is that ...

Dr LIM: Yes, that is right. Expenditure report for members, 2006-07, Output number 2, Member and Client Services, I refer to the first column of the page headed Employee Expenses. My query is that it appears that even backbenchers of government are on fairly high employee expenses compared with Independent members and members of the opposition. I am curious to note that, and I wonder why it has happened. Considering the member for Nelson has been here for six years, I have been here 13 years, and many of the members of government have been only two years and are on extremely high salaries.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Greatorex. As I explained, this column of employee expenses is about the base salary of a member. Each member receives exactly the same base salary. Then, any expenses of office; for example, I receive an allowance as the Speaker. Then, there is the electorate allowance, which as you would be aware, varies from electorate to electorate which would significantly differ for a very large electorate as opposed to my electorate in Nightcliff, and then there are costs that relate to fringe benefits tax. So included in that is of course is the Chairs of committees who also receive an extra allowance of office as well. That explains the differences there ...

Dr LIM: So the electorate allowance is not in goods and services; it is in employee expenses.

Madam SPEAKER: No, this is in the employee expenses.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions, member for Greatorex? Any further questions on this output group?

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, does the Remuneration Tribunal come within the responsibility of Legislative Assembly, as in the payment for the Remuneration Tribunal?

Madam SPEAKER: No, we do not. I think that must be government.

Mr WOOD: Department of the Chief Minister, that's right. With the electorate office training, do you have any figures that show the percentage of electorate office staff who have taken up training opportunities? What I am getting at is you provide office training in various facets of electorate work. Do you have any idea, not so much how many, but what percentage of those training courses have been taken by electorate office staff?

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask Vicki Long to answer this question.

Ms LONG: We have undertaken a training needs analysis the year before last for electorate officers. We continually send out any training opportunities that come up. In order to answer your question, I think I will need to take it on notice in terms of the percentage.

Question on Notice 1.12

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, could you restate the question for *Hansard*?

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chair. Madam Speaker, could you provide figures for the Estimates Committee showing what office training courses were available over the last year and what percentage of electorate office staff availed themselves of those courses?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Madam Speaker, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will allocate that question number 1.12.

Mr WOOD: One more question, Mr Chairman. Madam Speaker, you did refer to some problems with IT in your opening statement. I know that there is a figure sometimes shown here under electorate offices, the performance measure is that client satisfaction with services and support is about 95%. I am not sure if my office is the 5% that is left over. What is being done to try to help improve IT services, especially when we get breakdowns? I know I am not really isolated as some other electorates must be, but just, for example, last week, we were nearly one week without e-mails. It is not only a problem there, of course; sometimes it actually affects your printers because the way that the system works is if there is a problem in connection of computers with the modem, there is sometimes also a problem with being able to print off copies of letters and things. Is there a general move to try to improve those services and the time taken to get problems fixed?

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Wood. I have to say that this is probably the area of the greatest complaint from members, including myself. There have been significant issues for a number of members including some members on the Estimates Committee. Yesterday, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I met with officers of DCIS, Fujitsu, CSG and I am going to be seeing Telstra later in the week regarding these matters.

One of the issues relates to how people view members of parliament and whether they see us as a priority, which is a bit of a concern. I think they do not actually understand the kind of work that we are doing. We are trying to get them to understand the urgency of some of these things in relation to dealing with our constituents in an appropriate fashion.

I am fairly certain that the meeting that we had yesterday will result in some good results over the next few weeks. They have given us an undertaking that they will give us a report back within a month on the matters that we raised yesterday.

I completely agree with you, member for Nelson, that the service at the moment is not as we would want, but I am fairly confident that we are looking at changes over the coming few months.

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, I thank the Speaker. The contract for the maintenance of electronic equipment within the Legislative Assembly, does that say that when there is a problem, a particular company must attend, and is their entire job requirement to fix the problem? What I am getting at is, for instance, the other day, and this has happened before, when a person has come out to look at the IT and they have found that the IT appears to be working, they say: 'Well, that's a Telstra issue' and they can pack up and go home and say: 'Well, you worry about it now'. That has occurred before. Is the contract designed in such a way that they have to look at fixing the issue and whether that requires them to go to ring up Telstra or someone else, that is part of the contract?

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nelson, this is in fact exactly what I raised yesterday because I have been confronted with the same sorts of comments and for someone who is not particularly fantastic at IT, I do not feel I am capable and I do not expect other members to be capable of answering technical questions or trying to find solutions. As a member of parliament, that is not my job, and it is not your job. What we are trying to make sure that happens in the future is that

whoever comes to your office actually knows how to sort those problems out and actually does that.

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, has been clear in the contract that the government signed off with the company?

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask Ms Vicki Long to answer that question.

Ms LONG: I cannot answer for the whole-of-government contract, that might be a question for the Minister for Corporate and Information Services, however we have reached agreement with Fujitsu that there will be the concept – it should be in place already – of a one-stop shop for members so that a member should not be confronted with: ‘This is not our problem; that’s a Telstra problem.’ They should contact the Telstra help desk on your behalf so that it is resolved seamlessly for you. That is one of the issues that we are still working out. Fujitsu management certainly endorsed that proposal. It is a matter of ensuring that the field technicians who come out also have that shared understanding. It was one of the agreements yesterday, that Fujitsu would work at having a limited pool of technicians who would attend electorate offices, so they would have a good understanding of the configuration there.

Mr WOOD: Last question on this issue, Mr Chairman. Thank you, Ms Long. One of the issues appears to be that the technicians are not always qualified enough to deal with the issue. I have had a number of people come to my office since this contract occurred who spent maybe half a day fiddling around and then left my computer in, I think, a worse state than when they had come.

Dr Lim: Hear, hear!

Mr WOOD: I reckon that they were just guessing. I did wonder whether there was some check or audit that the people that we are employing to do the job that we require are actually qualified enough to do that particular job properly.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Nelson. I would have to agree with you on that, and it was something that was raised yesterday in the meeting, particularly about the standard of capacity of some of the people who are attending at our electorate offices and so that when I said about understanding what a member does and the priority that we might be given because of the kind of work we are doing in relation to a big government contract, but certainly that was discussed and I am hoping that there will be a major change in this area in the coming months, or month.

Mr WOOD: Yes, hopefully, too.

Dr LIM: I have just one very quick question. Sorry about that. Madam Speaker, would you consider that we should impress upon DCIS that they do not continually replace the DCIS officer who is attached to the Legislative Assembly? We need an agency champion who will look after the interests of the Legislative Assembly and not look after the interests of DCIS. Every 18 months, we get another officer. We have just lost Mr Trobbiani for another one, and it is going to take six months to get any idea of what we do and he is going to leave in another 12 months’ time. What a waste of effort and learning that we provide these people. Will you consider that?

Madam SPEAKER: I am happy to consider that, member for Greatorex. After considering it, I will get back to you about it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions?

Mr WARREN: Yes, one quick one, Mr Chairman. In relation to the matter raised before by the member for Greatorex and the expenditure report which you tabled here, I notice the member for Greatorex has an exceedingly high goods and services expenditure, which is quite considerably higher than anyone else in the parliament. In fact, it is almost double the member for Araluen’s. Is there any particular reason for that?

Dr LIM: I work so hard.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Goyder, the reason there is a big variation relates to where a member lives. In relation to the member for Greatorex, he lives in Alice Springs and he has to

travel to Darwin a lot, so this includes his travel as a member. He is the Opposition Whip, and so there is a lot of travel ...

Mr WARREN: Would it be normal to be twice the Leader of the Opposition?

Ms Carney: We're in a different budget, Ted. Don't go there.

Dr Lim: That shows how stupid you are.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask you to withdraw that, member for Grotorex.

Dr LIM: I withdraw that. How uninformed he is.

Mr WARREN: I withdraw the question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Goyder. Do you have any further questions?

Mr WARREN: No.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 1.2.

Output 1.3 - Building Management Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now consider Output 1.3 - Building Management Services. Are there any questions? Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Last year, I asked how many functions, including those held by government and the Speaker, were held in Parliament House during the last 12 months. I received that in tabled form. Do we have a tabled form list of the number of functions held in Parliament House in 2006-07? If so, would you table it?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, I do have that information. This information includes Protocol-hosted functions, the total of sponsored functions and sponsored media conferences.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Last year, when I asked about government functions held in Parliament House, you said that they were, for the most part, underwritten by the Legislative Assembly with the exception of big functions held in the Main Hall, such as the V8s and Darwin Cup receptions. So, for the most part, the functions held downstairs in the Main Hall by ministers and the Chief Minister are, in essence, paid for by the Assembly. In that light, I would like to know, and the document you have tabled may provide it, the cost to the Assembly of the government-sponsored functions in 2006-07. Do you have that information?

Madam SPEAKER: Do you mean the cost of the room?

Ms CARNEY: Let us say a notional cost because we are looking to see not only how many functions government had, but how much they cost the Assembly because, of course, all of these functions cost Territorians. We want to know how much it costs for the government to hold their functions albeit those functions are underwritten by the Assembly.

Madam SPEAKER: I do not have that specific information available, but as a general comment, government functions as run by Protocol, the room hire and other facilities are divided because it is in Parliament House, in the same way, Leader of the Opposition, if you have a function in Strangers' Lounge or Members and Guests, the room hire is included and is not charged to your office. Similarly, if members approach me to have a function for constituents in Members and Guests or Strangers, I waive costs for them as well because Parliament House is, in fact, for members and ministers are members as well.

Ms CARNEY: That is right, yes.

Madam SPEAKER: That is the policy arrangement.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you for that. That is for the room hire. What I am getting at is: how much is the food and grog?

Madam SPEAKER: Oh, I do not know, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. In relation ...

Madam SPEAKER: That is actually a government matter. You would have to ask the Chief Minister.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to a question asked last year, the Clerk indicated that the costs of those functions were underwritten by the Legislative Assembly. In other words, with the exception –I think you said, Mr Clerk – of cleaning and a couple of extra bits and pieces, the costs were paid for by the Assembly. I am trying to find the *Hansard*. Is that not the case? Who pays for the food and grog?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that is paid for by the Department of the Chief Minister. I will not answer for the Clerk, I will let him speak for himself, but I think he must have been talking about the costs that I am talking about in relation to members using Parliament House for functions. However, I will ask the Clerk to respond.

Mr McNEILL: Mr Chairman, by way of explanation, I am not sure about the actual quotation to which the Leader of the Opposition is referring, however back in the early days of the operation of this building, it became clearly evident to this department that support that we provided, as building managers, for various government functions was a severe drain on our resources, staffing and financial. On two occasions, we undertook, in the course of baseline budget reviews, and the most recent one, I think, was December 2001, to identify clearly and to substantiate how much it was actually costing this agency to effectively support the range of government functions that were conducted in the building.

I recall that back then, the cost to us was in the order of \$100 000, but it would be a possible project that may take a little bit of time, but we could provide an estimate of the current cost for those functions that we, effectively, provide by way of security, additional overtime for our own staff, additional cleaning and the like. It shouldn't be too difficult an exercise to refresh those figures. That was effectively what I meant by us underwriting or supporting it.

Madam SPEAKER: So it is not the cost of the functions themselves.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, thank you. You said 'support for those functions underwritten from our budget', which I thought was interesting. So you do not pay for the food and grog; the ministers pay for that. Correct?

Madam SPEAKER: That is correct.

Ms CARNEY: Right, thank you. One last question in this regard before others, and then I get to non-specific. Was any legal advice obtained by the Assembly in the last 12 months? If so, can you provide details of the advice obtained, why it was obtained and whether any advices were received in relation to a member or members? Also, provide other relevant details.

Madam SPEAKER: We received advice from the Department of Justice, which is at no cost because it is inter-departmental, and advice was sought and obtained from the Department of Justice by the Department of Legislative Assembly as follows: advice sought on behalf of a member in respect of employment issues; advice sought relating to the granting of permission to McMillan Education Australia to include *Hansard* extracts in educational publications; advice re application of the *Legislative Assembly Security Act* and *Legislative Assembly Powers and Privileges Act* in respect to the police powers in the parliamentary precinct; and the *Speaker's Corner* lease.

Advice has been sought and received that advice is pending on the following issue: copyright of material produced by the Statehood Steering Committee.

Outsourced legal advice in 2006-07: legal advice to the value of \$4800 was sought from Professor Ned Aughterson by the Subordinate Legislation and Publications Committee. With the complexity of the regulations being scrutinised by the committee, a decision was taken to provide members with legal counsel. As a result, a contract has been negotiated with Professor

Aughterson and this applies to 2007-08 year also. Professor Aughterson's services have been contracted to \$5000 for 2007-08.

Ms CARNEY: No further questions on this output.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions for this output group?

Dr LIM: One quick question, Mr Chairman, if I may. Madam Speaker, I refer you to page 32 of your budget statement. Repairs and maintenance: from your original target, you have jumped quite significantly. Is that because there are more repairs and maintenance, or is this part of the repairs and maintenance that has to be undertaken following government-sponsored functions in Parliament House, and there is damage that there needs to be attended to?

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Chair. No it has nothing to do with functions at Parliament House. The building is simply getting older. We put in a bid for a larger amount for repairs and maintenance and we are very pleased that, for the first time in virtually a decade, we have a significant amount of money for repairs and maintenance, and so we can have a very good program of repairs and maintenance for the building.

Dr LIM: Thank you.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chair. Madam Speaker, has the Asset Management Plan been completed?

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask Mr Horton to answer that question.

Mr HORTON: You would probably be aware that funding was allocated for the development of an Asset Management Plan. That was done through the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. That was also done in conjunction with the Supreme Court. To date, there have been a number of draft segments to that report, but I have not received the final report as of today.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, do you know how long we expect it to be before that Asset Management Plan is finalised?

Mr HORTON: I do not know.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, in relation to the energy audit, and there is lots of talk about global warming and cutting down on costs, I read in the last year's annual report that the department installed a low load screw chiller to reduce the cost of air conditioning. Have there been any ongoing energy audits to try to reduce more of the energy that is used by this House? I especially refer to members' rooms, in my case on the fifth floor, which have six separate lights for one room. I do not know whether they were installed in days when lighting was not a concern, but I wonder whether we have done an audit of the amount of lighting in this building and how much is absolutely necessary to have to run an office properly.

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask David Horton to answer that question.

Mr HORTON: We are very conscious of power usage in the building. You have noted that the low-load chiller is one method that we have installed to try and reduce that and subsequently the greenhouse gases. There are a number of programs that we have undertaken and will continue to undertake. One of them relates to the modification of lighting and putting sensors throughout the building, including store rooms, to try to reduce energy consumption. We have already put a separate air conditioning unit in one part of the building because it was a low use area and the air conditioning was working to fill a large space unnecessarily. We reduced that by putting in an air conditioning unit to cover the people who work in that area.

There are a number of other initiatives taken, such as variable speed drives to cooling tower fans, which allow the fans to respond on demand rather than running at full power all the time. We are continuing that. We are members of the Greenhouse Challenge and we will continue to conduct energy audits in the building.

Mr WOOD: One last question in relation to security. Have we basically reached the targets of our security upgrades that were required, or are there any more upgrades to security foreseen in the next financial year?

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Nelson. Certainly, in the lead up to the APEC conference, which was held in Parliament House, there was a much closer look at security and as a result of that, there have been recommendations put together for the House Committee to look at what things might be appropriate for Parliament House in the coming years. That will be coming back to the parliament. There have been upgrades in relation to the use of blue cards, photographs including of members, and I understand everyone who has a blue card now, except for the very small group of people, has photographic ID which has certainly improved the security in the building.

Mr WOOD: Thank you. No further questions, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions for Output 1.3? There being no further questions, that concludes consideration of this Output Group.

Non-Output Specific Budget-Related Questions

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any non-output specific budget-related questions?

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker how much of the total appropriation for the Assembly, some \$21m, goes towards corporate and executive services? That is, the administration of output groups and programs?

Madam SPEAKER: If you look at the Portfolio Budget Statement on page 41, it has the DCIS property services listed there, and DCIS Other and Parliamentary Services as well, so the bottom three figures, Leader of the Opposition, on page 41.

Mr SCHOOLMEESTER: \$2.6m.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so that will show how much goes on corporate and executive services out of the entire appropriation, correct, on page 41 of the Portfolio Budget?

Madam SPEAKER: It shows you the amounts that are spent and it shows you the whole budget.

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, what is the cost per square metre for cleaning Parliament House and is it undertaken by contract or internal cleaners?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, it is done by contract and the costs are on page 32. It is \$22 per square metre.

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker what is the cost of cleaning for electorate offices, the average cost? Sorry, I will put that again. What is the cost to the Assembly for cleaning the 25 electorate offices?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you will be aware that in aware electorate allowance, there is actually an amount that covers cleaning of electorate offices.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, yes. Madam Speaker, I think you have answered this before. I was after the cost of all office rentals for the 25 MLAs. Has a breakdown of those figures been provided in any of the material tabled? If not, can you table that information?

Madam SPEAKER: The cost of \$1.12m. If you have a look at this, once again, on page 41 of the Portfolio Budget Statement under DCIS Property Services, that figure, \$1.12m, is for the leases of electorate offices.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. How much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of advertising? What are the design and production costs for radio, television, newspaper, magazine and any other medium for the Assembly?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I have figures relating to advertising and promotions, which includes everything except advertising for staff vacancies and things like that.

Ms CARNEY: Do you have those in table form?

Madam SPEAKER: I do. I have written on mine, however, I will find a better version. I am happy to table that. It includes advertising, for example, from my office, which includes the advertising I do for the sittings, plus death notices and various things.

Ms CARNEY: What is that document called?

Madam SPEAKER: It is called Advertising and Promotions, Whole of Agency. I am advised that, for the Statehood Steering Committee, the figure includes radio advertising, but it is not specifically broken down in this document.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will just mention that we will be shortly out of time, so ...

Ms CARNEY: We have about another minute, Mr Chairman. How much of the total appropriation in 2006-07 went towards the cost of reviews undertaken in that year, and could you list what reviews were undertaken?

Madam SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, we have not had any reviews. We had an audit of members travel, phones and satellite phones. We are conducting a customer survey which, hopefully, you have all responded to, but apart from that, we have not had any reviews of anything within the agency.

Ms CARNEY: Madam Speaker, I do have many other questions, but we have run out time. Thank you to your wonderful staff, and everyone else here, I know, have prepared in great detail over a long period of time for this two hour session. Thank you very much.

Mr CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the committee, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you as well for attending, and I would also like to thank the staff of the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

Madam SPEAKER: I would like to place my thanks on the record to the staff too, who do a terrific job for all of us. Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The Estimates Committee is going to have a quick meeting about one issue now, and we will immediately commence on our return with the Treasurer.

The committee suspended.

NORTHERN TERRITORY TREASURY

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We reconvene the Estimates Committee. I welcome the Treasurer and staff. Before I go further though, for the purposes of *Hansard*, I just would like to record that the member for Nelson has been replaced on the committee by the member for Braiiting.

I also advise that the Estimates Committee received a request from minister McAdam to appear before the committee on the evening of Wednesday 27th instead of Thursday 28th. Minister Vatskalis who was to appear on the evening of the 27th will take minister McAdam's place on Thursday 28th. That change has been approved by the Estimates Committee.

Mrs BRAHAM: Mr McAdam will be appearing tomorrow night?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

Welcome, Treasurer. I invite you to introduce the officials accompanying you and to make an opening statement if you wish. I just remind officials, before you speak, to announce your name for *Hansard* so that it is clear who is speaking. I ask everyone in the room to switch your mobile phone to silent, or switch them off please.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I would like to make a brief opening statement in relation to my responsibility as Treasurer. This covers questions to relating to Treasury, the Central Holding Authority and the Northern Territory Treasury Corporation.

I have with me the Under Treasurer of the Northern Territory, Jennifer Prince; and other senior Treasury staff. Witnesses include Mr Tony Stubbin, Assistant Under Treasurer; Ms Jodie Kirkman, Assistant Under Treasurer; Mr Craig Vukman, Executive Director of Revenue; and Mr Alex Pollon, Acting General Manager, Northern Territory Treasury Corporation. As we progress through, I will introduce other Treasury witnesses who may be required for individual output areas.

The estimates process is now embedded as an important method to achieve greater government transparency and accountability. It is the sixth accrual budget presented by the government with agency information disaggregated by output classification.

Budget Paper No 2 provides whole-of-government financial information. It includes the Territory's consolidated financial statements according to the requirements of the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act*. It contains an overview of the fiscal strategy underlying the 2007-08 Budget, and an analysis of the Territory's financial position and outlook. It also includes summary details on the Northern Territory economy, the budget initiatives, Territory revenue, and commercial issues impacting on government finances.

Budget Paper No 3 presents agency-based budget information for all agencies subject to the *Financial Management Act* as well as detailed information on Territory revenue.

Budget Paper No 4 provides details on government's capital works and infrastructure expenditure.

The budget-related books include a comprehensive report on the Territory economy as well as a budget overview, regional highlights and the business book.

As Treasurer, I will address a number of issues from a whole-of-government perspective, including financial and accounting policy issues applying to the 2007-08 Budget; requirements of the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act* including financial statements for the general government and non-financial public sectors in the fiscal strategy; whole-of-government financial issues including relevant parameters, debt and liabilities, revenue including taxes, royalties and GST; revenue measures in the 2007-08 Budget; and community service obligations and dividends.

I will also address any issues in relation to the overall cash and program position of the infrastructure budget. Details on individual projects are the responsibility of the Infrastructure minister and portfolio ministers.

As shareholding minister for Power and Water, I will address issues in the budget that affect Power and Water including CSO payments to limit electricity and water tariffs; and dividends and tax equivalent payments made by Power and Water. Operational or other policy questions should be directed to the Power and Water representatives who will appear before the Government-Owned Corporations Scrutiny committee.

Mr Chairman, I am happy to answer any questions from the committee relating to the responsibility for the Appropriation Bill and Budget Papers, and for the Northern Territory Treasury, the Central Holding Authority and the Northern Territory Treasury Corporation.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Treasurer. Are there any questions relating to the Treasurer's statement?

Mr MILLS: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman. I have a few questions. First, welcome, Treasurer and I acknowledge the senior public servants who are represented here. For all public servants, I am aware and humbled by the amount of work that has gone on in preparation for Estimates. It has come to my notice as I go around that there is a significant amount of work, and from opposition, we have a responsibility to make inquiries. So the line of questioning, hopefully, will advance the best interests of the Territory to ensure that we are aware of where we are going and how we are going to get there.

To start, though, Treasurer, I trust that you and I have developed a relationship over the years working in this capacity that we would be dealing with overall and general matters to start with, and then we could probably, as far as I am concerned, then travel fairly quickly through the list once some of those broader issues have been dealt with. I will not seek to do all of that at the beginning just to leave some time for other members who want to inquire on general matters.

First up, Treasurer, since 2001, what do you understand to be the population increase, percentage terms?

Mr STIRLING: Thanks, member for Blain, and thank you for your acknowledgement of the effort required in terms of preparation. Treasury being the major agency, but indeed, all agencies go through a great level of preparation. Thank you for that acknowledgement.

Population as enumerated most recently by the first release of the 2006 Census was 212 550-odd, but I just need to check the 2001 figure. Mr Stubbin is working through it.

Mr MILLS: I did not mean to start with a hard one.

Mr STIRLING: Good question. 198 000.

Mr MILLS: So the question is, the increase since 2001 in percentage terms I guess to be about 4.5% to 5% increase since 2001. Would that be correct? No, not correct.

Mr STIRLING: Seven.

Mr MILLS: Seven per cent, okay. Thank you. What would you acknowledge to be the increase in your own taxing effort since 2001? Since 2001, the increase in your own source revenue in percentage terms?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I thank the member for Blain for his question. The tax effort by this government on Territorians, in terms of the number of taxes applied, the rates at which they are applied, have all been going and trending down. A number of taxes have been removed, including taxes that will disappear on 1 July this year, as a result of the intergovernmental agreement around the introduction of the new tax system.

Mr MILLS: We will talk about that later.

Mr STIRLING: No, but you asked the question.

Mr MILLS: No, with respect, the question was, what is the increase since 2001?

Mr STIRLING: Well, I am telling you, there has been a decrease. I am telling you there has been a decrease in the number of taxes and the rates at which they apply. Do you want the detail, or are you happy to look up the budget papers yourself on that?

Mr MILLS: Treasurer, all I am asking for is, in 2001, your tax take as a Territory government, compared with what it is now. You can then tell the story about the economic increase and all the wonderful things that occur. All I want is the percentage increase between 2001 and now.

Mr STIRLING: Well, I will tell you the tax cuts since August 2001, because your question is based on a false premise. Now, the idea of this exercise is to scrutinise the budget. You cannot put a statement on the table that we have increased taxes, take that as read, and for me to answer that, because it is a falsely-based question.

Mr MILLS: Well, is it the same premise, with respect ...

Mr STIRLING: Now, in answer to the question, in 2002-03 payroll tax reduced from 6.5% to 6.3%. We removed stamp duty on wet hire.

Mr MILLS: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Mr STIRLING: We increased the stamp duty first home owner concession ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Treasurer, sorry, there has been a point of order.

Mr MILLS: If the premise upon which was based the preceding question with regard to population was accepted, surely the second question with regard to the increase since 2001 to now should stand; same premise. You are playing games.

Mr STIRLING: We have been the most ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Treasurer, there is no point of order, member for Blain. The Treasurer has discretion on how he wishes to answer the question and how much information. I will leave it to the Treasurer's discretion.

Mr MILLS: It is an honest and open question.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, he cannot say: 'How much have you increased taxes', when we have been the most tax reforming government in the Territory's history. I am prepared to put on the record all of the taxes that we have reduced and/or abolished, including right through to 2008-09, the last one is adjusted, and so the question is wrong.

Dr LIM: The question is wrong? You mean you cannot answer it.

Mr STIRLING: The question is wrong – how much have you increased taxes? We have reduced them across the board. We have abolished taxes. Where payroll tax is still in place, we have reduced the rate; we have increased the threshold from \$600 000 that you blokes had to \$1.25m, knocking out very, very many small and medium sized enterprises from paying it at all.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Treasurer, I will break in there. Members, I have recognised the member for Blain as asking questions, and until he indicates that he is finished, or will allow someone else to ask questions, the questions will come from him. I will ask all members for their cooperation not to break in with questions of their own while the member for Blain is asking his questions.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Treasurer, I have the figures, and I was wondering whether you were aware of the increased revenue that has flowed to the Northern Territory government since 2001? You obviously are, and are therefore sensitive. I gave you the opportunity to defend it by saying there has been stimulated growth in the Territory and so on – that is fine. However, the fact is that there has been an increase in the taxing capacity of the Territory government. Is that not the case?

Mr STIRLING: No, it is not. Greater revenue stems from greater economic activity. Your question assumes and puts a false premise that this government has increased taxes. It has not. It has reduced or abolished taxes right across the board. If there is greater revenue coming

through those taxes that are still on the books, it is as a result of economic growth out there in the community, of more people in more jobs. Greater economic growth produces, of course, greater revenue flows.

Mr MILLS: I accept that, and I did have that contained within my first attempt to have this question answered. What has been the increase in revenue ...

Mr STIRLING: Okay, I am happy to take that question.

Mr MILLS: ... flow to the Territory since 2001? Population, you have told me, has increased by 7%.

Mr STIRLING: If you ask the right question, you will get an answer.

Mr MILLS: Well, that was the same question.

Mr STIRLING: No, it is not. It is not the same question at all. We are getting the answer for you.

Mr MILLS: We have a crowd of witnesses here, but nonetheless, I judge it to be the same question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Treasurer and member for Blain, it is not going to assist the process if you two want to keep sniping at each other. The question was asked and the answer is being looked up. If we can leave it to the question and answers, thank you.

Mr MILLS: I would accept that. It would be great. I honestly did not think we were going to have this sort of rocky start.

Mr STIRLING: In 2001-02, \$216m; unsourced revenue in 2006-07 extrapolated to the end of financial year will be \$354m.

Mr MILLS: In percentage terms, though?

Mr STIRLING: If we take 2007-08, the estimate \$362m would be a 67% increase.

Mr MILLS: The increase in GST over the same period: what in percentage terms since 2001 to now? Just to assist the crunching of numbers, I calculate it to be somewhere in the order of 50% increase since 2001. I wonder whether members concur. I do not want us to have to set homework here.

Mr STIRLING: In 2000-01, \$1118m; in 2007-08 the estimate will be \$2015m, which is an increase of around 80%.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Treasurer. All of these are indications of growth and development within the Northern Territory. I wanted to place those at the beginning. As population has increased, our taxing capacity as a Territory through Treasury and government has increased, and GST revenues flowing into the Territory has also increased. Population, we accept, has increased by 7%, the own source revenue by 67% over the same period, and GST by 80%. From that basis, can you tell me your take on the current nett debt situation?

Mr STIRLING: The best way to look at a nett debt is as a percentage of revenue. So nett debt plus employee liabilities gives you the most complete picture as a percentage of revenue in that financial year. I will just get the comparisons. We have a one page on it just to give you an idea of how it is trending and where we estimate it to be at the end of the forward estimates period.

If we go back to 2001-02 - and this is the most complete picture because we put nett debt plus all the employee liabilities that are there as a percentage of the total revenue in that financial year - so 2001-02 is 134%; 2002-03 is 131%; 2003-04 is 118%; 2004-05 is 124%; 2005-06 is 112%; 2006-07 is 116%; 2007-08 is 116%; 2008-09 is 115%; 2009-10 is 114%; and 2010-11 is 110%. So we are tracking in the right direction from a high of 134% in 2001-02.

Other states were able to make quite dramatic improvements in these levels over the years as a result of the sell-off of government assets and entities, and privatising power, and all the sorts of things that for good reason the Territory chose either not do, or simply did not have the assets to improve their bottom line. But the trend is clear in the forward estimates and the production of the last four budgets in surplus helped to reduce that over time, notwithstanding that we forecast modest deficits through that time.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Treasurer. We will go further into that later on. The document you just referred to, I find interesting. It is possible to have that tabled?

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Treasurer, with those figures on the table - 7% increase in population, nearly 70% own-source revenue increase and tax take, 80% increase in GST revenues flowing to the Territory, you will understand, would you not, why I described the budget as one where a diver on a board had the potential of doing an extraordinary feat. With all those factors going in your favour why was it such a modest and conservative approach?

Mr STIRLING: That is commentary; that is not a question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I might also make the point that this is in relation to the Treasurer's statement. That sort of question can come under whole-of-government ...

Mr MILLS: But that is what we do with it, at the beginning in Treasury.

Mr CHAIRMAN: In relation to the Treasurer's point, if there was a question could you restate it a question?

Mr MILLS: Okay, I will leave it at that. I want to, with the Treasurer's consent, go into some more housekeeping-type questions with regards to the department, to Treasury. I note that the staffing levels have decreased from 255 to 180. Do I understand that that is a result of Racing and Gaming moves?

Mr STIRLING: Primarily that would be the bigger shift. If there is other detail around that I will ask the Under Treasurer.

Mr MILLS: Okay.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, 47 full-time equivalents transferred from Treasury to the Department of Justice associated with the Racing, Gaming and Licensing transfer. Would you like any other details on Treasury staffing?

Mr MILLS: So that 47 - I just have to do my sums here - gives you the 180?

Ms PRINCE: You will find that our staff estimates can vary by plus or minus 20 through the year. As you know, in Treasury we have a large graduate intake program. In this year, we had 20 graduates who were recruited into Treasury so we had an increase in our staffing numbers associated with that. We will see that number decline through the year as part of our normal replacement of staff and then our vacancies will be taken by those graduates. We do have quite significant variations through the year. We work on an average full-time equivalent through the year as our average that we are seeking to observe.

Mr MILLS: Through the Treasurer, I applaud the investment in our young in the Territory, the graduate program through Treasury. Do I understand that there are 20 currently?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we recruited 20 at the beginning of the year. One of those has left us to return to Adelaide. His father was very sick. We have 19 at present.

Mr MILLS: And last year, how many were recruited?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, seven last year and that lower number was associated not with any attempt on our part to limit the number of graduate intakes, but simply that was the number that we were able to recruit in the areas of discipline that we were interested in.

Mr MILLS: How many of those seven are still there?

Ms PRINCE: I think it is six.

Mr MILLS: That is good.

Ms PRINCE: Yes, we find that more than half of our graduates stay for at least five years and most of our promotions from within Treasury are actually from our graduates over the period of their employment with us.

Mr MILLS: I just wonder in the room do we have any who came in as graduates who are current ...

Ms PRINCE: There are many of them nodding, including one at the table.

Mr MILLS: Excellent! Welcome. Can you explain how it is that with the efforts that you described, seven were recruited last year and you managed now to get more than double that, to 20? How did that occur?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, it is hard to say. We do quite a lot of analysis of our recruitment program and we find, as I think many other agencies do, that it is difficult to always determine which are the most successful recruitment areas. We have a number of criteria that we use when we are recruiting graduates. We have selected disciplines that we are particularly interested in. This year, surprisingly, we got more lawyers and economists than we have done in previous years. More often than not we get more finance and accounting graduates than we have. We try to recruit as many who are r locals who have studied elsewhere or who have studied at CDU. We tend to find that on average, we recruit about 50% who are local and 50% who come here from other locations. I cannot tell you absolutely why we were more successful this year, but we took this many and we will take as many as we can get because the numbers were unfortunately a little lower last year. We try to take between 10 and 12; that is our average.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Treasurer. I visited the Treasury building on a couple of occasions last year and years before, and I noticed that there are a lot of people working there. Do you have other accommodation now since my last visit mid last year? Have you expanded?

Mr STIRLING: Not to my knowledge. I will check with the Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, yes, there has been one change since you would have visited us. The Superannuation Office was previously located in Enterprise House, however, because of some moves of other agencies, we have been able to move them into Cavenagh House, and so we are all now located in that one location.

Mr MILLS: So, the 47 who transferred from Treasury have created some space?

Ms PRINCE: The 47 who transferred were also located in Enterprise House, and I believe most of them have actually stayed there, so that the space was transferred to the Department of Justice in addition to the staff.

Mr STIRLING: They were not in the Treasury building. RGL had their own place.

Mr MILLS: I will go down to another level of housekeeping. What amount in the total appropriation for Treasury goes to the input Corporate and Executive Services?

Ms PRINCE: We do not have the actual expenses allocation of Corporate. We can get that. The information that we have is by output, as you know. Of our staff, about 35 are included in Corporate, that estimate though includes a number of senior staff, myself, the Deputy Under Treasurer, one of our Assistant Under Treasurers, as well as our secretariat staff and the traditional Corporate Services staff.

Mr MILLS: So, out of the total appropriation, maybe you can take it on notice, the amount ...

Ms PRINCE: We can get that for you within half an hour.

Mr MILLS: Sure. Corporate and Executive Services – the portion of the total allocation going to that input.

Now to another level – cleaning. Do you have contract cleaners or do you have those who are in the building doing the cleaning? Graduates, perhaps?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, my understanding is that cleaning costs are associated with the lease of the property, and that is managed by Properties. We do not arrange the cleaners ourselves, and nor do we have FOITs cleaning.

Mr MILLS: Would the cost of the cleaning be carried within your own appropriation, and accounted for?

Ms PRINCE: No. If it is a cost that is managed by Properties, as is the leasing cost, then it would be included in the Properties allocation of DCIS.

Mr MILLS: Right. There is no reference within your accounting systems, or within the accounting systems of Treasury, to account for cleaning costs?

Ms PRINCE: Not if those costs are organised for particular buildings by the Properties Division of DCIS.

Mr MILLS: Would I expect that to be the same system for other agencies and departments?

Ms PRINCE: It is usually the case for leased buildings; it may vary for owned buildings. However, it will generally be arranged on a building-by-building basis.

Mr MILLS: And maintenance, I presume, would be the same?

Ms PRINCE: It depends on the categories of maintenance. There are some minor elements that are not borne by the property owner that each agency would bear. If you like, we can provide you with the allocation for maintenance that Treasury is given.

Mr MILLS: Thank you.

Ms PRINCE: \$40 000.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. What is the cost of office rental?

Ms PRINCE: For our offices?

Mr MILLS: Yes.

Ms PRINCE: Again, that is a cost that is borne within the Properties budget of the Department of Corporate and Information Services.

Mr MILLS: So, that is a question that we would have answered by going to that minister?

Ms PRINCE: Yes, and they can provide you with a list of the rental information for all the properties leased by government. That is done centrally.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Treasurer, how much of the total appropriation for the output group goes towards the cost of advertising? What are the design and production costs of radio, television, newspaper, magazine and any other media?

Mr STIRLING: Very modest, member for Blain, but we will get that for you. If you want to describe the budget as conservative, I can tell you when it comes to costs, you ain't seen nothing when it comes to Treasury and conservatism.

The Under Treasurer is getting more information, Mr Chairman. The document production for promotional material: Treasury spent \$300 000 on document production including an accrual amount for 2007-08 Budget papers and associated budget communication material; and incurred

producing official publications: budget papers, Treasurer's Annual Financial Report, mid-year report, superannuation schemes annual report, payroll tax monthly and annual returns packages, Northern Territory Treasury Annual Report. Other document production expenses in that: notices in the *Government Gazette*; printing of revenue acts; printing of stamp duty lodgement forms; production of *Home Incentives for Territorians* brochures; printing of Treasury Corporate stationery letterhead, file covers, and business cards; Census brochures; and the Indigenous Expenditure Review Report.

Mr MILLS: And that totals?

Ms PRINCE: If I could add that the other promotional material, other than the budget material, in 2006-07 amounted to approximately \$70 000.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. When you say 'other', can you help me get an idea what the other refers to?

Ms PRINCE: The 'other' relates to any promotion of Treasury at local shows, careers fairs, support for the 2006 Census - which was quite significant, sponsorship of things like the Institute of Professional Administration conference in Alice Springs - those sorts of things.

Mr MILLS: Yes sure, thank you. The advertising that bears the photograph of the minister, are you able to sift that out?

Mr STIRLING: I would be surprised if there was any, Mr Chairman, but I will ask the Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: For Treasury, there was no advertising with the Treasurer's photograph that I am aware of and do not think his photograph is included in any budget papers.

Mr STIRLING: It is not a good look, they decided!

Mr MILLS: We are trying to sell the budget, aren't we? So zero?

Ms PRINCE: As far as we know.

Mr MILLS: Postage costs associated with mass communication with Territorians, and what is the cost of letter box drops?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, there would not be any against Treasury as far as we know. Any direct mail outs and information that emanated from my office would be inside the Chief Minister's budget line.

Mr MILLS: Okay. The stuff that we receive in our letter boxes promoting the budget and all the wonderful things that are occurring for you, do not come from Treasury; they come from the Chief Minister, correct? Okay, thank you. So, zero from Treasury.

How much of the total appropriation, minister, for the output group goes toward the cost of media liaison and monitoring?

Mr STIRLING: I will ask the Under Treasurer to answer that.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we do not bear any costs associated with media liaison or monitoring. Any of that work is done through the Treasurer's office or the Department of the Chief Minister. We have a small communications group. Their role is to provide assistance and involvement in production of printed material, such as budget papers, Treasurer's Annual Financial Reports, media reports, and so on. They arrange any other ad placements; they assist with Treasury displays at the show, and so on.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, I understand that. Treasurer, are you able to advise how many are in the communications group and the appropriation while we are at it? The allocation for that input.

Mr STIRLING: I will ask the Under Treasurer to answer that.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we have three staff in our communications area plus one person whose role it is to manage our own IT services and the communications group, so about 3.5 full time equivalents. Their funding allocation is included in the Corporate group and we will identify that in the additional information we are getting you.

Mr MILLS: Can you explain to me how they sit within the organisation? Who do they report to directly?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, the three people in the communications area report to a manager who is in charge of our own IT support network and communications, and in turn, that person reports to our Acting Assistant Under Treasurer responsible for Corporate and Superannuation. Would you like that person's name?

Mr MILLS: That is all right. I just work out the structure, write them a Christmas card or something, it is just ...

Ms PRINCE: We could give you an organisation chart.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. So there is no media monitoring or transcribing services that are utilised by Treasury?

Ms PRINCE: No, Mr Mills.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Reviews: what is the total cost of conducting reviews? That is probably a difficult question.

Mr STIRLING: Well, yes. Do you want to give us any detail about what reviews?

Mr MILLS: Yes, okay. I will put it around the other way. Can you give me the details of ongoing and current reviews?

Mr STIRLING: Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, I am not sure that I would be able to do that. Quite a lot of our role in Treasury, as you know, is to review expenses, to review proposals. That is a part of our ongoing work. I can, however, give you expenditure on consultants that we may have engaged to help us with particular tasks.

Mr MILLS: Yes, I was going to get there. My question is probably imprecise, that being reviews that are to be reported publicly. I can understand that the organisation would have any number of internal reviews, but reviews that will be reported publicly.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, even then - I mean, I might ask Treasury to do a body of work that might encompass some form of review, that may or may not translate to a Cabinet submission, and then ultimately a Cabinet decision, at which time that might become public, the information that was found. It may not get to a Cabinet submission. Cabinet might reject it and so the information is not public. So it is almost hypothetical. I am not trying to be evasive; it is just business between the Treasurer and Treasury. Treasury undertake their own, of course, in terms of advice to the Treasurer, some of which might never be public, some of which may be commercially confidential.

Mr MILLS: I need to go back to this time last year. There was a list provided, a description of reviews. I understand what you are speaking about, Treasurer.

Mr STIRLING: Let us have a look at that list from last year, Mr Chairman, and we will get more of a handle of where you are going.

Mr MILLS: Consultants, then.

Mr STIRLING: That was the consultants, probably.

Mr MILLS: No, I will go to consultants.

Mr STIRLING: But that list was probably consultants, not reviews.

Mr MILLS: Possibly tied to it, but I think I am satisfied that I have that question, which may bring in some of the issues that I want to investigate later. In the area of consultants, how many were appointed?

Mr STIRLING: Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: I have the whole list here, Mr Mills.

Mr MILLS: All right.

Ms PRINCE: I will just count them up if you like?

Mr MILLS: Well, I can count them.

Ms PRINCE: Okay. We spent \$1.8m and we had in – this is during 2006-07 to 31 May and the purposes of those consultancies on the list – there would be about 15 of them.

Mr MILLS: So the purposes are there?

Ms PRINCE: Yes.

Mr MILLS: How they were appointed, is that information included on the list?

Ms PRINCE: No, it is not, but with all of our consultants we go through a process of the usual procurement which could be choosing from a panel, using Certificates of Exemption if there are particular areas of expertise that are required. One of these consultancies is with the Charles Darwin University and we do that under the Partnership Agreement with the CDU.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Might I have that document tabled? Thank you. So out of the total appropriation, what goes towards the cost of staffing? Include the number of full-time equivalents and number of employees at each level.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, could I clarify whether you were seeking information for 2006-07 or 2007-08?

Mr MILLS: 2006-07.

Ms PRINCE: Our estimate for 2006-07 for employee expenses is \$16.327m. We believe we might be slightly under that estimate at 30 June 2007. I have a summary of the classification by category and by gender, which I could table.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. This might be a tricky one - total appropriation that goes towards the cost of airfares, and specifically airfares between Darwin and Alice Springs? I am happy to take that on notice.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we do have our estimate of intra-Territory fares, and that is \$20 000. I think it would be fair to say that almost all of that is between Darwin and Alice Springs.

Mr MILLS: That is airfares is it, or is it ...

Ms PRINCE: Airfares.

Mr MILLS: Okay, \$20 000, that is 2006-07?

Ms PRINCE: That is our estimate, yes.

Mr MILLS: I would just like to go to some environmental issues as they relate to this department. How much of the total appropriation of the output group goes towards greenhouse gas reduction strategies?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, I do not know that we can give you an estimate of that. What I can say is, we have spent some considerable effort over the last five years conforming with the government's energy management plan where we have made a conscious effort to reduce our electricity usage in both buildings that we previously occupied, so in Enterprise House as well as Cavenagh House. We have put timed switches on all of our conference rooms; our lights automatically go off in the building at 6.00 at night, although on a number of floors we have had to extend that until 7.00 pm.

Mr MILLS: Recent times?

Ms PRINCE: No, quite some years ago. Again, those sorts of costs are often borne centrally or by some other mechanism, but we have made a conscious effort to also reduce other environmental areas of concern. Our paper usage - we report on that now in our annual report. We are attempting to reduce that wherever possible.

Mr MILLS: Are you informed of your progress in these matters?

Ms PRINCE: Yes, Mr Mills we are, not on a monthly basis, but we review our own building and our allocation of lighting and other things, usually on an annual basis, and with the assistance of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr MILLS: So how is Treasury going?

Ms PRINCE: As part of the energy management plan, there are a number of criteria that are established for particular agencies and target reduction. The last time we reviewed it, we had met all of our production requirements. We continue to look for other opportunities.

Mr MILLS: Who issues the energy management plan?

Ms PRINCE: There is a group, as part of the Construction Division. They are known as the GEMP group – Government Energy Management Plan.

Mr MILLS: How long ago was the plan devised for Treasury?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, I cannot you give a precise date, but I know that we have been reviewing it and observing the requirements for at least five years. We have two areas of interest: Treasury as an agency as well as some whole-of-government considerations from a capital works planning point of view.

Mr MILLS: The Territory government has committed itself to a 1.5% reduction in emissions from NT government commercial buildings for the end of June 2007. You have described adjustments that have been made within your operation. Would you say that you are on track to assist and reaching that target?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, I am not sure what contribution Treasury makes to the total, but we have, as you know, less than 200 staff in 15 000. Therefore, our contribution would be small. What I do know - and I have not seen an updated report from the Energy Management Group recently - is we take our own emissions reduction seriously.

Mr MILLS: Sure, thank you. Now to my last question in the general area – and thank you for those; that puts all those questions of that type aside. With regard to the announcement that was made by the Prime Minister on Friday, can you advise me of perceived impact upon the Territory budget flowing from that decision?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, it is difficult at this stage, given the lack of detail flowing from the Commonwealth. Whilst individual ministers have been linking up with their federal counterparts, things are still quite fluid in the implementation of what really has been, I guess, a broad brush, and relying on information coming from the Prime Minister and minister Brough. I do need to say at the outset, though, that we do welcome the focus on the whole issue from the federal government.

In each of our discussions with our federal counterparts, we are stressing that what is put in place in response to the views coming from the Commonwealth need to be practical, effective and,

most importantly, need to be sustained; that is, that the spotlight is not put on this for six months, one year, and then swept away and focus lost, because that generally seems to have been the trend of responses wherever this has occurred and been picked up in Australia in the past.

We do not have a view at all as to what costs might be borne by the 2007-08 budget until we get far greater detail from the Commonwealth. We know, for example, the extra police have been picked up by the Commonwealth. I guess we can just work on matters as they translate into more concrete reality and implementation, as to who picks up what cost. Generally, the Commonwealth has been saying that, in the main, they will pick up the costs.

Mr MILLS: Just for the public record - and I am very aware that it is early days - can you describe the mechanisms that would already be in place to prepare to analyse potential impact on the Northern Territory budget?

Mr STIRLING: Well, it is a matter of seeing the detail of the plans. The Northern Territory government is, of course, working closely with the Australian government. As I said, three of our ministers had a phone link yesterday. I spoke with Attorney-General Ruddock on another matter in and around the pornography issue yesterday. However, it is just too early. The Northern Territory government will stand by regarding reasonable costs where they accrued by the Northern Territory government. We always expected that there would be costs to the Northern Territory government in relation to our own response. Our own response, in general terms, was probably not going to be that much different from what the Commonwealth is putting on the table now. It is just a process of working through. I am not being evasive; it is just impossible to say.

Mr MILLS: You expect it is going to be a greater impost upon the Territory budget than you have currently provided for?

Mr STIRLING: In commissioning the report, we knew that there would be recommendations; recommendations invariably bring costs. The government was prepared from the outset for additional costs against Budget 2007-08. Government is always prepared for unforeseen, as you are aware anyway, and in this case was prepared in and around this case apart from the normal contingency anyway. We will continue to work with the Commonwealth to translate the detail of the implementation and what costs are shared and what costs are borne by the Territory.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Treasurer. I would presume from that, and it is a sincere question, whether the capacity that you have envisaged as a response to the report would be sufficient at this early stage to accommodate any additional response that may be required from this whole action of the Prime Minister?

Mr STIRLING: Well, I expect so. I mean, you can take a punt at these things. We had a view that the report would bring recommendations at a cost. So a sum was put there. Always prepared and still prepared to put that in. We have an overlay, if you like, in response from the Commonwealth, most of which would have been wrapped up in our own response anyway. Now it is a matter of working out how do we complement the effort, we do not expect the Commonwealth to come in and do everything here. It was our report. We are prepared to respond to our report by way of financial and resourcing; always expected to do that. So it is a matter of working with the Commonwealth until we have a clearer view.

Mr MILLS: In preparing for, and I understand the role of Treasury is to prepare for these contingencies, your response or anticipated response to the recommendations, in any event, do they have a price tag? Have you calculated a provisional amount that could be reserved as a means to respond to the report?

Mr STIRLING: We just made sure the normal contingency fund in the budget process would take account of the fact that there would be expenditure accruing from implementation of recommendations of the report. So there is a sum which covers all emergencies.

Mr MILLS: Understand. I do not have details to mind of the contingency fund. Are you able to advise the amount that the contingency fund is able to accommodate?

Mr STIRLING: We put aside every budget year and you do know, in fact, that there is an amount allocated.

Mr MILLS: I do. I am quite genuinely saying I do not recall what.

Mr STIRLING: It is in the order to \$20m to \$30m each year, and this year I think it is \$40m.

Mr MILLS: \$40m. Thank you.

Mr Chairman, thank you for that. I do not have any more general questions. The member for Braintree was chomping at the bit a bit earlier on.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I might just say we seemed to have rolled from questions relating to the statement into item 1 whole-of-government questions, budget and fiscal strategies. I am not sure if that was your intention.

Mr MILLS: As was done in the last few years, early on we deal with things that are ...

A member: A point of order, it was not on last year.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, you rolled into it and I will allow the same latitude to the member for Braintree in her question.

Mr MILLS: I have no objections.

Mrs BRAHAM: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I thank the Treasurer for his opening statement. With the increase in the population that has been identified in the Northern Territory, obviously we were talking about increase in funding from the Commonwealth, has that been written into the 2007-08 Budget? As I recall, that was notified after you brought the budget down. If so, what sort of increase did that have on the budget, or is it something that will come ...?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, thanks member for Braintree. No, it is not in the figures because the information was known too late, after the production of the budget. \$31m is estimated to be now factored in from the Commonwealth and, importantly, in there every year because our population base is now a new base. Unfortunately, it is recognised that that population increase did not happen in the last few days of Census time 2006; it was an accumulation between 2001 and 2006. If you want to be strict about this, the Commonwealth should back pay portions of that all the way through because nearly 4000 people did not turn up whenever the Census was last year, August last year. They were building over that five year period, but the Commonwealth does not back pay so the Territory forgoes that revenue but, importantly, that extra \$31m is now in our base, will be in 2006-07, 2007-08 and going forth.

Mrs BRAHAM: So it is in the 2006-07 year. Has that been put included in the budget papers for this year?

Mr STIRLING: No.

Mrs BRAHAM: It is not actually in there, so there may be a surplus or something that we are not aware of?

Mr STIRLING: We may well track for a very modest surplus. We forecast deficit of \$56m at the outset. We improved that mid-year, but we may well have a modest surplus and it will be a good thing to have because it will make five, I think, consecutive surplus budgets for the Northern Territory.

Mrs BRAHAM: So coming to the surplus, I noticed also that your borrowing has increased over the years and that it is estimated to be quite considerable this financial year. Could you tell me [inaudible] from the increase in the debt level that you had, say, five years ago and what it is now?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, I touched on nett debt plus employee liabilities earlier. I will get the figures, just the nett debt figures going forward. The borrowings that you have seen over the past few years have invariably been refinancing of existing debt. That is, as loans have matured and are required to be paid back, but you still need the money so you refinance the loan for another however many years you get the loan for. Any increase this year - Power and Water, of course, have announced over five years a quite massive capital works program and there will be increased

borrowings to put against that over the forward estimate period as well. I will quickly run down these figures of nett debt.

Mrs BRAHAM: Can I just ask when we look at the borrowings and the nett debt, is it sustainable?

Mr STIRLING: Sorry, member for Braitling?

Mrs BRAHAM: I was just going to say: with the increase in debt and the increase in borrowing, is it sustainable or is it a risk for the Territory?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, very much sustainable, and I think by pointing out the best measure is not so much the raw figure of what nett debt or even nett debt plus employee liabilities might be. If you take them as a percentage of the revenue coming in to the Territory over any year, you then get an idea of how big it is, rather than, whether it is \$1400m or \$1700m, can be a bit meaningless. As I have pointed out, in 2001-02, that nett debt plus employee liabilities to revenue stood at 134%. This year, it stands at 116%, on track to be 110% in financial year 2010-11. So that is probably as good a measure as you can get. It is comparable to across other jurisdictions, but it is also a measure of how large it is in terms of your revenue, so the raw figures themselves do not really get you there. In 2000-01, it was \$1481m; in 2001-02 it was \$1753m; 2002-03 it was \$1723m; 2003-04 it was \$1656m; the same again in 2004-05; \$1595m in 2005-06; and \$1693m in 2007-08.

Now, if you put nett debt plus employee liabilities in there, you get a much more quickly growing figure, because we know that the recalculations around superannuation entitlements have jumped dramatically, hundreds of millions of dollars over the last few years.

Mrs BRAHAM: So, with the increase in money from the Commonwealth, have you any indication of where they will be allocated, or will it be to reduce debt, or will it be in the general budget?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, in relation to the \$31m, that is a cost per capita against the population increase in the recognition that that is at the heart of the distribution of the common wealth of Australia as realised in the GST, that side of the revenue at least. That extra population demands extra services, demands extra costs. So, it is not as if, whoopee, hit the town, we have \$31m to tuck against debt, or to simply pay off debt, because you get that money to provide a service to the population. If your population is increasing, you get more money to provide that service, but you cannot turn your back in the sense that you are servicing costs of an increasing population are going to continue to increase. Notwithstanding that, the decision was made this financial year to put \$60m away against future liabilities on that employee liabilities, which, of course, have been unfunded forever and remain a liability to this government and, indeed, future governments. That is the start of what we will continue to try to do each year: put money away against those entitlements accruing into the future.

Mrs BRAHAM: So you are basically saying that that you are fairly comfortable at the moment. I guess I was a little surprised. I thought in the budget there might have been a bit more of a slash and burn. You have increased the cost of the power, and you have reduced some of the stamp duties. Are there any other increases in the budget of costs?

Mr STIRLING: There were adjustments to charges around planning fees, inside Lands and Planning. That, and power, water and sewerage increases are the only increases.

The comment about slash and burn, Mr Chairman, just to pick up, there was commentary and speculation over the latter part of the last financial year that public service numbers were too large. When you look at the areas in which the increases have largely gone, and that is police, health, doctors, teachers to an extent - although some of them have come back out of the system - they are critical service delivery areas, and the growth in those key service delivery areas has been much stronger. In fact, we are seeing reducing numbers in other parts of the service which suggests that growth is about delivering services, not just a fat and bloated public sector, which some critics like the Chamber of Commerce, like to point out.

We have said quite clearly that there will be growth again this next financial year, if only for the fact that we are committed to 100 extra public sector trainees, all of which, of course, will require

supervision and training; the idea being that government is bound to contribute to the training effort across the Northern Territory.

Mrs BRAHAM: Mr Chairman, if I went on, I would be going into areas that we are probably going to cover anyway. I will leave it at that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions relating to the minister's statement?

Whole of Government Questions - Budget and Fiscal Strategies

Mr CHAIRMAN: If not, then formally, we will go into the Whole of Government Questions - Budget and Fiscal Strategies. Are there further questions?

Mr Mills: No.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Whole of Government issues.

OUTPUT GROUP 1.0 – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Output 1.1 – Financial Management

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now proceed to consider the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2007-08 as they relate to NT Treasury. I now call for questions on Output 1.1 - Financial Management. Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: Yes, Mr Chairman. Questions related to responses to stamp duty reform and the like – is it in this output or would it be safe to put it in Territory Revenue? Are you happy for me to put it in this output?

Mr STIRLING: The committee is happy.

Mr MILLS: Very accommodating. We have some other minister who ...

Mr STIRLING: Just ask the questions and we will deal with it.

Mr MILLS: Okay, I will proceed. I note, as we all have acknowledged, the success of the Goods and Services Tax and the money that has flowed into the Northern Territory, as indicated by a previous answer to the – I have it written down – 80% increase from when it started, which is significant growth. There has been an agreement to abolish a range of duties and taxes. I understand in that agreement all but one have received an agreement from the states to a timetable of abolition. Is that correct?

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Can you tell me what that one is?

Mr STIRLING: The federal Treasurer believes – I do not think he maintains there was ever an agreement - but he states that stamp duty on non-residential conveyance ought be removed by the states and territories. However, it says nothing in relation to the sort of hole that would leave in state and territory budgets, and no mention of any way around that. The states and territories have a view that they can remove the non-land component of such a conveyance and put that in around the forward estimates. The federal Treasurer has been silent on the matter since budget time, but I do not suspect it has gone away as an issue.

I wanted to pick up on the comments made by the member for Blain about the revenue flowing from the GST. It is true that the GST has been a growth tax for the states and territories, as they always claim they needed and wanted. If we take this chart here, in 2000-01, there was \$27.2bn flowing to the states and territories. That has grown to this year, 2007-08, to \$41.9bn. However, I draw your attention, member for Blain, to the growth in Commonwealth revenues. This one is going off the graph. See? States and territories – flat! Flat, with a little growth. Look at the Commonwealth ...

Mr MILLS: I used to do graphs. Look at the axis.

Mr STIRLING: I will this one over to you: Commonwealth own purpose revenue - \$148.4bn to \$253.3bn - I send it over for you to understand. See the Commonwealth said: Oh, look, they have squandered, the states and territories have wasted all this GST'. Look at this: excise, company tax, personal income tax, going through the roof, mate, going through the roof with the Commonwealth. How else do they get a \$15bn surplus while we are still in deficit territory? I table that, Mr Chairman.

Here is the important one. This is the crocodile jaws. This is the state/territory share of national tax revenue. So this is a picture of the share of the Commonwealth of Australia, all the wealth in Australia, the national tax revenue. There is the Commonwealth, oh you beauty! Going along nicely. Here is the states' share: decreasing. So even since 2003-04, where it stood at 62% to 38%, as it now stands, in 2008-09, it will be 65% to 34%, heading to two thirds, a third. If you go right back to 1993-94, it was down around 55% to 44% and yet we are heading to 66% to 33%. Not bad for the Commonwealth. Of course, that is the one that tells the truth of it. Their growth is outstripping the GST and, short of a very major national recession, will continue to do so.

I table those because every time you call it a 'windfall', you infer that it is something that Northern Territory does not deserve. In fact, it is a very diminishing share of the common wealth most of which is accruing to the federal government, not the states and territories. I table those and hope that you will look at them.

Mr MILLS: I will, thank you, Treasurer. I understand the graph and you object to the term 'windfall' because it implies that you are not deserving of a share. It sounds like a particularly socialist view that those who are rich must appropriate their goods to the poor or something, and there is a sense of greedy-ness behind this. Yet, you simply have a responsibility to acquit the increase that has come to the states. That is a different matter. My focus is simply on the fact that Territory income has increased 80%. Your own efforts to tax the citizens of the Northern Territory have increased by 60% and the population has increased by 7%. Now, we can have this argument all day that we really have a recognition that the Territory has a responsibility to live within its means. You can have your games with your Labor colleagues against the Treasury and demand that they give up their wealth and appropriate it to the poor states. That is another battle that you can have when you ratchet up the GST to 17% and cause that to flow into the states ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Blain, I am sorry, is there a question in here, or are we just grandstanding?

Mr MILLS: It is a response to just balance the last answer which was not really an answer to a question. Going back to the question that I asked, it was regarding the abolition of a tax, or a stamp duty. You are saying, Treasurer, that there is no agreement to abolish taxes, is that correct?

Mr STIRLING: I think the federal Treasurer agrees with himself but no one else. He has agreement, he has agreement within himself and presumably his head of Treasury, but no one else in Australia agrees with him.

I want to make a comment on this Commonwealth grants process, which has served this country so well for so many years, being described as one approach in greed. On one hand, it is a socialist approach, the member for Blain says, which suggests something quite different to greed, and the other one, it is a greedy approach. This system of allocation of revenue goes back to the first days of federation. Western Australia simply would not have joined the Federation of Australia because it could see that New South Wales and Victoria, being the biggest wealth generating states, would have continued to retain and consume that wealth if that is the way it was to be distributed. Western Australia took quite some convincing to come in to the Federation of Australia as a foundation member along with the other states. They did so only when there were assurances around distribution of the common wealth of Australia to look after those weaker states. It is a system that has served this country tremendously well compared with the inequity and imbalance that you get in a country like the USA where the wealthy states go on getting evermore wealthy and the poorer states struggle to remain viable, and that goes to education, health services, the whole lot.

This country and every federal government, national government of this country, has a view that the rest of the country has an obligation to ensure that Australians, no matter where they live, have a right to something approximating the same level of service delivery. Now it is a

tremendous principle. Call it socialist if you like; I am not opposed to that description, but you cannot call it greedy. It is a very fair and just method of allocation between the states and territories notwithstanding the last chart that I put across the table showing that the Commonwealth is fast approaching claiming 66% of the national tax revenue generated in this country against just 34% for the states and territories. That 34% that goes to the states and territories is at least distributed equitably according to need.

Mr MILLS: I do not disagree with you.

Mr STIRLING: Well, you did before. You said it was greedy.

Mr MILLS: I will not take the bait. The question that you were answering with the other bits added at no extra cost or request.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, because you make silly statements. You cannot go unchallenged.

Mr MILLS: I will leave that be. You say that there was no agreement and the agreement only exists in the mind of the federal Treasurer. Why, then, have the states agreed to abolish a range of taxes? Why have they forgone a number of taxing regimes as a result of the GST if there was no agreement?

Mr STIRLING: There were two intergovernmental agreements, in fact. One when the GST was first mooted, which contained a whole raft of changes that the states and territories would agree to after about five years of GST experience. That first intergovernmental agreement was struck down and re-written following the passage of the GST legislation through the federal parliament where the Senate insisted on the removal of the food component of the GST. Taking food out of the GST dramatically reduced estimates around what revenue would flow from the GST. States and territories and the Commonwealth then had a very different view as to what taxes might be involved in a second intergovernmental agreement. Those taxes now, I think from 1 July this year, will see all of those intergovernmental taxes gone in the Territory.

Mr STUBBIN: Business conveyancing.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, that is the last one. So they are all gone. In our view, they are all gone.

Mr MILLS: So the one remaining, as the Treasurer contends, the states agree is not on, that is stamp duty on conveyancing of real property for non-residential real property.

Mr STIRLING: In fact, as the Under Treasurer just points out to me, the states in that intergovernmental agreement agreed to review all of those taxes - there was not even an agreement to abolish - and agreed subsequently to their own timetables to abolish. You will remember one or two years ago, there was discussion around the states and territories as to acceptance by the federal Treasurer of the respective time frames. The states and territories agree on this: removing stamp duty on conveyance of land for business at the same time the householders are going to buy a house have to pay stamp duty. If you are going to buy that factory, you do not pay stamp duty. In the Northern Territory, where we do not have land tax, where we do not have fire or ambulance, those sorts of service levies, conveyance duty is an important part of the own-sourced revenue mix, and we just regard that as inequitable that you would continue to tax a home buyer, house purchaser, but not a business. A big hotel can change hands down the road there and not a cent accruing in conveyance tax, but you go and buy a house or a unit, and you are in the Territory, and you get slugged with conveyance duty. Now, what would happen if the Territory removed that? It would simply have to find that revenue as part of its own-source revenue mix, elsewhere. Land tax?

Mr MILLS: So, you are genuinely saying your argument is an issue of equity. You are just concerned about the sensitivities of those who are being taxed on one hand and the other ones are not being taxed, and you prefer to tax them both.

Mr STIRLING: Not sensitivity. Fairness.

Mr MILLS: Even though you are getting a nearly 70% increase.

Mr STIRLING: So it is all right for business not to pay tax. That is your view. That is a view you have. Business is an important part of contributing to the tax mix, as are Territorians overall. Now, if you take out a big slab of taxation out of your own-source revenue, you have to find it somewhere else, or you have to start dropping police, hospitals, schools. You have either have to stop spending on your services, restructure your services, and reduce your services, or supplement that revenue by another means, ie, a land tax – which we know you are fond of, you touted that a few years ago, or ...

Mr MILLS: No, you dressed that up. You made that one up.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, you did. You put that out there. CLP would put a land tax ...

Mr MILLS: You put that out there.

Mr STIRLING: No, your words.

Mr MILLS: You put it out there.

Mr STIRLING: We are not keen on the land tax. We do not believe it is appropriate for the Territory.

Mr MILLS: You put that out there.

Mr STIRLING: But we look at this from a point of view of fairness.

Mr MILLS: You are selling something we were not even offering. Good heavens! Anyway, going back to the one, even though there was no agreement, out of the kindness of the hearts of the states, they have agreed to a timetable for the abolition of stamp duty on non-real residential property. Correct?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, we have; 2009-10.

Mr MILLS: So that is the non-real component of non-residential property, you have accommodated that and agreed to a timetable on that, and yet you will not extend it to ...

Mr STIRLING: No, not agreed. We have said that is what our timetable will be and we will do it.

Mr MILLS: Yes, okay. So you have agreed to that and you have ...

Mr STIRLING: Not agreed. Not agreed with anyone.

Mr MILLS: Okay, so you got together and the Treasurer has got ...

Mr STIRLING: We did not agree with anyone. That is our timetable that we put forward. New South Wales put forward a completely different timetable for the abolition of this tax mix. Victoria had a very different timetable because many of the taxes they had already gotten rid of in years past. South Australia has a different schedule and timetable.

Mr MILLS: Well, that is curious. What is driving this goodwill on the behalf of the states if there is no agreement, and there is no collusion really, no pressure, from the federal Treasurer?

Mr STIRLING: Well, there is pressure from the federal Treasurer. He wants to abolish the lot. He wants to take business right out of the conveyancing mix altogether.

Mr MILLS: And that is where you draw the line?

Mr STIRLING: Well, show us how it is affordable. Just show me that chart again. Who has got all the money in this country?

Mr MILLS: I have one over here.

Mr STIRLING: Who has all the money in this country? He expects us to knock off a fair whack of our own tax. I think a little bit there could come back. If he wanted to do it, pay for it.

Mr MILLS: I understand that one of the states is prepared to talk about this and has had discussions, because the federal Treasurer has said: 'Well, let us have a talk about it. Maybe there are other ways that we can do it'. Is it the Northern Territory that has had these discussions?

Mr STIRLING: We are always willing to engage and discuss with the federal Treasurer. I have not discussed this matter with him.

Mr MILLS: You have not?

Mr STIRLING: No.

Mr MILLS: You have not. So I understand there is one state or territory that has opened the door to discussing other ways where this could be accommodated.

Mr STIRLING: The Under Treasurer just reminds me that there was discussion with the federal Treasurer about other areas of reform as a replacement, and that is an open question. I believe the federal Treasurer is open to that, but I understand there has been no discussion with us. I do not know about anyone else.

Mr MILLS: Okay. That is the point; if you draw the line on that then there are other ways that that reform agenda could be carried through. What other ways are you considering by way of ongoing reform?

Mr STIRLING: That is an open question. However, this would be to maintain the same flavour, if you like, of the mix. It would have to be some form of business tax reduced to - or maybe a range, but you have to be careful of the impact on, as I said, on your own source revenue and how far you go without supplementation by either another tax, or supplementation by the Commonwealth.

Mr MILLS: That is where you and I differ. You seem to have a focus on money that you may lose. When you free up the market you stimulate economic growth. That is the confidence that I have. We just have different views on that. You would prefer to have the revenue harvested, but I say in response to your proposition, that you can release this capacity of business and, you therefore, would increase and stimulate economic growth. Your own arguments support that by the fact that you have more payroll tax because there is greater economic activity.

Mr STIRLING: But simply selling 'businesses' in itself does not generate greater economic return. One business owner becomes another business owner. Sure, they might improve and grow their business. They might also go broke. That does not, in itself, generate any. The fact is though, there has been plenty of activity out there in the market with businesses changing hands. The growth economy such as we have had in the past few years, suggests that there is very strong confidence out there, and business - well, I do not think I have had any letters of complaint about conveyance on business. People are happy to buy the business and pay the tax.

Mr MILLS: I appreciate it. For fear of going down a path that may just burn up more time, I will go back to the one where there has been a decision to change; that is, the one that is before the parliament to be closed off at the consent of parliament on Friday. That is the conveyancing of non-real non-residential property. It is a curious thing - and, minister, I ask for your clarification on this. If that agreement - or decision to use the right word for you - has been made - which means, effectively, that you would be losing some revenue - does that explain why there has now been a move to change some of the regulations of the administration act so that the definition for land has been broadened to include goodwill, so that what you forgo you also receive?

Mr STIRLING: I will go to the Commissioner of Taxation around this matter. However, it was necessary to seek greater clarity in the legislation. I just pick up, in relation to government forgoing revenue. It is not about revenue; it is about the ability of government to fund the proper level of services to Territorians - health, law and order, education among the primary ones. You have to balance and mix, haven't you? You have revenue in, you have expenditure out. If you cut your revenue coming in, you have to cut the expenditure going out, otherwise we get where the CLP was in 2001-02 - massive debt ...

Mr MILLS: Without the GST.

Mr STIRLING: ... growing deficits, year after year. You have described us as modest, bland, boring, uninteresting ...

Mr MILLS: No, this particular budget is un-visionary, but it is modest, I will give you.

Mr STIRLING: Fiscally prudent is the correct description. You might call it boring, bland, uninteresting, but it is a recipe that has got us to where we are from disaster in 2001 ...

Mr MILLS: Oh, come on!

Mr STIRLING: Well, what else would you call it? What else would you call it – the blokes who normally drive the cement mixers sitting on the bums down there drinking coffee in 2001 ...

Mr MILLS: Oh, you created that, did you?

Mr STIRLING: In 2001, this was the reality ...

Mr MILLS: Property boom – congratulations; resources boom - fantastic.

Mr STIRLING: Well, people were leaving town. The member for Drysdale used to jump up in the House and say: 'The growth industry in this town is removalists taking people out because the place is stuffed'. That was two months after we came to power, after we found a deceitful budget that said we would have a \$12m deficit that we found would be \$134m deficit on a massive body of debt, per capita by far and away the greatest in Australia. There were some reasons for that; we accept that. It was an economy that was collapsing; a budget that was deceitful. That is what we have grown from: a nightmare to these last four budgets, and possibly this one, probably this one, surplus budgets. You blokes would have killed for a surplus budget. But you could not do it because you could not manage Treasury finances.

Mr MILLS: Treasurer, with the *Taxation Administration Act* amendment, the definition for land has been broadened to include 'goodwill and information' as taxable items. Is this a move to gain a greater tax on business in preparation for your agreement, or decision, to abolish stamp duty on non-residential conveyances for real property?

Mr STIRLING: I will go to the Commissioner of Taxation, Mr Craig Vukman, for that question.

Mr VUKMAN: The answer is no. Basically, the amendments merely replicate what is currently in the legislation and puts them in a form that can be more easily understood. The valuation tradition you refer to is based on normal valuation principles. It just basically makes the law easier to understand in terms of determining what the value is of a transaction that is subject to tax.

Mr MILLS: It is reflecting what is in currently, or in legislation. Does that mean – I do not understand how you can identify and tax 'goodwill'. Do you mean that was there before?

Mr VUKMAN: In the valuation of land there would be aspects of the value of the land attributing to things like attraction to the land, goodwill. All of those things are normally accepted valuation principles. The legislation basically just spells those out.

Mr MILLS: In spelling it out, Treasurer, does that therefore increase the capacity for a more effective taxing regime on business?

Mr VUKMAN: It basically provides clarity for people to comply with the legislation. So, in actual fact, it makes it easier to understand people's obligations and perhaps reduces the ability for dispute and therefore costs.

Mr MILLS: Who would you say, Treasurer, it benefits, Treasury or business?

Mr STIRLING: It certainly benefits everyone, Mr Chairman. Where legislation is less than clear it invariably falls to the courts to adjudicate and find that clarity. It is incumbent on

government to provide unambiguous, add to the clarity in legislation and that is an ongoing body of work. The commissioner has explained that is the basis of this amendment.

Mr MILLS: Treasurer, does it surprise you that goodwill and information can now be regarded as taxable items?

Mr STIRLING: I will ask the commissioner in terms of whether that always was the case.

Mr VUKMAN: They already are. As I mentioned earlier, the transfer of dutiable property, one of the categories of dutiable property includes goodwill currently where goodwill is transferred. In addition to where land is transferred, where there is information attaching to the land, that goes to the value of the land. That is currently in the current legislation.

Mr MILLS: Is it a coincidence that this amendment happens at the same time as the announcement of the decision to forgo this element of stamp duty?

Mr STIRLING: We are putting this amendment in now because of the need for clarity, so that matters do not end up disputed and challenged and in the courts. If we do go as we have signalled, that is not until 2010, you are drawing a pretty long bow to say: 'Oh, we have to get all this in place now,' because of what we are going to do in 2010. If it was not an issue until 2010, I think Treasury have plenty of other work to do rather than scurry up amendments to legislation that are not required for the next three years. This about clarity tomorrow or as soon as the legislation is passed.

Mr MILLS: If it is such a contentious aspect, how many disputes have arisen as a result of this lack of clarity? Disputes over goodwill being taxable and information being taxable.

Mr STIRLING: It has never been in dispute.

Mr MILLS: How many disputes have there ...

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I don't know if there have ever been any disputes about goodwill. We need to be careful. I don't, certainly, have the information in relation to individual tax payers, nor should I. The commissioner does, and it is his discretion as to answering that question.

Mr VUKMAN: There have been disputes as to what you would include in a valuation in other states, also in the Territory to a limited extent, but as we said earlier, it is about time to clarify the law.

Mr MILLS: I am still to be convinced as to the driver for this. It is not, as I glean from your response, a hot-spot of disputation, but it appears more to be a pre-emptive strike. Would that be the case?

Mr STIRLING: No, it is not. As I said, if it was an issue for us in 2010, I am sure Treasury would bring it up in the Budget before that. It is about clarity and I will ask the commissioner again. I think he did say that there have been misunderstandings and, potentially, disputes around this area. Commissioner?

Mr VUKMAN: Yes, that is right, but none of them have gone to court in the Northern Territory.

Mr MILLS: Sorry, I missed that.

Mr VUKMAN: Yes, there have been disputes.

Mr MILLS: There have been?

Mr VUKMAN: None that have gone to court.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, perhaps I can help. The valuation of properties to determine what the value is to which the conveyance duty would apply is always an issue of some complexity. I think all jurisdictions, apart from Victoria, include in the current valuation for property non-real components, that is, information technology, goodwill, and other items in the value of the business that would not be associated with the real part, that is the land. What all states have now agreed

to do is to remove, at some future time, the stamp duty on the non-real elements. What this amendment was intending to do was to provide clarity about the split between the real and the non-real part, and to have it in place so that when we get to 2009, the law is clear.

The differentiation has not been as important until now because the whole value has been taxable. But we will be moving to a situation where part of the transaction is taxable, that is, the real or the land part, and part will not be taxable. That is all this is trying to do: to amend the law such that the wording in the law is consistent with current valuation principles. There is no change in policy.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Under Treasurer. So, do I understand from this, then, that if this bill is to be assented to, goodwill and information will be regarded as real property?

Mr STIRLING: No.

Mr VUKMAN: Only insofar as it relates to a value of land.

Mr MILLS: Okay, thank you. So what industry do you think will be most affected by this amendment?

Mr VUKMAN: I don't think there is any particular industry that will be affected by it.

Mr MILLS: The pastoral industry, do you think, or the mining industry?

Mr VUKMAN: Well, any industry in which land is involved.

Mr MILLS: Right. There isn't a particular dispute that sits before the Treasury, before government, that has had some prompting to move in this direction? A dispute over stamp duty?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, it would not be my role or right to know, but even if there were legislative change of this nature, it would not be able to be applied retrospectively to a matter before Treasury in any case, would be my understanding.

Mr MILLS: All right. I will leave that there.

Mrs BRAHAM: Mr Chairman, following on from that, Treasurer, you and I have had this debate before about stamp duty on insurance premiums plus GST. Do you actually get the 10% GST anyway, and are you basically getting that GST plus the additional stamp duty that you are recovering by combining them both?

Mr STIRLING: That GST component of that, of course, goes to the Commonwealth in the first instance. The Commonwealth gathers it all and then redistributes through the Commonwealth Grants Commission process. This was all decided at the time of the GST, how it would apply right across the board. The general view - and I was not Treasurer at the time - was taken that as things were, so they should be into the future. For example, there were always complaints in the Territory about a product that attracted sales tax going on top of a product on sale in the Northern Territory, given that you had the cost of the item, the cost of the freight to get it here and then your sales tax applied so you are, in a sense, taxed more here in terms of sales tax than you would be if the product originated in Melbourne and you were buying it in Melbourne.

Mrs BRAHAM: This way you are getting ...

Mr STIRLING: But that was the principle of how sales tax applied on the goods that attracted sales tax. It was on the price of the product. All the inputs into the price of the product, and sales tax on top. It was agreed at the time that everyone understood that, everyone at least knew how that worked. GST, for want of a better word, is like a sales tax on everything except food and a few little things that we have knocked out, so it would apply the same. Now, a tax on a tax, I guess it has always been that way.

Mrs BRAHAM: What difference would it make to your budget if you were, in fact, only charged stamp duty on the premium, because really, when there is talk about double dipping and getting that GST back, but you are also getting stamp duty that you are levying on that GST as well. Would it make a large deal of difference to the budget to only charge stamp duty on the premium?

Mr STIRLING: So, taking the GST out before you put the stamp duty on?

Mrs BRAHAM: Just purely put it on the premium.

Mr STIRLING: It would cost around \$10m at the moment per year. We have \$3m, \$4m, \$5m, maybe \$6m now in our forward estimates for future tax reductions. That is being committed to future reform of payroll tax. There is nothing in forward estimates to knock out this \$10m - \$2m of that \$10m comes from insurance products, \$8m from all other manner of products. So if it was to be knocked off insurance, it would be about \$2m.

Mrs BRAHAM: Do you think it is a fair thing?

Mr STIRLING: I do not believe it is locked in the agreement with the other states and territories. It was decided back at that time that there would be a question around consistency of taxation treatment, given that, by and large, the states and territories, in order to help business, are looking for greater consistency all of the time, hence the work from state and territory Treasurers around payroll tax reform; that did not involve the Commonwealth because it is a state tax. Similar work could be embarked on, but you would probably want everyone to do it.

Mrs BRAHAM: Obviously, as you said, in the past there was no trend for other states to fall in with it.

Mr STIRLING: No, I am sure they all get the same levels of representation. I get representation on this issue, particularly on insurance products. Perhaps not so much these days ...

Mrs BRAHAM: Yes, it is mainly insurance, because it is the ...

Mr STIRLING: ... but when insurance was going through the roof.

Mrs BRAHAM: Minister, with your sale of assets and the revenue you collect from that, do you pay GST?

Mr STIRLING: Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: Mrs Braham, we do not sell assets in a great amount. Our largest ongoing asset sales would be the sales by NT Fleet of used vehicles, I think. The question would be: do the buyers pay GST?

Mrs BRAHAM: Yes, but they actually would cover it within their business?

Ms PRINCE: Yes, not whether we would charge it, but whether they would pay it. Yes.

Mrs BRAHAM: That is all my questions, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions in relation to Output 1.1? There being no further questions, that concludes Output 1.1 and Output Group 1.0, Financial Management.

OUTPUT GROUP 2.0 - ECONOMIC

Output 2.1 – Economic Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now consider Output Group 2.0 - Economic, Output 2.1 - Economic Services. Are there any questions on that output?

Mr MILLS: Mr Chairman, population forecasts. Can you give an indication of the analysis that has been done by Treasury with regard to population of Palmerston in the next five to 10 years?

Mr STIRLING: I will ask the Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, the update that we had a couple of weeks ago from the 2006 Census was merely the most recent quarterly release. We do not have any disaggregated information from the Census yet, and we do not expect to for a couple of months. We do not have age/sex

breakdowns. We do not have regional breakdowns. We do not have indigenous/non-indigenous breakdowns. Therefore, until we get that information, we are not able to do any analysis of the sort that you are asking. It is certainly on our list.

Mr MILLS: That information will come?

Ms PRINCE: Yes, we think in about a couple of months we will start getting those first releases.

Mr MILLS: Does the capacity to analyse population trends largely sit within Treasury, or is it spread across other agencies?

Mr STIRLING: DEET, for example, employ – I am not sure whether they have their own, but certainly have access to – demographers because they need to know that sort of information in and around schools. What the Under Treasurer is saying is that that information is actually critical to the Northern Territory, given that extra funding. You need to know where they are, who they are, to ensure that the increased service delivery is hitting the mark; are they rural/urban, what mix. Obviously, they are not going to be both. I will ask the Under Treasurer in relation to their own.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we have a small group in Treasury who are very competent at doing demographic analysis. We also have a strong link with CDU where they are building up their demographic analysis program. As the Treasurer said, DEET has a specialist unit which looks at school enrolments and population segregation from that point of view. The Health department also has a unit that particularly looks at health status. There are a couple of other areas that have people who are interested in the issue but are not dedicated to the task. There is a loose coalition of specialists around government who work together on these issues. We are in the process of developing some census analysis tasks that will involve all of those agencies.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Under Treasurer. First, is there a presumed coordination with all these demographers and - I cannot think whatever the other word is - but which is the lead agency to coordinate the efforts of demographers?

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we have a group across government called Statistical Liaison Committee, and there is also another group whose acronym is SPAC, the Statistical Priority Advisory Committee. We are represented on those. One we chair; another one we provide the secretariat services to. We do quite a lot of the work. Most of the liaison with the ABS is either done by us, or us and other agencies depending on the issue. We would generally be understood to be the lead agency on those statistical and demographic issues.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Treasurer.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any other questions on that output group?

Mrs BRAHAM: Mr Chairman, yes. Treasurer, the \$50 back to school funding, how is that administered? Are the schools required to do it?

Mr STIRLING: That is a question for the minister for Education; it is within their allocation. I was there when this started, but systems might have changed. I will leave it to him.

Mrs BRAHAM: Okay, I was just wondering how as an economic service it is actually implemented and how it is actually paid?

Mr STIRLING: I think it is different for different schools. You should put it to the Education minister.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on that output group? That concludes consideration of Output 2.1.

Output 2.2 – Community Service Obligations

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now proceed to Output 2.2 - Community Service Obligations. Are there any questions?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I wonder if I might prevail upon the committee for one minute. I have been drinking a lot of water because I have a cold and I am dehydrated.

The committee suspended.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Braitling, you had some questions for Output Group 2.2?

Mrs BRAHAM: Treasurer, are you able to table for us a list of the groups that get Community Service Obligation subsidies? Taking it as a whole, you pay a subsidy to, I think, pensioners for – no? Wrong one?

Mr STIRLING: I think we can probably get it – maybe not in one piece – but I will go to the Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: Mrs Braham, we provide CSOs in relation to the uniform tariff arrangements that are in place for electricity, water and sewerage. CSOs that are provided to pensioners for example, are provided by the Department of Health and Community Services. In Treasury, we do not provide all of the Community Service Obligations of that sort. Our responsibility is to provide the general Community Service Obligations that serve to moderate the cost of electricity, water and sewerage across the board.

Mrs BRAHAM: So it is subsidised across the board?

Ms PRINCE: Yes, and there is additional assistance for particular groups.

Mrs BRAHAM: I would have to go to that department to find out?

Ms PRINCE: Correct. Budget Paper No 2, however, does have a summary list of all of the Community Service Obligations that are paid across government for different purposes.

Mrs BRAHAM: Do you have a page?

Ms PRINCE: It is page 104, and it lists them by agency and gives summary information of their purpose.

Mrs BRAHAM: Thank you. That is all, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, that concludes Output Group 2.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 3.0 - COMMERCIAL

Output 3.1 – Commercial Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: I now call for questions on Output Group 3.0, Output 3.1 - Commercial Services. Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: No questions, Mr Chairman.

Mrs BRAHAM: Just one very quick one: this year, there was no subsidy to the Alice Springs Convention Centre. Is that the end of the agreement, or was there going to be a renewed agreement? I know they were seeking additional assistance.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, indeed, Mr Chairman, they are. I have had some involvement with it, but not sole involvement because the Minister for Tourism and Chief Minister are also involved. I will go to the Under Treasurer because I am not sure whether it is all finalised.

Ms PRINCE: Mrs Braham, the first tranche of subsidy arrangements for the Convention Centre were in Treasury's budget because of the agreement in 2000 where the Territory contributed some capital funds and an operating subsidy for five years. The responsibility has now transferred to Tourism because the assistance will be in the nature of marketing assistance. My understanding is that they have almost completed negotiations and we expect an announcement in a little while.

Mrs BRAHAM: So you are saying I should ask the Minister for Tourism?

Ms PRINCE: Yes.

Mrs BRAHAM: And he probably can't give me an answer, anyway.

Ms PRINCE: He may. I know that they are in negotiations and it is close.

Mrs BRAHAM: The subsidy is likely to be more in the form of marketing rather than operational. Okay. That is all, Mr Chairman.

Mr STIRLING: But ongoing assistance, nonetheless.

Mrs BRAHAM: It is going to be ongoing.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, that concludes consideration of Output Group 3.0

OUTPUT GROUP 4.0 – SUPERANNUATION **Output 4.1 - Superannuation**

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will proceed to Output Group 4.0 - Superannuation, and Output 4.1. Member for Blain.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. My first question relates to actuarial advice to Treasury. Does this happen every year with regards to superannuation?

Mr STIRLING: Sorry, does it happen every year?

Mr MILLS: Yes.

Mr STIRLING: The actuarial reviews are, I think, three-yearly, but I will check that.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, there is a process of an actuarial review of each scheme every three years. We try to do each scheme in rotation so that all schemes are not being reviewed at the same time. In the last couple of years, in addition to having the full actuarial review, we also ask the actuary to review any changes in economic circumstances, so it results in a mini-review. We do that because of the requirements of the accounting standards.

Mr MILLS: You have just reminded me: you referred to a couple of reviews there, and a document provided last year identified these types of reviews – very important reviews ...

Ms PRINCE: Yes.

Mr MILLS: You have clarified for me, too, that – I wonder why there have been what appear to be so many actuarial reviews? Is it the cyclical nature of the review?

Ms PRINCE: Yes. The legislation requires that there are reviews every three years for each scheme.

Mr MILLS: There are two schemes?

Ms PRINCE: The schemes that we have are: the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme, we have members in that, it was closed in 1985; the NTGPASS Scheme that was closed in 1999; the Police Supplementary Superannuation Scheme; the Legislative Assembly Members Superannuation Scheme; the Judges Scheme; and the Administrator's Scheme, which is also closed, I think.

Mr MILLS: Okay. What are people who do that called?

Ms PRINCE: Actuaries.

Mr MILLS: So there are most likely actuaries at work all the time?

Mr STIRLING: Actually people.

Mr MILLS: Yes, I have not met any at a party or a barbecue.

Mr STIRLING: You would not want to!

Mr MILLS: Are there any in the room? That would stop the conversation, would it not? What I assume, therefore, there are actuaries at work every year?

Ms PRINCE: Our usual practice is to have the NTGPASS review one year, the CSS review the next year, and then all of the other schemes, which are smaller, on the third year, so the workload is balanced reasonably well. We have consultant actuaries who do that task. We do not have actuaries on staff.

Mr MILLS: Okay, good, you have answered the other question. That leads me then to, now that I know that background, I need an understanding of how it is that your superannuation liabilities have just moved so dramatically. It seems every year that we have had these budgets come out, there have been unpleasant surprises that have arisen from actuaries' work. This one, we have had revealed to us, not so much what is going ahead, but what has just happened behind us, there has been nearly \$0.5bn unexpected. Can I please have an understanding of how that occurred?

Mr STIRLING: I have some points that I am happy to share, Mr Chairman. The Under Treasurer might have more from experience. Since 2005, actuarial assessments have increased our projected unfunded superannuation liability through to 2010 by \$900m, from \$1.5bn to \$2.4bn. The increases in this liability following actuarial re-assessment back in 2004-05 relate to service benefits; salary increments; higher investment earnings boosting preserved and contributor liabilities because the equity funds themselves have been going very well; and revised mortality tables. I would add, one, that people tend to take pensions now, that is the trend far more than early in the lives of these superannuation schemes, and people taking cash and going, that are no longer a liability – you know, they cash up and they are out. However, pensions, they are in there every year, so that adds over time. The Territory picked up an extra 206 members after the last triennial review for the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme that were only recently identified by the scheme administrators, that there were 206 new people in, and I believe I mentioned, over time, improving mortality rates, all of which actuaries assess, put a figure against it, and reassess the liability.

As I said, since 2005, \$1.5bn to \$2.4bn is \$900m. When we put nett debt and unfunded liabilities together, that is why we get such a big figure and growing - not nett debt but the unfunded liabilities in and around this.

Mr MILLS: I understand it. It is of great concern. Can you describe how it is that it was nearly \$0.5bn that arose from the last actuary assessment?

Mr STIRLING: I am not sure that I can add any more but the Under Treasurer may.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, in addition to that, I will give you an indication of the changes that have contributed to the \$900m increase. A couple of years ago, the actuary who had been doing this analysis for the last 15 years or so died, and we changed actuary. The new actuary simply had ...

Mr MILLS: Probably a moral there.

Ms PRINCE: Yes, probably. ... new methodology which touched on a number of issues. What the actuaries do is an estimate on escalation factors that will apply over the next 40 to 60 years, particularly in relation to the CSS. If one those small elements change by 0.1% or 0.2% we can have \$100m change in our liability. The change in methodology that the new actuary adopted a couple of years ago resulted in an increase of about \$323m. When we moved to international financial reporting standards, there was a different approach to the discount factor that would be used. That, in itself, resulted in approximately a \$150m increase. The IFRS – International Financial Reporting Standards - will, in fact, see our liability be reviewed on an annual basis. Because the discount rate that is used at that time will be a fluctuating one, depending on market

conditions, we will see very large changes, both positive and negative, in our liability associated with that alone.

This CSS major review resulted in an increase of \$265m which was the effect of people living longer, as the Treasurer said, and more people taking pensions than would otherwise be the case. All states with pension-based schemes have had similar increases.

The last one is the introduction of the death and invalidity scheme for members who are in choice-of-fund superannuation arrangements that was introduced about a year ago. It has added about \$40m to our liability.

Just recently, the CSS was reviewing the number of beneficiaries that should be regarded as the responsibility of the Northern Territory. As you know, there can be people employed in the Territory who are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme. When they retire or receive superannuation benefits, the CSS pays them and, then sometime later, they go through a process of attributing responsibility for those people to various states. What the CSS told us just before Christmas last year – and I think these are the numbers that you would have seen in the mid-year report - was upwards of almost 300 people have now been identified in their records that are partially the responsibility of the Northern Territory. We hope to have that number clarified in the next couple of weeks.

We put a lot of effort into the analysis with the actuaries and we hope not to see these sorts of variations into the future. However, some of the assumptions are simply outside of our control.

Mr MILLS: It is not a flippant question, but you indicated that there was one who did the assessment for 15 years and is no longer with us ...

Ms PRINCE: Yes.

Mr MILLS: ... and was then replaced by another one who gave this quite different advice or ...

Ms PRINCE: Yes, the new actuary came from another firm, and that firm's process had differed from the previous actuary with very small differences in future estimate of wages, costs and longevity, and so on. It is amazing the small differences; those very small factors can make a huge difference.

Mr MILLS: I can understand how they could statistically, but do you get a second opinion?

Ms PRINCE: We do now. We have moved to a process where we have a panel of actuaries whereas the previous practice had been to have one only. We have the actuaries reviewing the other's work. It is also fair to say since HIH, actuaries have become fair more conservative than they used to.

Mr MILLS: I do not have my calculator here to work out the percentage increase and we are getting towards lunch, but I guess that it is a colossal increase. You talk about the nearly \$1bn, \$900m. Has a similar quantum affected other states?

Ms PRINCE: Certainly the states with pension-based schemes, they have had very substantial increases. All states and the Commonwealth have pension-based schemes all of which are now closed. For most jurisdictions, their liability will last for between 50 and 60 years, and their objective by starting to fund some of those past liabilities is to bring that liability profile back to 2020 or 2030.

Mr MILLS: So that was another question. You are saying, Treasurer, 2020 is the predicted horizon for this steady growth?

Mr STIRLING: That has shifted out over earlier estimates of what it might be. The key to when your liabilities really hit the peak in terms of outgoings, is your peak and it will decline, is why we are being driven to put \$60m away this year and focus into the future for what can be afforded at different times in order to be better prepared, I suppose, to meet those liabilities in and around the peak. You cannot change when the peak hits, but you can make sure you have money there to handle it, or as much as you can, so that the unfunded liability becomes, in theory at least, funded; at least the money is there.

Mr MILLS: It is curious though, this time last year when I put the same proposal to you that some of the unexpected surplus from the GST be applied in this manner that you, and I have it on record, saying that will not make any difference, but you have now moved to put \$60m there, so I congratulate you.

Mr STIRLING: Thank you, and it shows I listen, does it not?

Mr MILLS: It does, and I am touched.

Mr STIRLING: So in a sense, in a one-off, the one-off is like the last water on a bush fire, it has to be continued, it has to be maintained in order to be meaningful over a long term. So, \$60m this year is fine, but this government and future governments will have to have an eye to continue to grow it.

Mr MILLS: Exactly right.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are dead on 1 pm so the committee will break and we will continue the questions where we left off. Treasurer ...

Mr STIRLING: We have a couple of follow-ups.

Ms PRINCE: If I could just provide the information that was sought before, and also correct an answer that I gave. I did say that Treasury did not bear any postage costs associated with the budget. That was not so. We were, in fact, responsible for 7500 mail-outs of a general sort, whereas the Treasurer's office was responsible for all the specific mail-outs that were done. That cost was \$2240.

I also have for you the allocation of our Corporate costs as part of our total appropriation. The Corporate costs amount to 9.1% of our total expenses. It is worth noting that more than half of that is for centralised IT costs for all of Treasury which are borne by the Corporate unit, but if I could table both of those.

Mr MILLS: Right. It appears to be very efficient.

Ms PRINCE: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are going by the time of the clock at the back. It has been pointed out that it is somewhat at odds with everyone else, but as we started according to that clock, we will continue, so 1.30 pm by the clock in this room, which is about 10 minutes behind everyone else. Thank you.

The committee suspended.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will get straight into it. Member for Blain.

Mr MILLS: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman. I am probably coming to the close of the section on superannuation, as far as I am concerned. The member for Nelson probably has many questions.

I appreciate the information regarding actuaries. In the midst of the explanations for the increases, which are understandable, the identification of wages was a contributor to the blowing out of these schemes. Treasurer, you recall the Attorney-General criticising you in 2006 for blowing the wages bill by 12%? How much do you think that has contributed?

Mr STIRLING: On any measure, there is going to be a contributing factor simply because, as sure as the sun comes up, wages go up. That is an outcome of the EBA process every two or three years as they roll around. To think any other way, we simply would not have a workforce. You have to have a mind to match your people interstate regarding recruitment and retention. Importantly though, why did we get into this situation in the first place? It was because the first self-government of the Northern Territory did not fund it. It is as simple as that. If they had made provision, as they did for LAMS, the members of parliament superannuation scheme, we would not

be sitting here today with this massive millions of unfunded superannuation. It was a bad call from the outset; it was a bad call all the way through the term of that government. Had we been in a stronger position fiscally than we were over this time, we may have been able to do more than we have done to date. Importantly, we are putting that \$60m aside and will continue to grow that over the years ahead so that there is something of a balance to offset some of the liabilities as it approaches peak outlay.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, I will not respond to that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on this output group? That concludes Output Group 4.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 5.0 – TERRITORY REVENUE

Output 5.1 – Territory Revenue

Mr CHAIRMAN: I now call for questions on Output Group 5.0 - Territory Revenue, Output 5.1 - Territory Revenue. Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: Treasurer, as you are aware, the plan being considered to rate pastoral and mining leases as a result of the shire amalgamation is causing concern in both industries. Without a doubt, for some familiar with the land, the imposition of a rating system on the pastoral industry will have a very serious detrimental effect. Can you rule out the plans to rate pastoral leases under the shire amalgamation?

Mr STIRLING: No, I cannot rule anything in or out. No final decisions have been made around this. There is a lot of work to do in terms of the amalgamation of local government, with the birth of the shires system in the Territory. These decisions will be taken and made as more information is known and as the picture more fully develops as we move to mid-2008. It is probably more a question to the Minister for Local Government, who has more direct carriage of it than I do as Treasurer.

Mr MILLS: The involvement of Treasury in the consideration of rating schemes must surely be connected to any of these plans. Would that be the case? How involved is Treasury in consideration of the development of rating systems?

Mr STIRLING: Treasury, as an agency, provides advice to government in the same way that all agencies do, notwithstanding they probably have almost an equal input as the Chief Minister, in views and recommendations when Cabinet submissions come forward. All agencies provide their views, and Treasury is but one of those agency. It is certainly important to me because, as Treasurer, I am compelled to understand and take their views forward, as minister with direct responsibility. However, all agencies have input to these sorts of decisions.

Mr MILLS: I appreciate that. What is the view of Treasury with regard to rating on pastoral and mining leases?

Mr STIRLING: At this stage, nothing definite has come to Cabinet by way of submission. Treasury would have their views along with everyone else on the question of rates.

Mr MILLS: Slightly different tack, but related to the pastoral leases. There has been a reassessment of the value of pastoral leases. Has that matter been resolved in regard to the quite significant valuation increases and the subsequent impact that has had on a number of properties?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, that has been resolved. We were concerned, I guess, with the mixed picture that the initial valuation gave neighbouring properties - one went through the roof; one did not change too much at all. To a layman not on the land, you would think there would be some consistency around the value of properties neighbouring regarding land, rainfall, water and the rest. That was subsequently revisited and - certainly seemingly - more appropriate land valuations were put forward. A decision probably has not been promulgated yet. I can say that the matter has been resolved.

Mr MILLS: To the satisfaction of the pastoral industry?

Mr STIRLING: Stuart Kenny seemed happy.

Mr MILLS: It is good to hear. I have not spoken to him. I spoke to him prior to this, so there has been a ...

Mr STIRLING: I only say that because he spoke to me on Sunday and said that had been a good result that had been well received.

Mr MILLS: Good. I will not proceed any further. That is good news.

The next issue is Gaming, if it is appropriate to talk about the revenue that flows in through gambling?

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Without going to great length, it appears that, every year that we have been here, the amount anticipated to be gained through gambling revenue exceeds expectations. This last one is, once again, the same story. Does that cause you concern, Treasurer, when you consider the stories that are on the table at the moment with regard to the social aspects of gambling; what is happening in the communities; the amount of activity there is; the amount of money that is flowing into Treasury? It is, obviously, an indication of the high level of gambling that is going on in our community.

Mr STIRLING: Let us not select gambling out of the estimates mix as being forecast low. The Commonwealth Treasury has been under fire for the last three years for predicting \$3bn surpluses adjusting to \$8bn or \$9bn mid-year, and coming in at \$15bn or \$16bn in an overall sense. There are good reasons why Treasuries tend to be conservative in estimates, because you are better able to withstand shocks if things go very badly wrong, or if Commonwealth revenue drops or whatever.

In relation to gambling – and the figures are there to analyse rather than the global figure – you will see the strong growth in the corporate bookmaker sector; that is, we have the biggest bookmaker in Australia in Darwin. I do not have a breakdown of how many Territory punters bet with that particular bookmaker or, indeed, other corporate bookmakers in the Northern Territory. I can tell you the many, many, many millions of dollars that go through that bookie's turnover cannot be Territory dollars. They are punters sourced from all over Australia, as, indeed with each of the corporate bookmakers.

If you say gambling is flourishing out there in the Territory, have a close look at the growth factor against the corporate bookmakers. There is the growth of that one big one itself, but also the growth in the number of corporate bookmakers here. As recently as a few weeks ago, I think RGL – and it is not strictly my area anymore – was signing up another one from Victoria, which will add revenue. That, then, will be revenue coming out of Victoria, off Victoria's books onto ours. Does that mean that he is suddenly taking all Territorian punters' money? No. Each of those bookmakers who have located to the Territory over the years have retained, in the main, their punter base from whence they came. Very few in the Australian mix would be Territory punters. Some Territory punters will join, I suspect, simply because they are here, they are known, and they are local. However, very much the major part of that spend on the corporate bookmakers is from other parts of Australia, and that will remain the case.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. We can put all that aspect of the gaming revenue to one side. I am particularly interested in pokies. Do you have the amount that is going into Treasury from poker machines for last year, specifically?

Mr STIRLING: The estimate for 2006-07 for community gaming machine tax is \$22.8m.

Mr MILLS: Again, sorry.

Mr STIRLING: \$22.8m.

Mr MILLS: Okay. What was it the year before?

Mr STIRLING: \$21.4m. No, that was the estimate for 2006-07. I see. For 2005-06 it was \$20.3m.

Mr MILLS: Okay. So, \$20.3m was what was actually received in 2005-06? One more, if I may, for 2004-05?

Mr STIRLING: Nowhere near matches the growth in bookies.

Mr MILLS: No, and I understand ...

Mr STIRLING: Bookies have gone from \$6bn to \$9bn to \$10bn. We will get the 2004-05 figure for you.

Mr MILLS: Okay. While you are going to take that on notice, can I, just for a point of reference this century, from 2001 to present, pokies?

Ms PRINCE: We do not have that level of detail here, but we can get it.

Mr MILLS: Oh, no, that is fine. I am asking that it be taken on notice, that the revenue streams from gaming machines from 2001 until present – do you have to do a special number?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, I have to ask you to restate the question for the purposes of *Hansard*.

Ms PRINCE: We will have it to you before the end of the session.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. I will work it out some percentage increases on that, match it with our population increase. I wonder whether that matches the percentage increases in the amount of money going into amelioration. Would you think that would be the case, Treasurer, with the increases just in gaming - gaming machines; I am not talking about the bookies.

Mr STIRLING: I would suspect not but, again, not everyone who played a gaming machine here in the Territory is a Territorian. We have tourists coming through who, undoubtedly, visit Lasseters and SKYCITY, and probably visit clubs with friends and relations and play those machines. Therefore, whilst there is an increase, you cannot measure it simply straight against population increase. It is not population increase that has driven that increase in corporate bookies ...

Mr MILLS: No, I am happy to put that argument aside.

Mr STIRLING: It is not population increase at all; it is strength of their marketing interstate.

On the amelioration side, there is more going into the Community Benefit Fund as well which, in itself, pays for amelioration services, but also pays for grants to benefit the community right across the Territory. We can get those figures. Is it really, though, the Minister for Racing, Gaming and Licensing who should be dealing with that?

Ms PRINCE: The revenue side is for you. He can deal with the amelioration.

Mr STIRLING: Probably that amelioration question should go to him.

Mr MILLS: So, the revenue received is Treasury?

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Okay. I will leave that for now, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

Mr WOOD: Treasurer, I was wondering if I could get an explanation from the 2005-06 budget which states: 'Diversion of fees and charges to a revenue unit equivalent'. Could you give me an explanation of what that is? Is it so that charges received are [inaudible] automatically, without having to do any normal adjustments?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, at its basis, it is a way of standardising right across – wherever – fees and charges which occur across government, and whatever agency, so that you had the

same thing all across the board. However, I will go to Commissioner of Taxes to explain the body of work that was done. I believe there is still work to be done.

Mr VUKMAN: Mr Chairman, revenue units last year were brought about because levels of fees across government were, I suppose, quite useful in terms of the services they were providing [inaudible]. Fees have been reviewed on regular occasions [inaudible]. The equivalent unit scheme was brought in to standardise the value for [inaudible] fees; that is, they would have to have a dollar base. One level of unit would be \$1 of fee, so each agency, through their submissions, could specify the number of units that would [inaudible] a fee. The value of the unit is able to be indexed on regular occasions, but that is by action of regulation of the [inaudible]. So, change to the value of units could roll out across the fees and charges, that had been representative of [inaudible] units, so, I suppose, they maintain their current value.

Mr WOOD: Is that on top of the change of fees? For instance, the Minister for Planning and Lands recently announced quite large changes to planning applications. It cost nothing to get a rezoning application a couple of months ago; now it cost \$2200. Not only could you have the index going up on that, the minister could also step in and say review it as well, and add another \$1000 on to that.

Mr STIRLING: In will go to the commissioner. I do not think so.

Mr VUKMAN: It is up to the appropriate minister to set the number of units that they want to specify their fee at. That would, generally, be a matter for that particular portfolio concerned. The amount of the unit itself is standardised across all fees and charges so that [inaudible]. The idea behind the scheme is that if you wanted to increase the size of the equivalent unit, you could maybe attach it to CPI - something like that – and that could be an increment, at that time, for the charges.

Mr WOOD: You said the Treasurer could actually increase the revenue unit, which would mean he could increase it right across all departments. Is that correct?

Mr VUKMAN: As I said earlier, and I want to stress, it is about maintaining the currency of the value, obviously, not necessarily setting an individual [inaudible] or altering the base amount of the fee.

Mr WOOD: I suppose what I am getting at, Treasurer, is that it is a form of taxation the government charges on various services the government provides to the public. We are getting an increase in GST, but we are not certainly letting go of some of the money we have. One way to let go of that money is to keep those fees from going up all the time. I wonder whether you are looking the other way a little - receiving extra money from the Commonwealth via the GST, but still keeping our charges still fairly high. We are doing that by now being able to change this revenue unit each year right across the board.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, let us be very careful. This is not taxation; this is fee for service and, generally, below the cost that it costs government to provide that service. Some of these fees and charges were looked at a couple of years ago – and these have all come by way of submission to Cabinet when these decisions were being made. They had not been looked at since 1983, so the relative worth of the fee was really not worth being charged at the level, given it had not been touched for, I think, 13 or 14 years in some cases.

As a principle, we do look across all of the jurisdictions. We do not want to be the most expensive, and we never want to be the cheapest. As a rule, in these type of fee for service mixes, we try to get at the middle of the pack. However, when you look at something that has not been touched for 13 or 14 years and the principles are wrong, in the sense that your fee for service was the same as if you were adding a shed on your block in your back yard, as it was to build a 25-storey apartment block. That is not the way we see it. We see there are bigger costs involved in building a 25-storey lot than a shed in your back yard – bigger costs to government; bigger fee incurred by the person building it. That was the rationale behind where we went there.

Mr WOOD: Yes, I want to discuss whether it is a tax or a ...

Mr STIRLING: It is not a tax.

Mr WOOD: Well, it is a form of revenue that the government receives. You cannot ...

Mr MILLS: I am with you, Gerry.

Mr WOOD: We have to pay. My question, basically, was related to the extra income that we do get; whether we could have fewer charges. I will move on.

Can I get clarification of the leasing method for the pastoral properties. Is it a 2% charge on the UCV of half the property?

Mr STIRLING: It was. Maybe the Minister for – whose area is this in? - NRETA, because I am not sure if it has been promulgated and known. Certainly, the Executive Officer of the Cattlemen's Association knows. Has it been struck formally and what is required to do that, I am not sure whether I am not at liberty to talk about it. But certainly, the minister for NRETA. You are right, that is what it was.

Mr WOOD: You are saying it has come to agreement, been struck and changed?

Mr STIRLING: Well, there has been a decision.

Mr WOOD: But we do not know the decision yet.

Mr STIRLING: Well, I do. I do not know if I am at liberty to talk about it, but the minister will know.

Mr WOOD: Oh, right. The passage for this charge is the minister for Primary Industries?

Mr STIRLING: NRETA.

Ms PRINCE: NRETA – pastoral lands.

Mr WOOD: NRETA. They tell you sometimes.

Mr STIRLING: I am not trying to be secretive. I just do not think it is not strictly in my area.

Mr WOOD: No, no. Sometimes ...

Mr STIRLING: I can say that the first information we had around valuations did make a lot of sense. Further work was done around that that seemed to make more sense and gave us confidence in order to make a decision. I believe it is a three-year decision, but if you ask the minister for the Environment and the Arts ...

Mr WOOD: I sometimes find it hard to know which minister owns what.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, sure.

Mr WOOD: A favourite subject of mine, Treasurer, is stamp duty. How much stamp duty was received in this past financial year from housing? The reason I am asking this is because housing prices have gone through the roof and, of course, the government is not going to go crook at that too much. I presume stamp duty is a percentage of the value of the house?

Mr STIRLING: Yes. I do not have a breakdown, Mr Chairman, to housing. I have a conveyance duty of \$97.4m for the 2006-07 final year estimate. However, we do not break down between all different parts of commercial and residential.

Mr WOOD: What conveyance duty was paid? What is it actually in?

Mr STIRLING: Paid on the purchase and conveyance of land? I will ask the Under Treasurer or the commissioner to ...

Mr WOOD: As distinct from stamp duty, or are they the same thing? They are the same thing; you are just trying to confuse me.

Mr STIRLING: Another word.

Mr WOOD: Luckily, I have the member for Port Darwin here to help me – a lot of experience in this area.

Mr STIRLING: She probably paid a fair bit of it herself.

Mr WOOD: Treasurer, has government given any consideration – and I am not talking about first homeowners here – to reducing stamp duty on houses. Although we talk about first homeowners, there are many people who might be buying a house for other reasons, such as a marriage break-up or they have been required to move to the north for some other reason. There are other reasons for people buying a house that just do not fit into the first homeowners category. We also, again, got a large sum of money from GST. Has the government considered reducing stamp duty?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, if they are buying it to live in it, there is the principal place of residence rebate, as well as the first homeowner concession, through which now, they do not pay anything up to the first \$350 000 for the first homebuyer. There is a \$2500 rebate on the principal place of residence; that is, you are buying that house to live in. We look at the mix right across the board every budget – the mix of tax on sectors of the community and the economy – obviously, with a view to what is affordable and against commitments made.

For example, we have commitments still to meet around further reductions in payroll tax that have not been met yet, and there is a figure in the forward estimates. I would not sit here and predict what next year's Budget Cabinet might do, but I have some sense that, with the property price increase, when the percentages were set – and they slide up to a top of 5.4%, I think, at \$500 000?

Mr VUKMAN: \$500 000.

Mr STIRLING: That attracts the highest. When they were set, there was no doubt a \$500 000 house in the Northern Territory would be right at the top of premium sales. Not so much these days. It is well in the mix. Therefore, you do get, in a sense, that bracket creep where there would be justification to look closely at it. We do, and it is a matter of competing priorities against what is available by way of tax reduction, what commitments are there that have to be met, and how far we can go.

We chose to do it on principal place of residence and first homebuyers because we have the lowest rate of home ownership in our community, in Australia. We were looking to stabilise that, particularly with first homebuyers. That has been an effective strategy.

Will we look again? Yes, it will be part of the mix and views that come to Budget Cabinet next year and the year after. It is an annual process. However, I am one person. As the Treasurer, whilst I will have my views on any item in budget, in the Cabinet process, I do not necessarily prevail. There are nine ministers and you never ever preempt a Cabinet decision – or you do so at your peril.

Mr WOOD: I will ask the member for Blain. Do you believe that?

Mr MILLS: No. Sounds good.

Mr STIRLING: Although we would be better off if we did have more say, but could we put up with 800 ministers?

A member: The power of one, Syd.

Mr WOOD: You know my views on first homeowners in relation to cheaper land. However, without getting into that particular argument, has the Treasury looked at the present first homeowner grant system and built in a model in relation to actual income earned by some of these people we call battlers, first homeowners or low-income earners, to see whether they could actually buy a house and land package under one of your schemes? Even if they could, have they estimated whether these people would be going into debt not, say, for 25 years, but for 45 years? Has there been some work done on this, because they are the areas that concern me. You

increase the homeowner grant, but you put people in debt for the rest of their life, or is it just the case that the house prices now in Darwin are \$390 000 for a median house, or, in the rural area where land is now up to \$270 000 – just for a block of land – it is unaffordable for a person on a low income to buy a house/land package anymore.

Mr STIRLING: I guess what work has been done around that was considerable, in conjunction with Housing and Treasury around affordability – inside HomeNorth, I am trying to get to – and restructuring HomeNorth to ensure it remained sustainable and viable out there in the market. To explain quickly, I was of the view that the way it was set it was not really working, and it might, in fact, in part at least in some parts of the Territory, had the effect of forcing prices up, as part of that. That was a real problem for us if it was ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I am going to interrupt there, sorry, Treasurer. I have been informed that our Hansard system has stopped recording and we are going to need five minutes to get it rebooted. Some of your comments may not have been recorded ...

Mr STIRLING: I can go back on them – no problem.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will adjourn for five minutes and resume shortly.

The committee suspended.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I call you back to order. I understand that the equipment is back on line. Member for Nelson, you had the floor.

Mr WOOD: My question, Treasurer, was about whether your department looks at modelling in relation to the first homeowner grant to see what levels of income, I suppose, versus median house prices, relate to whether people can actually purchase a house, considering there are single-income people or low-income people who would like to get a house, but fear that they either cannot obtain a loan or, if they can get one, that loan could go on for a considerable length of time – until nearly the day they die.

Mr STIRLING: Thanks, Mr Chairman. I was explaining that HomeNorth is very much a realisation of all of that policy work between Housing and Treasury, and a great deal of work went into understanding what HomeNorth was achieving against the objective set. And that is to assist those lower income, particularly the ones who are having difficulty mustering a deposit in order to get a commercial loan. We have to be careful on the one hand of not banging up against the commercial sector because there are banks and financial institutions out there to do that, so the parameters had to be directed towards those who could not quite make it into the commercial sector, but we give them a hand up under HomeNorth on the low income.

When we analysed where HomeNorth was taking us, there was a huge imbalance in the sense of single people getting into those homes. That is a good objective in itself, but it was not our only objective. We wanted young families to get in there as well. Hence, the enormous policy development around making HomeNorth better structured, upping the income for those with families. We are keeping the singles in there in the mix as well, but trying to get the scoop of balance across to young families as opposed to the preponderance of singles that we saw were benefiting from it. Given the way it sort of was not realising its objectives, and there was a point when I thought maybe we let the scheme disappear until a critical dinner meeting I had with bankers, and they said: 'What about HomeNorth?', and I said: 'I do not really think it is really achieving what we wanted to achieve out there in the marketplace. There might be things that we could do'. They tossed a few ideas around. They said: 'It is a very important scheme for us'. I said: 'How so?' And it was because HomeNorth gets the person in with - I know you decry the upsurge in property values, but that actually increases the equity that the HomeNorth purchaser, or any purchaser, has in their dwelling to the point they get the business within a relatively short time. Maybe it is only two to four to five years that the HomeNorth purchaser, they have stabilised, they know they can handle the payments, job is going all right, they are all secure. They then go to the commercial bank and say: 'This is the situation I have. I am paying this much. I now want to buy out the percentage that government has'. They are more than happy to fund them into it.

Now, those people could not have got a loan in the first place, but within two, three, four years they are off in the commercial sector. They pay the government back. That money goes back into HomeNorth to assist another HomeNorth purchaser in a similar situation.

The way we have structured it now, I am confident that it will better realise objectives across the board. We have strict monitoring around that so that it is reviewable each year as it goes, particularly around thresholds, although we have set thresholds at 85% of the median price in the given locale. Before it was fixed across the Territory, that did not make sense for like Tennant Creek to Darwin and we saw prices move more quickly in some places than others. So it is much more strategically focused as a result of that policy work. Treasury and Housing understand much more about the market and the potential target group they are aiming at. I think for this year we are fine; let's have a close look at it in a year's time.

Mr WOOD: Just one other question, minister. I noticed from the Budget 2005-06 one of the priorities was to finalise legislation for a new Tax Administration Act. What stage is that at?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I will ask Mr Vukman.

Mr VUKMAN: Our legislation has been through an extensive round of consultation. The results of that consultation came back to Treasury. Treasury is now considering those and considering the recommendations to government.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That concludes consideration of Output 5.1.

Output 5.2 – Tax Related Subsidies

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to Output 5.2 – Tax Related Subsidies. Any questions?

Mr MILLS: No.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes Output 5.2 and Output Group 5.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 6 – ECONOMIC REGULATION

Output 6.1 - Economic Regulation

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 6.0, Output 6.1 - Economic Regulation. Any questions?

Mr MILLS: We do have a category just for non-output specific, have we?

Mr STIRLING: Yes. You can go.

Mr MILLS: Thanks, Syd. I am just giving everyone a fair go because I have been talking a bit so I will just make sure of that. I do not trust this Treasurer. Yes, that is fine. I am right.

Mr WOOD: In that section on the budget, on page 57 under the heading 'Economic Regulation' it basically says in the absence of competition, your role is to simulate competitive market conduct to prevent the misuse of monopoly power. I wondered if I could get an explanation on how you do that, please.

Mr STIRLING: It sounds like you are talking about Power and Water.

Mr WOOD: It does not specify in that.

Mr STIRLING: It might be the Utilities Commissioner, but I will just check with the Under Treasurer, who is right on it.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Wood, this Output Group does apply to the Utilities Commissioner. That is a completely independent office with statutory responsibility for a number of things. He reports directly to the Treasurer but is housed in Treasury for administrative efficiency. He has a number of statutory roles that are set out in various items of legislation. His primary task is to set network prices so if there were other participants in the electricity market, they would need access to Power and Water's networks to distribute any electricity that they would generate, or if they were a

retailer, they would need access to those services. He determines a network price based on criteria that are common across Australia. He also receives complaints from customers about pricing. Usually those complaints relate to customers that are competitive customers with high levels of usage, but this does reflect the fact that his role is relatively limited in the Northern Territory, given our current situation, but these changes in the act under which he works were introduced in 2000 as part of the electricity reforms that the Territory really had no option but to introduce.

Mr WOOD: Do we have any private people still in the electricity market?

Mr STIRLING: No we do not, but the Utilities Commissioner is to make sure that the field is a level playing field so that Power and Water, being a government-owned corporation, does not have any undue advantage over someone coming into the market, be they a generator, retailer, distributor or any player at all coming in to the market, and that is the critical role of the Utilities Commissioner plays. The role won't change, but the body doing it might if the Northern Territory was to enter the national energy market because they are forming up a complete national energy market, and there are views from the Commonwealth that they would like the Territory to be in. We are happy to go in, but we are very different from, say, Victoria and New South Wales which have a multitude of private players with the market all segmented between those who make it, those who distribute it, those who retail it, whereas our body does everything.

So there needs to be an understanding of the very different nature of the market. We are not connected, of course, to the main body of Australia either, so if we go that way and do enter a national energy market, we would no longer have our own utilities commission, but would come under the national level of that. We would play the same role.

Mr WOOD: One more question then. What happens, say, as Alice Springs develops as a solar town and people want to hook into the grid? Will the money that they receive for producing electricity be set by the Utilities Commissioner or would it be set by Power and Water?

Mr STIRLING: Good question, Mr Chairman.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Wood, I believe it depends entirely on the level at which they generate and whether they will be selling that into the grid or not. I think that is a long way down the track.

Mr WOOD: I had a feeling that is part of what a solar city is about, it is actually to produce electricity and what you do not need goes back into the grid at a set price, I suppose.

Ms PRINCE: Yes, but I do not think that development is something that is going to happen immediately.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, that concludes consideration of this output group.

NON-OUTPUT SPECIFIC BUDGET-RELATED QUESTIONS

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any non-output specific budget-related questions?

Mr MILLS: Mr Chairman, one of them may be recognised as being specific, but I forgot to ask it at the relevant place. I will see how we go. Treasurer, when we consider the impost of the cost of housing on first home buyers in particular, you decide to create a subsidy, which has merit but, in assessing that decision and the economic impact of that decision on the marketplace, is economic advice provided to you by Treasury on that matter, on that decision that I presume is a policy decision of government, that you receive economic advice from Treasury on that decision prior to making it?

Mr STIRLING: Treasury is, of course, the agency bringing forward submissions and recommendations of that type. I would be interested in how you saw it actually impacting on the market, setting a stamp duty-free threshold, and why you think that, for first home buyers, necessarily impacts on the market.

Mr MILLS: The reason for that is, advice received from the industry is that, once the concession is released into the marketplace, the cost of housing rises to match the concession that has been provided. Is that your observation, Treasurer?

Mr STIRLING: No, and I do not believe that is necessarily the reality, because, the first home buyer maximum concession is \$350 000 threshold, a bit over \$15 000. So you are saying, 'Oh, it is a first home buyer so we will put it up by \$15 000', which would then rule them out. I mean everyone has their limit, haven't they, in terms of purchasing, and maybe their own purchasing limit goes a bit further because they do not have to find the \$15 000 in terms of the stamp duty. The Under Treasurer might want to contribute more, but I do not think that would be our view in the same way that we did believe that the previous thresholds around HomeNorth probably did have an effect on some of the market. Not so this, however, I will check with the Under Treasurer.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we provide advice to the government, both on the revenue aspects of stamp duties and the stamp duty concessions and, in doing so, we have regard to any economic flow-on. I think we would recognise that there is the potential for a flow on to prices, but that can be limited to the extent possible by the design of the scheme. We certainly took that view when we were providing advice on HomeNorth and working up the options there.

In relation to stamp duty and first home owner concessions, first home owner is still a very small proportion of the home purchase market and the decision before the government was whether there would be greater benefits than disadvantages of increasing the first home owner concession having regard to the increase in house prices, and was that likely to cause any material flow-on effect across the board to prices. We took the view that there was greater benefit to be gained by increasing the concession and that the flow-on effect would be relatively limited.

Mr MILLS: As a member of parliament, my electorate takes in an area where housing is probably the market sought by first home buyers, being cheaper. Reports were that the moment the concession was released into the marketplace, prices moved upwards to accommodate the concession that had been provided. I was wondering whether there is economic advice to show that that did in fact happen; as a result of the concession that the market adjusted to meet the concession, therefore once again moving it one step away from a first home buyer.

Ms PRINCE: I do not think we would have any information that would allow us to draw that conclusion absolutely.

Mr MILLS: All right. It would perhaps be anecdotal or an understanding of how the marketplace works. Could I put it to you that it is not such a concern? If that be the case, the increase in value does increase the stamp duty take by Treasury. Would not that be the case? So what you have given by way of concession you receive a return by way of the increased value through stamp duty receipts?

Mr STIRLING: When you have a growing market, as we have had the last few years, in house prices, it stands to reason both in terms of numbers of sales and in the value of those sales.

Mr MILLS: Okay, I understand. The next question I think is non-specific to an outcome is the Territory Taxation Administration Liaison Committee. How regularly does this group meet with Treasury and who do they meet with?

Mr VUKMAN: We try to meet twice a year. It just depends on what is on the arena to discuss.

Mr MILLS: So through the Treasurer, when did they last meet?

Mr VUKMAN: The last meeting was, I think, in October last year.

Mr MILLS: Is it an active group in your view?

Mr VUKMAN: It is a group that does provide comments on, as was mentioned earlier by the member for Nelson, under the *Tax Administration Act*. There has been some discussion with that on there for consultation so it was quite active about that. Where we have guidelines we send them through to the committee to get comment before we release. That happens, I wouldn't say frequently, but whenever we have a guideline, once every couple of months.

Mr MILLS: This committee, how is it comprised and how are the members nominated or become members of this committee?

Mr VUKMAN: The committee comprises tax practitioners – that is, accountants and lawyers who have something to do with Territory [inaudible] taxes. Also, industry groups have representatives on it. In terms of the membership, it is by members urging someone else to go on it. There is a charter to it which is on the website ...

Mr MILLS: On their website?

Mr VUKMAN: On our website – the Territory government website.

Mr MILLS: Okay, thank you. That is all the questions in that area.

Finally, there is the question I should have asked in Revenue. It relates to insurance. I am having difficulty understanding how to measure the amount of revenue collected by way of duties on insurance and, more so, how that revenue mechanism works. If I could have advice, firstly, on the nature of duties on insurance – what kind of insurance are levied; and the amounts. I have to take the amount part of that on notice, in a similar form as from 2001 up to the present time. That would just be the trend of revenue receipts with regard to insurance duties.

First up, if I may ask my last question, is an insight into the insurance area and the duties on insurance – what kind of insurance is levied ...

Mr STIRLING: Yes, we might have to chase up some. Mr Vukman.

Mr VUKMAN: There are two lots of insurance revenue. The first one applies to general insurance policies. That goes at a rate of 10% of the premium paid per policy – the rate they pay. There are also life insurance policies. That rate is 10¢ per \$100 or part thereof for the sum insured ...

Mr MILLS: Sorry to stop you. Just on that, does that rate remain the same for ...

Mr VUKMAN: Yes, for quite a long time. Also, within life insurance, a duty applies to temporary policies. Their rate of duty is 5% of the first year's premium. That is the duty for insurance.

Mr MILLS: Thank you for that. The final question is, having that in mind, the flow into Treasury of those duties from 2001 to the present time.

Ms PRINCE: Mr Mills, we have at hand the actual from 2005-06 through to the estimate for 2007-08. We do not have the ones for the earlier years, but we will have it within session.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. That is all from me.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Mr Wood, do you have anything else?

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, the Under Treasurer made a statement earlier in response to a question from the member for Blain, saying that the number of people who applied for first homeowner loans was quite small. Considering the waiting list for public housing is somewhere between 24 and 27 months, is there a group of people out there who are, basically, left out of this whole process, or have trouble finding a place to live? They, for instance, could be a single income family – not a single person – who do not have enough money to get into the HomeNorth system because of the price of housing. When they apply for a house, of course, it is public housing, and there is a huge waiting list. Does the government have a concern about that group of people who must be out there 'living off their parents', or struggling to find a place to live?

Mr STIRLING: I would suspect that there would be people in that situation who would be eligible for Commonwealth government rental assistance. However, even with HomeNorth, which is much more user-friendly than the going to the commercial world to secure finance, they still have to demonstrate the ability to pay. It is taxpayers' money that is in the scheme, and government has to have a knowledge of the risk, and as much certainty that you can that it is going to be repaid. It does carry a very low level of – what do you call that when they do not ...

Ms PRINCE: If they do not pay, forfeiture.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, forfeiture. I suggest that it works very well. Do we know what those numbers might be; how many people might there be? I am not sure. I will ask if the Under Treasurer has anything to add?

Ms PRINCE: No, Mr Wood, we do not have that information about people who might be falling between the cracks, as you say. However, normally people in those groups would be picked up by some form of Commonwealth government assistance through the Commonwealth Rent Assistance Scheme or some other benefits.

We know that the HomeNorth scheme in the Territory is far more generous than in other places. It is an uncapped scheme, so that there is no upper limit on the number of applications, whereas the scheme that was introduced in Western Australian earlier this year had an upper cap of a few thousand people, and I think they had ten times the applications as they did available finance.

Mr WOOD: I was leaving these questions for the minister for Lands, but what concerns me is the government owns land. I do not know whether Treasury actually values land before it is sold, or some other department?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, they really are Lands and Planning.

Mr WOOD: As you know, to me, that is where you fix up the cracks and reduce what is one of our major costs at the moment: the price of land.

CENTRAL HOLDING AUTHORITY

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, the committee will now move on to the Central Holding Authority. There are no questions for the Central Holding Authority?

Mr MILLS: I believe I have asked all my questions for that area.

Mr WOOD: I am right too, Mr Chairman.

Mr STIRLING: I am disappointed. Mr Wood usually asks what it is.

Mr WOOD: I thought it was a garage for Corvettes.

NORTHERN TERRITORY TREASURY CORPORATION

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now move on to the Northern Territory Treasury Corporation. Treasurer, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Mr STIRLING: I do not think so, Mr Chairman.

Business Line

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now consider questions regarding the Business Line. Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: I just wanted to say I know who is going to change ...

Mr WOOD: The pressure is on, isn't it?

Mr MILLS: Yes, come on, Gerry.

Mr WOOD: No, I am okay.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That now concludes consideration of all Treasury Outputs Groups. On behalf of the committee, I thank all officers from the Northern Territory Treasury for attending today. Thank you for the information you have provided.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I add my thanks to the Under Treasurer and the many staff who attended for their contribution.

Ms PRINCE: We have the information on community gaming machines tax and stamp duty on insurance since 2001 we can table.

Mr MILLS: Thank you very much.

POWER AND WATER

Mr CHAIRMAN: Moving through the schedule, Treasurer, the next area for consideration is Power and Water, with specific reference relating to the 2006-07 Statement of Corporate Intent. Do you wish to make a statement in relation to that?

Mr STIRLING: I think I did in my opening remarks, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: Isn't this dealt with on Friday when we speak to ...

Mr STIRLING: It is just if you had ...

Ms PRINCE: Any issues in relation to community service obligations. Do you think you ...

Mr MILLS: No, no, that is fine.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, we will move on.

[**Editor's Note:** The Committee proceeded to examine Department of Justice budget allocation.]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the sake of speeding things up, I will start off by repeating that witnesses, as you would be aware, evidence given to the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, the giving of false or misleading evidence to the committee may constitute a contempt of the Legislative Assembly pursuant to the Powers and Privileges legislation. Officers should also be aware that, when they are requested by their minister to provide answers, they are not required to comment on matters of policy.

I now welcome the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and invite him to introduce the officials accompanying him and, if he wishes, to make an opening statement on behalf of the Department of Justice.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman. I have with me the Department of Justice Chief Executive Officer, Greg Shanahan; the Deputy CEO, Policy Coordination, Elizabeth Morris; and the Deputy CEO, Business Strategy and Performance, Dr Terry Dreier. Other relevant Justice staff are present today and will be called on as needed.

I would like to make a brief opening statement in relation to my responsibilities as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General which I hope the committee will find helpful as the afternoon progresses. As members are aware, the objective of proceedings is to examine the budget for this department, and to respond to questions which impact on that budget. The 2007-08 Budget Papers provide a significant level of detail relevant to the 2007-08 Budget with particular output budget data provided in Budget Paper No 3. It provides information on the budget of the department detailed down to output level. I welcome questions from the committee in relation to that data. The committee should be aware that performance information contained in Budget Paper No 3 was actual data recorded up to and including the third quarter of 2006-07 extrapolated for the full year. Financial information provided is based on actual data from the government accounting system and, in most cases, current as at 30 April 2007.

I would also like to note that while the Department of Justice incorporated Racing, Gaming and Licensing during the current year, questions in relation to that area should be addressed to the responsible minister, Chris Burns, tomorrow. This year, the Department of Justice also welcomed Community Harmony into the agency.

Last year's Budget Paper No 3 recorded an output cost budget of \$135.3m for the Department of Justice for 2006-07. In this year's Budget Paper No 3, the output cost estimate for 2006-07 is recorded as \$158.8m, the difference \$23.4m. This figure is the difference between the budget amount provided for at the commencement of 2006-07, and the budget position recorded around budget preparation time in May 2007. In other words, the figure of \$158.8m is Treasury's statement of the Department of Justice's 2006-07 budgetary position at the time of the preparation of the 2007-08 budget.

The major variations to make up the \$23.4m are: \$0.3m movement in federally funded programs; \$0.5m movement in judicial funding; \$19.7m in funding for Racing, Gaming and Licensing and Community Harmony; \$2.4m in additional budget cover as well as carry forward; and \$0.5m in other sundry movements. Significant budget adjustments are being provided for in 2007-08 in relation to the following items: \$1.5m to boost Community Corrections' services to ensure compliance with orders of strict supervision of offenders, to manage high caseloads and high risk offenders, and to ensure staff is appropriately qualified; an additional \$0.67m to provide resources primarily for the Director of Public Prosecutions to deal with criminal property forfeiture matters; an increase of \$0.47 provided to the Fines Recovery Unit to increase their capacity to recover government debt; and \$0.15m to cover additional costs associated with providing prisoner health care services.

Mr Chairman, I am happy to receive questions from the committee.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I indicate that this session was due to finish at 6 pm, but we will extend it to 6.10 pm in light of the problems we have had at the start of the session. Are there any questions in relation to the minister's opening statement?

Ms CARNEY: Yes, thanks, Mr Chairman. Attorney-General, welcome to your first estimates as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Although I was fond of Peter Toyne, things were

getting a bit dull. Welcome to your staff as well. I wonder if I can ask some questions in relation to your statement similar to those asked by my colleague, Terry Mills, earlier today. They are pretty straightforward and I hope we can rip through them. The first one is: how much of the total appropriation to which you referred for this output group goes towards corporate and executive services?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I will ask Mr Shanahan or Mr Dreier.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I ask witnesses to state their name before they speak for the purposes of Hansard recording, thank you.

Dr DREIER: Terry Dreier, Deputy Chief Executive Officer. The total corporate management costs for 2006-07 were \$9.29m. The costs included the Department of Justice executive area, the Department of Justice secretariat area – would you like the amounts read out?

Ms CARNEY: If you have it in table form, Mr Dreier, that would be good.

Mr DREIER: Yes, we can do that. It just requires a little explanation.

Ms CARNEY: Terry – the other Terry – can I have that to go through it and I will give it back to you to copy.

Mr DREIER: Sorry, that is my only copy.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We might need another copy so that other members can refer to it as well ...

Ms CARNEY: By the time these questions come up ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: You could go back to your questions as well.

Ms CARNEY: So we are back to square one.

Mr DREIER: The 2006-07 corporate strategic services budget comprises the Department of Justice executive area for \$0.95m, the Department of Justice secretariat area for \$0.29m, the Department of Justice HR and Industrial Relations Unit for \$0.7m, finance infrastructure and general services \$1.1m, and the Information Services Unit \$1.4m.

We get to this item called IJIS and Mainframe. There are a number of corporate costs which we, as a department, pay for centrally. These are charges which apply to various divisions within the department: there is \$1.7m in IJIS, which is our main application, and mainframe charges; the DCIS charges are \$2m; then we have the reception area, corporate communications, which is \$0.57m; the audit services is \$0.18m; and apprentices and cadets is \$0.25m; making a total of \$9.296m.

Ms CARNEY: When I asked you before, unless I wrote it down incorrectly, I wrote \$9.23m.

Dr DREIER: I beg your pardon, \$9.29m.

Ms CARNEY: \$9.29m. Okay, thank you.

Dr DREIER: \$9.296m to be exact.

Mr WARREN: Just through the Chair, Dr Dreier, and I cannot quite hear either of you talking at the moment, that's all. Can you speak up a bit, please?

Dr DREIER: Certainly.

Ms CARNEY: Thanks for that. My next question is: what is the cost per square metre for cleaning the Department of Justice offices, and is the cleaning undertaken by contract or internal cleaners?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I think it is probably a Properties question but I will just check that with ...

Ms CARNEY: Yes, it probably is but someone ...

Mr STIRLING: No, it needs to be redirected.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So, this is a DCIS one. It is in the Properties. So the building that DoJ works from, or buildings, they are leased and it is through DCIS. Correct? Yes. Okay. What is the square metre size ...

A witness: Sorry, except for the court house and the prisons which the government own, yes.

Ms CARNEY: Of course, yes. What is ...

Mr STIRLING: What is the situation there? Different for the courts, Mr Chairman.

Mr SHANAHAN: Do you want the costs for that?

Ms CARNEY: For the sake of completeness, why not, you may as well.

Mr SHANAHAN: We will have to take that on notice though, I think.

Mr STIRLING: But we will get it back to you before the session.

Ms CARNEY: What is the square metre size of the CEOs office, that is the CEO of Justice, and the Director of Public Prosecutions?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Shanahan should know that.

Mr SHANAHAN: Mine is a lot smaller than his office.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If I can just get you, Mr Shanahan, to state your name prior to answering.

Mr SHANAHAN: We can get ...

Mr STIRLING: Someone is going to get the tape measure out now. They will have it back shortly.

Mr SHANAHAN: We will get it back to you on notice – the CEO and the DPP.

Ms CARNEY: The CEO and the DPP.

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes, his office is bigger.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. We will put it on notice, but are you indicating that you can get the answers before the end?

Mr STIRLING: Very, very quickly.

Mr SHANAHAN: We are going to endeavour to.

Question on Notice 2.1

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you want that formally on notice?

Ms CARNEY: I think we had better, otherwise we will lose it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So, if I can ask you to restate the question?

Mr STIRLING: His office is not very big, it will not take long.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. What is the square metre size of the CEO of Justice's office and the DPP?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Attorney-General, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 2.1.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Next question in relation to advertising. How much of the total appropriation goes to the cost of advertising, and what are the design and production costs of radio, television, newspaper, magazine and other medium?

Mr STIRLING: Thanks, Mr Chairman. Dr Dreier.

Dr DREIER: Could you just give us those points again, please?

Ms CARNEY: Yes. Total appropriation that goes towards advertising and what are the design and production costs of radio, TV, newspaper, magazine and other medium?

Mr SHANAHAN: We would have to take that on notice because we have the central costs but all the different divisions do their own things also.

Question on Notice 2.2

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, for *Hansard*, could you please restate the question?

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of advertising, and what are the design and production costs of radio, television, newspaper, magazine and other medium?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Mr STIRLING: I was just checking we could get it back within the session, but it is not a big - we will endeavour to get the answer back within the session, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will repeat that as on notice. For the purposes of *Hansard* that is question No 2.2.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. What is the cost of all advertising media which included the minister's image?

Mr STIRLING: I think I know the answer to this, but I will ask Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: There were two corporate campaigns that actually featured the minister's photograph during the 2006-07 year. One was *Breaking the Cycle*. The total campaign cost was \$17 800 and the other one was preparations for Justice show circuit display. The budget for the four regional shows including exhibition panels and the like was \$35 000.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Minister, what was the cost of postage associated with the mass communication of the advertising material?

Mr SHANAHAN: That was included within the \$17 000.

Ms CARNEY: I see, okay. What is the cost of policy research or message development research in relation to the material that came from the Department of Justice for 2006-07?

Mr SHANAHAN: Sorry, a point of clarification. Is that external costs or all costs including our own?

Ms CARNEY: Yes, all costs incurred, or paid, or borne by your department on policy research and message development research.

Mr SHANAHAN: I think that would be a guess at best. I am not sure that we actually record time spent undertaking those tasks internally. It would have to be an estimate.

Ms CARNEY: I have a question in relation to consultants, and that might cover it.

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes, we can do externals quite easily.

Ms CARNEY: So the answer from an internal point of view is just staff time, is it?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: How much, if any, of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of media liaison and monitoring?

Mr SHANAHAN: Again, the costs associated with that would be internal. The total budget for our communications section is \$541 000 of which \$353 000 is personnel.

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, can you slow down? The total budget for communications is?

Mr SHANAHAN: \$541 000, that is our central Corporate Communications, which includes personnel of \$353 000 and operational of \$188 000. They do all sorts of things, including preparation for annual reports, compiling various publications which are produced by the agency. So in terms of the extent to which those funds are applied to media liaison, that would again be a bit of a guesstimate on our part.

Ms CARNEY: But you have a communications budget of \$541 000 and it is all contained in that group?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes, except occasionally there might be a campaign done by the Liquor Commission, for example, as part of their dry area declarations and Consumer Affairs might run their own campaign on a particular matter, but that is not the corporate budget.

Ms CARNEY: Are there any additional costs of media monitoring and, if so, what costs are associated with transcription services?

Mr SHANAHAN: There are none.

Ms CARNEY: None, okay. In relation to reviews, could you detail what, if any, reviews were undertaken by the department in 2006-07 including the number, cost and description?

Mr STIRLING: Ask me the consultancy one. I can answer that.

Ms CARNEY: I will come to that, Syd, don't worry.

Dr DREIER: The total of our consultants budget for ...

Mr STIRLING: No, this is reviews, Dr Dreier. I have the consultancy one covered, thank you.

Mr SHANAHAN: Another point I have to ask, are you talking external or internal?

Ms CARNEY: No, I am not talking about the review of legislation. I am talking about departmental reviews.

Mr SHANAHAN: The only one we have undertaken this year is the McNamara review which is an examination of Corrections or prisons. I do not know that we have paid for that yet. There were a couple of others for ...

Ms CARNEY: Can you list what they were, please?

Mr STIRLING: Who carried out this review?

Mr SHANAHAN: Shane McNamara carried out the review.

Ms CARNEY: And you do not have a bill yet? You said you did not know how much it cost.

Mr SHANAHAN: It is around \$30 000.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Next review. You said there were three, I think? Okay, the McNamara review has concluded?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Is that a publicly available document?

Mr STIRLING: Not yet.

Ms CARNEY: Will it be?

Mr STIRLING: I made a commitment to the unions that we would share it at an appropriate time.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. How long did the review go for, when did it start?

Mr STIRLING: About eight weeks.

Dr DREIER: It started probably early April and finished mid to late May.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I would like to ask you some questions about consultants, and I am sure you will be able to answer them.

How much of the total of appropriation goes towards the cost of engaging consultants, that is, how were they appointed, ie, by tender, certificate of exemption, short-term contract, etcetera? How many? What were their specific tasks? Who were they, and what did they cost?

Mr STIRLING: I am so disappointed, Mr Chairman, she changed the question - I cannot answer it now. However, Mr Dreier will be able to because I am not quite sure where the other information is? I can tell you the costs ...

Ms CARNEY: What question would you have liked me to ask?

Mr STIRLING: What it cost?

Ms CARNEY: Okay, how much were the consultants?

Mr STIRLING: \$214 819.

Ms CARNEY: Can I ask you to provide me with details as to how were the consultants appointed, by tender, certificate of exemption, short term contract? How many were they? You probably have this in tabled form. I think we do this pretty much every year.

Mr STIRLING: Yes. Mr Chairman, it is probably easier to table the information, including the reasons where there are certificates of exemptions, and the full list, as a rule?

Mr SHANAHAN: The list which we have certificates of exemptions details for are not necessarily consultants. They include any consultants that might have been (inaudible) but they could also include purchases.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, maybe if you table the document, we can have a look, and then if we have any follow-up questions ...

Mr STIRLING: I am happy to table that, but we still need ...

Ms CARNEY: We wanted: how much did they cost? Who were they? What were the tasks? And, how were they appointed, tender, C of E etcetera?

Mr STIRLING: We have some information on that, Mr Chairman. There will be more information on these following tabled papers.

Mr SHANAHAN: There are two documents I would like to table here. One is a total figure, which is \$214 000, which is the one the Attorney-General referred to; and what we have broken down the details of those consultancies where the expenditure exceeded \$10 000. We have those itemised including the purpose for which they were engaged.

Ms CARNEY: We will wait for those and get back to you if we need to, thank you.

In relation to staffing, how much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of staffing, and can you include the number of FTEs, and the number of employees at each level? If you have it in table form it might be quicker, if not.

Dr DREIER: We are happy to provide you with this: the FTE staffing numbers by output and sub-output ...

Ms CARNEY: Can I interrupt. When you say you are happy to provide me this, are you talking about – so you are going to table it?

Dr DREIER: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so I can put the pen down.

Dr DREIER: The FTE staffing numbers by designation and division for pay 24 of 2005-06 compared with pay 23 of 2006-07 showing variations, and anticipating the question about FTE for executives, we have a table on that.

Ms CARNEY: It is a little cumbersome, obviously, although I am thankful that you are going to table it. But from the documents you have provided I will, do I take it, get the answers to the number of full time equivalents and the number of employees at each level?

Dr DREIER: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: I have copies of the same document here. I think I should have two different documents. Okay, so I want two copies of everything.

I am so sorry, but we need to backtrack because there is a bit of problem here. You tabled a document in relation to the \$214 000 worth of consultants, yes? And that is neither of those documents I am showing you now?

Dr DREIER: No.

Ms CARNEY: You also tabled a document showing the breakdown of consultants. Is that this document?

Dr DREIER: No.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so we are still waiting for those two. All right, we will keep an eye on that. And the FTE document is still waiting? Okay, we will march on.

I would like to ask a question about airfares. What is the total appropriation that was spent on airfares between Darwin and Alice Springs in 2006-07? That includes the cost of airfares between Darwin and Alice Springs - no I am sorry I will re-state it: how much of the total appropriation was spent on airfares between Darwin and Alice Springs for DoJ staff?

Mr STIRLING: Dr Dreier?

Dr DREIER: The figure of intrastate airfares between Darwin and Alice Springs was \$430 000 approximately.

Ms CARNEY: \$432 ...

Dr DREIER: \$430 000 approximately.

Ms CARNEY: \$430 000. Thank you. I would like to ask some questions.

Dr DREIER: Sorry, could I just correct that: \$340 000. It was \$440 000 for the total.

Ms CARNEY: \$340 000. How much of the total appropriation went towards greenhouse gas reduction strategy?

Mr STIRLING: Greg?

Mr SHANAHAN: Can we take that on notice please?

Question on Notice 2.3

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to restate the question.

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation was spent or went towards greenhouse gas reduction strategy?

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

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 2.3.

Ms CARNEY: The government committed itself to a target of a 1.5% reduction in emissions from NT government commercial buildings by the end of June 2007. What adjustments to building and specific measures and activities has your department done to reach that target?

Mr STIRLING: Dr Dreier.

Dr DREIER: The Department of Justice has achieved a 2.1% reduction in energy usage for 2005-06. An energy usage audit has not been conducted for 2006-07; this will happen at the end of the financial year.

Ms CARNEY: So it was not conducted for 2006-07?

Dr DREIER: It will be conducted at the end of the financial year.

Ms CARNEY: Sure, but the 2.1% reduction was for 2005-06?

Dr DREIER: Correct.

Ms CARNEY: The government commits itself to a target of 5% reduction in per kilometre emissions from the NT government's passenger fleet by the end of the month. What specific measures has your department undertaken to reach this target? For instance, could you tell us how many hybrid and LPG vehicles you have in your fleet?

Mr STIRLING: Dr Dreier.

Dr DREIER: We have three Toyota Prius in our fleet but it will be safe to say that as contracts expire we would be looking to do something about that.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I wonder if that is not a global question in terms of Fleet?

Ms CARNEY: Well, arguably it is, but we would like to know what this department ...

Mr STIRLING: You would get a fulsome answer in terms of the targets, had they been met, and I think they have actually been exceeded, from DCIS.

Ms CARNEY: Part of the preceding question, which you did not answer with respect, was what specific measures has your department undertaken to reach that target? You have three cars, what else?

Dr DREIER: We have a brief here which we can table if that would assist, or I can just read it all out.

Ms CARNEY: I would prefer it if you would table it in the interest of time, thanks Mr Dreier.

I should say to the committee staff, I still do not have for some reason, although it might just be here, the FTE staff, thank you. We are on the home straight. Last question: government has set a 10% carbon emissions reduction target. Can you set out what specific measures your department is undertaking to meet or beat this target, please?

Dr DREIER: I think you will find the answer to that is in the brief, which is currently being copied.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, thank you. Thanks for that. We have got through those questions.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, just a response on one of those earlier questions. The Director of Public Prosecutions' office is approximately 21 m².

Mr CHAIRMAN: Question 2.1, is it? The question on notice was 2.1.

Ms CARNEY: So the DPP's is 21 m², and Mr Shanahan's?

Mr STIRLING: And in the red corner, the Chief Executive of Justice, only 19 m².

Ms CARNEY: Thanks for that. Now we can get on to some other output groups.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

Mr WOOD: Before I do, Mr Chairman, I just seek some clarification. Does this remove the section on non-specific budget ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: No, these are just questions arising out of the statement that the minister made. The non-output related come at the end.

Mr WOOD: Good. Are we going to do this with all ministers?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, all ministers will have the chance to give an up to five minutes introductory statement and then there is the opportunity for questions on that statement.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, could you provide some details of the increase in staff numbers of 89 since last year, please, and where were those staff members were allocated?

Mr STIRLING: I covered in large part, Mr Chairman, in my opening statement, the bringing in to the Department of Justice of Racing, Gaming and Licensing, previously operating within Treasury, and Community Harmony. They would take us probably all the way through those numbers, but Dr Dreier will be able to fill any gaps there. Generally, it was the bringing in of elements that used to belong elsewhere in government. It was an 89 staff increase. There were 52 RGL or thereabouts.

Dr DREIER: Mr Wood, could just clarify that question, please?

Mr WOOD: I think there was an increase of 89 in staff numbers since last year. I am just trying to get an idea of where those 89 people went.

Dr DREIER: Can you tell me where the 89 appears?

Mr WOOD: I will have to pull out last year's figures. You have a staffing here of 1021. I do not have last year's budget with me. I am presuming the information I was given referred to that figure for 2006-07 and compared that with 2005-06 staffing numbers. I do not have last year's budget in front of me.

Mr STIRLING: We should be able to tell you what the increase is from the import of those other functions and staff. We might have to double check your 89.

Mr WOOD: All right. I can leave that on notice if you like.

Mr STIRLING: In the interests of moving on, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will get you to restate the question, member for Nelson.

Mr STIRLING: We have it, I think. The question is: 89 extra staff, what are they doing? We will get back within this session. I do not think we need to record it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr WOOD: Just quickly one other question, then. The Leader of the Opposition asked what certificates of exemption were handed out during the year. I was just wondering if we could have an explanation as to a contract for \$612 750 for supply and delivery of tobacco pouches for a period of three years. I was wondering if I could get an explanation of what the tobacco pouches were and how come they cost over half a million dollars?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I am not sure if it was exclusively White Ox tobacco. It is an interesting one, that it needs to go to a certificate of exemption, and it has been the case, and it has been subject to question at this committee before by my predecessor, and it is simply the market. There is no interest in fulfilling the tender, in my understanding. It is a three year supply of that tobacco to our correctional institutions, which the prisoners pay for. They are not given the tobacco free. I believe, if there is anything else, Mr Shanahan might like to add to it. It has always struck me as curious why you cannot get a competitive supplier arrangement around this, but no-one seems interested in doing it.

Mr SHANAHAN: My understanding is that I believe we actually did go to the market and did not get a competitive tender, so we had to go back and get the certificate of exemption to approach particular suppliers.

Mr WOOD: And, basically, the cost is recovered by the prisoners purchasing?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes.

Dr DREIER: Mr Chairman, if I could go back to a question asked a moment ago. I am not sure whether we have yet tabled answer 10A, but perhaps if I could answer 10A, I could give you that. That provides most of the explanation on the variance and then I could make up the difference for you. Has that been tabled?

Mr Shanahan: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Is that part of that document? Yes. It has paper number 935 on it.

Mr WOOD: Yes, I have it.

Dr DREIER: If you look at the table, the column headed Sum of Pay 24, 2005-06, which, if you can forget about Racing and Gaming, because there were not with us at that time, it is \$928.99m, and if you go to the column immediately to the right, Sum of Pay 23, 2006-07, gives you \$998.72m, that is part of the difference. Then, if you look ahead to what is coming in 2007-08, the explanation is there were an additional four positions at RGL as part of the integration. There are three positions in the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions for the criminal forfeiture funding that was provided in 2007-08. There are two positions in Registrar-General, Public Trustee for the criminal forfeiture additional funding. There are 15 positions to be created in Community Corrections, as referred to by the minister in his opening speech, and three positions from

Community Harmony, and then, if you reduce that amount by seven, in order for us to meet our efficiency dividend, I am pretty sure that will get you very close to 1021.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Output Group 1.1 – Solicitor for the Northern Territory

Mr CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, the committee will now consider the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2007-08 as they relate to the Department of Justice. I will now call for questions on Output 1.1 - Solicitor for the Northern Territory.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, I wish to ask a couple of questions in relation to the Crimes Victims Assistance changes that were made last year. Peter Toyne said, during the last Estimates, that \$0.12m was allocated to 'establish a Crimes Victims Services Unit'. My question is: has that been established, and what exactly has been done? Have staff been employed? Have they been employed in Darwin and Alice Springs, and have offices been secured?

Mr SHANAHAN: We have an explanation of what has happened there. Pretty much, what it indicates is that the scheme got up and started on 1 May 2007. There are people in place to administer the scheme and, if you like, I can table the briefing which will set out in the number of inquires they have received and the like.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, that is great. Thank you for tabling it, but before it is taken away to be copied, can I have quick look at it? I would like to see whether it answers the question.

Mr STIRLING: Well, it does, Mr Chairman. It is only just starting.

Ms CARNEY: With respect, my question was: has it been established, what exactly has been done, have staff being employed, and have offices in Alice Springs and Darwin being secured? I do not know whether this document answers those questions and you did not know any of them, so you can just sit back and relax.

Mr STIRLING: You can't know everything.

Ms CARNEY: So brochures have been done; the free call number was set up; procurement has taken place for Crisis Counselling Services; Centre Care has offices Darwin, Palmerston, etcetera. I am not sure that this does - although it is helpful and I thank you for that - specifically answers a couple of my questions. Have offices been secured for the Crimes Victims Services Unit in Alice Springs or Darwin? Yes or no?

Mr STIRLING: I think we need to check on those.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr SHANAHAN: The arrangement is that there is a head office in our building on the Esplanade and, in the other centres, the documents can be obtained from and lodged at any of the court houses.

Ms CARNEY: Right. Has an office been secured in Alice Springs? Yes or no?

Mr SHANAHAN: No.

Ms CARNEY: No. Is it your intention to secure an office in Alice Springs?

Mr SHANAHAN: Not at this stage.

Ms CARNEY: Not at this stage. Thank you. If you have one office for the Crime Victims Services Unit, how many staff does it have?

Mr SHANAHAN: The equivalent of 3.5 full-time staff.

Ms CARNEY: When you say the equivalent of 3.5 full-time staff, how many staff are there? You have the capacity for 3.5. How many work there?

Mr SHANAHAN: At the moment 4.1, but next year it is going to drop back to 3.5

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So four people work in the Crimes Victims Services Unit in your office in Darwin, correct?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Have extra lawyers been put on in the department to assist with the new scheme and, if so, how many?

Mr STIRLING: Certainly we have extra lawyers, but whether they are to do specifically with the scheme. Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: There are no lawyers employed specifically for that purpose, however, the lawyers within the Solicitor of Northern Territory will be performing that function on behalf of the unit, and those lawyers are not included in the figures I gave you.

Ms CARNEY: So the four staff or so who run the Victims Services unit, they are not lawyers, they are social workers?

Mr SHANAHAN: I am not sure what their qualifications are, but there is a director, a manager - sorry next year there will be a manager, two case managers and an administration officer.

Ms CARNEY: Was it ever intended that an office was going to be in Alice Springs? When this scheme surfaced a year or so ago, I think it was. Don't know? Okay.

Attorney-General, you remember that your predecessor - and I disagreed strongly about whether the existing, or the old scheme should have changed. You will recall, I think, that the opposition's view was that whereas, for instance, victims of child abuse under the old scheme could make applications in respect of each incident, under the new scheme you cannot do that. You only have one opportunity to make a claim for compensation. I wonder, so my question is in light of the focus on child abuse, is it your intention to review that scheme to enable victims of child abuse to be able to make claims in respect of multiple offences and not just one?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, there is no consideration around changing the scheme which was quite dramatically strengthened, in my view, from increasing a bit one claim to the maximum amount per individuals went I think from \$25 000 to \$40 000. There is no view, and no view being put either to me to carry through the government that we ought review in terms of multiple claims by one individual. If a strong case was put around that, and compelling reasons why it is necessary to change it back to the way it was, I would look at it but it is not my view at the moment.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Next question is about lawyers. How many lawyers are working in the department and how does it compare to the preceding two years? In fact, if you have a table you probably have a table for five years.

Mr STIRLING: In the Solicitor for the Northern Territory - 35.85 lawyers; 1.5 unfilled.

Ms CARNEY: So 35.8. How does that compare with preceding two years?

Mr STIRLING: The total number of staff at 1 July 2006, 53.4; 31 of them are lawyers, 31.2 and ...

Ms CARNEY: So 31.2 in 2005-06? And 35.8 in 2006-07. Have you got the figures for 2004-05?

Mr STIRLING: Not here but we can get it. No, we have it.

Ms CARNEY: I am sure you have.

Mr STIRLING: July 2005, 23. I will just round that up: 2004-05, 23; 31, 35.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. How much has been paid to the private sector in 2006-07? By private sector I mean private profession. Ordinarily you have a table and I would be grateful if you tabled it.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I will be pleased to. I think Mr Shanahan has all the documentation.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr SHANAHAN: We have three tables. The first one is *ad hoc* legal expenditure. The second one is total expenditure on local practitioners; and the third one is total expenditure on interstate and overseas practitioners. The tables take us up to 30 April 2007 and they go back to two years.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. That concludes my questions for that output group, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on Output Group 1.1? Member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Attorney-General, in the annual report for last year, it is mentioned the Newcastle Waters matters involving six separate proceedings, all but one of which were polygon claims. Could you please explain what the proceedings were about? What are polygon claims? Has this matter been decided?

Mr STIRLING: Good question!

Mr WOOD: It was raised by a previous opposition leader.

Mr STIRLING: We need someone to answer that who is not here, Mr Wood, so we will take a note of ...

Mr WOOD: Could I just ask the next question, and if you need the same person, I will put them together and we will make them one question. The second question is: what is the present status of the *Larrakia & Ors v Northern Territory Government*, which I presume is the Native Title Claim.

Mr STIRLING: I can answer that, Mr Chairman, but I will need to find it. Let us just make sure we have that Newcastle Waters matter.

Question on Notice 2.4

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will ask you to restate that question, Member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chair. In the annual report 2005-06 is a mention that the Newcastle Waters matters involving six separate proceedings, all but one of which were polygon claims. Could you please explain what the proceedings were about? What are polygon claims and has this matter been decided?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of Hansard, I allocate that question number 2.4.

Mr WOOD: And the second?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, in answer to the question, in April of last year, the Federal Court dismissed a number of Native Title applications by the Larrakia and Quall applicant groups over large areas in Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield. In so doing, the court determined that Native Title does not exist over any of the areas under claim. Separate appeals from that decision by both Larrakia and Quall applicant groups were heard before the Full Federal Court in November last year. In April 2007, the Full Federal Court in a unanimous decision agreed with the trial judge

and dismissed both appeals. In May 2007, the Larrakia applicant group filed a further appeal to the High Court by way of an application for special leave to appeal from the Full Court's decision. No date has yet been set for the hearing of that special leave application.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, that concludes consideration of Output 1.1.

Output 1.2 – Agency Legal Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: The committee will now proceed to output 1.2 - Agency Legal Services.

Ms CARNEY: There is an anticipated reduction in the number of instructions outsourced from 900 to 500. Last year it was 1044 to 900. The stated reason in the budget papers is that it is due to the new CVA scheme. My question is: are there any other reasons why the number of instructions outsourced has reduced?

Mr STIRLING: Good question, Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, an active policy pursued by my predecessor and being continued with me is to increase the number of lawyers in-house for good reason: in order to reduce legal costs across the board. I was a member of opposition in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly when the situation went from doing almost all things of a simple nature in-house, notwithstanding they are always large and complex cases that require outside expertise and assistance to run.

We saw, from opposition during those estimate committee days under questioning, the legal cost for government absolutely balloon because it simply meant that letters that were written, either by Justice for agencies, or even by in-house lawyers where in-house lawyers were kept across agencies for reasons of experience and expertise particular to one or another agency, those letters could be written in-house by the employed lawyer, covered in the cost of their salary, covered in the agency's budget.

Under the total outsourcing type arrangement that existed from about 1998-99, every single letter, every single piece of correspondence requiring legalese or a legal letter, of course, cost government \$300, \$600, \$700, \$800 for one letter, all of which could have been done in house. We are coming back to the situation that existed pre-1998-99 when the cost of legal services for government, notwithstanding there may have been some big cases on or about foot, which you would need to take out in order of fairness for comparative purposes, but it ballooned – it absolutely ballooned. This is the right policy to pursue and there will be a little less going out the door as we bring more in house.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you for that speech, minister, but my question ...

Mr STIRLING: It was not a speech, it was an answer.

Ms CARNEY: Well, it was. My question was: is there any other reason, other than the CVA? What you have done is, you have embellished, and I say embellished, because if you can find me a lawyer who charged the government \$800 for a letter, to use your now famous expression, 'I will go he'. In any event ...

Mr STIRLING: I can find you one that charged me \$1800 about three months ago.

Ms CARNEY: He might have charged you, but I doubt that there is \$800 for a letter for government.

Mr STIRLING: \$1800 for one letter, thank you.

Ms CARNEY: In any event, so there is no reason. I guess your answer is, you are saying it is the policy of the government to reduce outsourcing across the board. However, is it, essentially, the reason for the number of reductions from 900 to 500? Is it because of CVA matters, or are there other matters that you are looking to?

Mr STIRLING: I will seek any further response to your question, other than that I gave. Don't you embellish it the other way either, in the sense that we are not outsourcing anything. In all of these matters, there is a balance, and the balance ...

Ms CARNEY: Minister, I am not going there. So just settle.

Mr STIRLING: Okay. The balance has swung far too far one way. We are restoring what we see is a reasonable balance in terms of what can be done in house efficiently, cost effectively, and, of course, bearing in mind the private sector out there that needs ongoing work. I will ask either Mr Shanahan or Dr Dreier if there is anything to add from your other question.

Mr SHANAHAN: The change in the scheme for processing crimes victims assistance applications will result in a reduction in the number of instructions sent out to the private firms, together with ...

Ms CARNEY: With a policy to reduce outsourcing generally across the board?

Mr SHANAHAN: ... with a policy to outsourcing. Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. There is nothing – no other reason – so it is one of those two things, yes?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes, according to my (inaudible).

Ms CARNEY: Attorney-General, you will be relieved to know my next question, in light of your concern about where you thought I was going to go, in terms of the performance measures, Budget Paper No 3, page 77, one of the performance indicators there says, 'process tax invoices within five days'. My question is, that refers to the processing of a tax invoice, in other words the bill, what is the average length of time to pay that invoice? I note with some interest that that performance indicator is not there, so what is the average length of time to pay? And then I might ask you another couple of questions.

Mr SHANAHAN: The explanation is that agency legal services actually gets the bill, vets it, makes sure it is in accordance with the contract, and that is the extent of its processing. It then passes it on to the agency to pay. We are not responsible for the actual payment of the bill. We are responsible in that process for vetting the bill to make sure it is in accordance with the contract.

Ms CARNEY: But if it is, for instance, an old CVA matter that would come from the Solicitor for the NT, you guys would pay that?

Mr SHANAHAN: Some of it would be, yes.

Ms CARNEY: But I guess you are saying if it is a Health matter, you then send it off to the Health Department.

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes, that is right.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So who would I ask if I was after what is the average period of time for a bill to be paid under agency legal services?

Mr SHANAHAN: DCIS, if they keep those records, which I cannot guarantee.

Ms CARNEY: No, that is fine. I will leave it there, thank you.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I wonder if I might prevail upon the committee again. I have a cold, Leader of the Opposition, and I have been drinking a lot of water and I do need to go to the bathroom.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, I thought it might have been your age.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you have any questions?

Mr WOOD: No, not on that section.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, at that point we can conclude Output Group 1.2 and take a five minute recess.

The committee suspended.

Mr STIRLING: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: No problem, minister. Are your advisors close by?

Mr STIRLING: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I would like to get a start again.

Mr STIRLING: We can cover two previous questions, Mr Chairman, if the committee wishes?

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, what did you say?

Mr STIRLING: We can cover two questions that we carried over.

Ms CARNEY: My questions on notice? Okay

Dr DREIER: In relation to cleaning and the Department of Justice premises, this is 2006-07 year to date, at 30 April 2007, in courts across the Northern Territory: \$238 000; for Correctional Facilities, \$129 000.

The question I have noted here as 2.3 related to greenhouse gas emissions: our amounts for 2006-07 on the reduction of greenhouse gases was nil. This was done because we had already achieved in previous years our greenhouse gas reduction levels. In fact, we had exceeded the levels required and we had other demands on our Minor New Works Program which we had to attend to.

Ms CARNEY: Point of clarification. Thanks for the figures for the Courts and Corrections. What about DoJ offices? Do we have the

Dr DREIER: The size of?

Ms CARNEY: No, no, the cleaning costs. I think you were asked that one, too, or was that DCIS one?

Dr DREIER: They are Property Management.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Output 1.3 – Legal Policy

Mr CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now proceed to Output 1.3 - Legal Policy. Are there any questions?

Ms CARNEY: Yes, I think we do this one every year. Could you please provide a table naming all consultants or consultancies, including legal practitioners, that have undertaken work for the Legal Policy Unit in the last 12 months?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, we do have information to table, I would think, in relation to this. Mr Shanahan?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, they have already been tabled, those lists.

Ms CARNEY: Well, that has been tabled. My question was how much was paid to private practitioners. This is in relation to consultancies, some of which may not have been legal practitioner work, so it is different.

Mr STIRLING: Consultancies for policy development, is that right?

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the Legal Policy Unit. There may not have been any, but there may have been some.

Mr STIRLING: Whilst Dr Dreier checks that, could we provide a further response to Mr Wood?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Mr SHANAHAN: This is in response to question 2.4, the polygon claims. The proceedings in Newcastle Waters involved six native title claims over two pastoral leases in the Barkly area plus the town of Newcastle Waters. The reason they are called polygon claims is that they were lodged in response to future act notices under the *Native Title Act* and they follow the shape of the mining tenement which applied, so they are sort of drawn out so they call them polygons.

The Federal Court handed down its decision today. The court held that the claimants had established a right to live permanently on the land, but this does not extend to a right to erect permanent structures. In the event of a conflict between native title rights and the rights of a pastoral lessee, the pastoral lessee's rights prevail and section 47B of the *Native Title Act*, which provides for extinguishment of native title in certain circumstances, applies in the town of Newcastle Waters.

That is what the court held today. I will just have to clarify that last bit because they have given me an abbreviation which I cannot decipher at this stage. Were you seeking the outcome of the court case or were you trying to clarify ...

Mr WOOD: Yes, I mean obviously this court case has been going on a long time and it is coincidental that the case has been handed down today, but it would be interesting to hear a little bit more about it because polygon claims were a controversial matter in parliament a couple of years ago in relation to their use to get native title. I mean, in a sense it was a mineral lease, I presume.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, it might be that the best way to handle it will be for a briefing; for Justice to contact Mr Wood and provide a briefing on that, or for any member who is interested in it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, I don't want to re-open that output group. Do you have a response to the Leader of the Opposition's last question, Attorney-General?

Mr STIRLING: Dr Dreier.

Dr DREIER: We believe that there probably wasn't any fees paid to external consultants, but we are having that checked and we will be able to get back to you very shortly with an answer.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. We will not put it on notice, but perhaps, by consent, if we do not get it by the session, we can go back and put it on notice.

How many staff worked in the Legal Policy Unit in 2006-07 and how many staff work there now? It goes without saying that the follow-up question is: how many worked there in the preceding year?

Dr DREIER: The total number of employees in the Legal Policy area is currently 12 of whom 10 are lawyers.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, and the preceding year?

Dr DREIER: I will have to get you that, I am sorry.

Ms CARNEY: Do you reckon we can get that by the end this session?

Dr DREIER: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Can I ask you, minister, whether any staff increases are expected in the Legal Policy Unit in 2007-08? You will appreciate why I am asking, and it has to do in particular with the focus on child abuse. Are you going to get more staff?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, a very valid question. We originally commissioned the inquiry. We are aware that any inquiry is going to come forward with recommendations that are going to be resource-intensive to whatever degree the inquiry authors defined, and, of course, again it costs money. So, as is the normal course of events, Budget Cabinet does put away an amount of money for unforeseen, not knowing what the strength of the recommendations would be at the time the budget was prepared, and not knowing, of course, about the Commonwealth moves.

At this stage, whilst there is considerable intergovernment activity, ministers to ministers, officers to officers, right across the board, with the relevant ministers at both levels of government working together and seeking the further detail required to implement the sort of bold brush work that the Commonwealth put down, there is considerable work to be done to implement that, to translate that, I guess, into a manner that can be implemented. Now the Commonwealth has said, in relation to a number of areas, that they will resource. A number of areas are common in terms of the recommendation of the inquiry as well, that we would have expected to resource and still do. So I would suspect the answer will be yes. But how many and when, until such time as we get to a position of far greater definition with the Commonwealth about who is doing what - for example, the x-rated pornography - who does it? Does the Commonwealth amend their legislation? Do we amend ours? What is required to be done? What happens with the ACT? These are the sorts of things that we need, as urgently as we can, to pick up with our Commonwealth counterpart as to their views, and the costs fall over, don't they. Who is doing it? Who is up for the costs? And just working with them to get as much understanding as we can.

My answer would be yes, without knowing how many and when, but we are working as quickly as we can to fill in the gaps with the Commonwealth. I mean, they have been on the front foot on a lot of these areas, for example, the extra police at their cost, but we expected there would be costs in implementing recommendations of an inquiry of that nature. We are prepared for that and we are continuing to work with the Commonwealth.

Ms CARNEY: The Chief Minister called the inquiry, I believe on 22 June last year. I accept, to a large extent, what you have said. However, you as a government have known since June last year that not only would there be recommendations but, indeed, you initially expected those recommendations sooner. I was surprised that there was nothing, and is nothing, on the face of the budget papers, at least, to indicate that there would be an increase. You must have known when you met to put the material in the budget and to do your budget, that there would be further work to do. You referred to a fund, that government has put some money aside, is that the same amount of money, that was \$20m or \$30m that you ...

Mr STIRLING: Nominally.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, so it is not a special fund somewhere else that is about \$20m or \$30m that you can grab at various points for various things? It has a name but I cannot remember it.

Mr STIRLING: I think we refer to it as TA. A nominal amount is put aside at Budget Cabinet virtually before anything else. What is the amount that we put aside for contingencies throughout that financial year? I can remember it being \$20m, \$28m, \$30m, different amounts over the years at Budget Cabinet. \$40m was set aside for the financial year 2007-08. Without even putting a figure on it, because there was no defined figure as to what would be the precise amount until we saw the report, the recommendations, the depth of them, what was it going to require in resources and money. So a normal allocation is \$28m, \$30m in that order. This year it was \$40m, but I am not saying to you \$10m was it, but it is in that order.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Legal Policy has a budget of \$3.34m. It has 12 staff, 10 of whom are lawyers. In the last 12 months, minister, has Legal Policy undertaken any research nationally and internationally about how children can give their evidence more efficiently or how to make it easier for them in court?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, in fact there has been a good bit of work. I am not sure who I am supposed to go to here, but we are bringing that forward in legislation.

Ms CARNEY: So, yes, and it is contained in that bill before the parliament. Is that ...

Mr STIRLING: Yes, a bill that we may have expected to go through this last week of parliament, but for further committee stage amendments which I thought it was prudent to hold over until we had a fuller understanding of any recommendations coming out of the inquiry that might lend themselves immediately to go in there. It just made sense.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, but the work the Legal Policy Unit has done, it has done that work and it is contained essentially in the Evidence Amendment Bill, I think, before the parliament. Correct?

Mr STIRLING: That is my understanding. I might just check with Mr Shanahan if he has anything further to add of if I am wrong.

Mr SHANAHAN: I am pretty sure it does not include the child sexual abuse inquiry stuff.

Ms CARNEY: Well, it couldn't because that was only released the other day.

Ms CARNEY: Has the Legal Policy Unit undertaken any research or provided you, minister, with any advice about specialist courts established in South Africa that are called, I think, Sexual Assault Courts; they are specialist courts for sexual assaults matters? Have you been provided with any information on that?

Mr STIRLING: No.

Ms CARNEY: Do you think it is appropriate to instruct your Legal Policy Unit, certainly in the last 12 months, to have undertaken work without pre-empting the inquiry, but to have done some work on child abuse and the legal system and to look a bit more broadly than at the vulnerable witness stuff that is contained in the bill before the parliament?

Mr STIRLING: They have been doing the work in the sense in what is deemed effective and practical to, as far as possible, reduce the trauma but still have credible evidence that a court can work with. I guess that is the substance of the bill that will be coming before us with a further review around making sure we have netted the practical, workable recommendations coming out of the child sexual abuse inquiry that would fit into that legislative amendment. Should we have gone further a field? Are there better ways of doing this? I am not aware of them. Should I be? I don't know.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, I think you should. We will come back to that. In the last 12 months, has your Legal Policy Unit provided you, as Attorney-General, with information on all or any of the following: the conviction rates for men in the Territory who have been charged with offences against children? Has your Legal Policy Unit assessed whether improvements can and should be made, making material explaining court processes more culturally appropriate? Third, has it considered how to address the under reporting of abuse? Fourth, has it been working on how to better collect data about child abuse?

Ms MORRIS: Elizabeth Morris, Deputy Chief Executive Officer. I can answer perhaps in reverse order in relation to better collect data and about child abuse. The Research and Statistics Unit of the Policy Coordination Division has been doing work in relation to collecting data about child abuse and preparing statistics on victims and offenders. Indeed, they will be giving a paper at an ANZSOC conference in Adelaide later on this year in relation to the data they have collected and the difficulties in locating and collecting that kind of data.

Comment [h1]: Sent to Liz Morris

As far as I am aware, there is no information that has actually been collated in relation to conviction rates for male offences against children but that information could be mined from the data and records that are kept in relation to convictions for various offences.

In relation to material explaining court processes to make - was it just for children or for?

Ms CARNEY: I did not state, let us just say indigenous children.

Ms MORRIS: A new brochure has just been prepared in relation to sexual assault and processes, about what can happen in court. That brochure in fact came from the publishers

yesterday and it will be provided to services which give services to victims of sexual assault. If I can just have one moment?

The Witness Assistance Service, of which you are aware, may also be providing some information specific for children, but I am not aware of an actual publication. But they would be working with children as victims who are going through the court process.

The third point you raised about under-reporting of abuse, if I can just seek clarification about information about that.

Ms CARNEY: It is well known that abuse has been under-reported has been for years. I just wondered whether in the last 12 months whether the Legal Policy Unit had done any work in working out how that could be increased so that the under-reporting would not be called under-reporting, that reporting would improve.

Ms MORRIS: I am not aware of any work the Legal Policy Unit has done. Obviously that was one of the reasons behind commissioning the report by Mrs Anderson and Mr Wild.

Ms CARNEY: Can I just ask you a couple of follow-up questions from some information you have provided. In relation to collecting data about child abuse, thanks for your comments, but I gather that the paper is going to be delivered and it is going to be about the difficulties of the data. The data has been pretty crappy for years, let us face it. In fact, I think the Chief Minister's Advisory Council on Domestic Violence, as it was called a couple of years ago, identified consistently that we are not able to correctly identify and collate the data about sexual assaults and child abuse. The paper is about identifying the difficulties. My question is: what are the answers? Does the paper go to solving some of these long-term difficulties that most ministers and most people working in the Justice system have known about for a long time?

Mr STIRLING: Ms Morris.

Ms MORRIS: The paper is more about the data that is reported and mentions in passing that, of course, these matters are under-reported for a whole range of social and cultural reasons, and perhaps other reasons. The paper that the Research and Statistics Unit is preparing is about the reported data.

Ms CARNEY: The reported data, okay.

Ms MORRIS: Yes, about reported cases, so reported offences that are recorded with police or through the court system, and following those cases through from reporting to completion.

Ms CARNEY: Is that material going to be publicly available?

Ms MORRIS: It will be presented at the ANZSOC conference, so it will be a publicly available paper.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Thanks for your answers.

Ms MORRIS: Additional information in relation to a review of the *Domestic Violence Act* about under-reporting, consideration of mandatory reporting is to be considered as part of that review.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. I had that one, and you have answered it, and the other one was: has any consideration been given to removing offenders from the community while they are on bail?

Mr STIRLING: I do not know if I see it the same as everyone else or not. I sometimes see it as a bit of a no brainer. I, through my partner, have some knowledge of the workings of the Crisis Accommodation Centre at Nhulunbuy which takes people from a wide range of communities across North East Arnhem Land, necessitating sometimes, because of the difficulties around the lack of RPTs and flights, family flying to Darwin and then flying - they may be from Millingimbi or Ramingining or any of those coastal communities - all the way back to Gove. You step back and you might say: 'Well, maybe the perpetrator ought to have been taken out of the community in these circumstances and the family left intact and safe in the knowledge that the perpetrator is out of the community'.

It needs far more practical consideration around that because whichever element that comes out, I suppose if the family and the children, if the wife and the children, if they are the victims, do come out, you know they are safe in that sense that they are in a secure environment and they have been well looked after. Where do you take the perpetrator to? Do they have to be charged immediately? Where are they held? They are considerations around that. It is perhaps not as easy as it sounds, but it is well worthy of further pursuit in understanding what is the most practical and effective response. It might not be the same in every case - that you would take the perpetrator out - but we do not under most circumstances. I have an open mind on it and I think it is a body of work that we need to pursue.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, thank you.

Ms MORRIS: If I may, just in addition to that, there are current reforms to the *Bail Act* in relation to serious sexual offences where there will be a presumption against bail for those offences. That will involve overcoming that presumption for the offender to remain at large, whether it is in the community or somewhere else.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Over and above the section 24 proposed changes, Attorney-General, have you been provided with advice and research from the Legal Policy Unit in the last 12 months about the removal of offenders from a community? It happens in some countries in the world. Is there any work being done on it?

Mr STIRLING: I am just getting it. This is in domestic violence or ...

Ms CARNEY: Sexual assault and DV, but my question is specific to sexual assault.

Mr STIRLING: Sexual assault. In the case I was talking about primarily, or from my experience, was domestic violence. Sometimes they will involve sexual abuse as well. Domestic violence in this case as well, so they are not exclusive. I have not put that to the department in terms of what is required, you know, what are the steps? Is it practical? Which is the best way, the most effective and practical way to go. However, in terms of all the recommendations out of the child sexual abuse inquiry, relating to Justice, it opens itself up in there for a response, in terms of the response overall to the report. Very many of the recommendations, I do not know how many, I believe we have a list of all the recommendations and their ...

Ms CARNEY: Might you consider getting your Legal Policy Unit to do some work?

I do have some other questions, but in the interests of time, I will leave it at that, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on this, member for Nelson?

Mr WOOD: Just one question, Mr Chairman. Attorney-General, in the annual report, on page 45, under Performance Measures for Timeliness for Filing of Indictments within 28 days of committal, you show 57% as the actual for 2004-05, and you show 64% of the actual for 2005-06, although your estimate was 85%. Why then have you estimated that, in 2006-07, you could reach 85%, when you were nowhere near it in previous years?

Mr STIRLING: Good question, Mr Wood. It is the wrong time to be asking, because it is a DPP question.

Mr WOOD: The DPP.

Mr STIRLING: It is a DPP question.

Mr WOOD: I pulled it out of the section on Legal Policy.

Mr STIRLING: We can get the answer.

Mr WOOD: The other heading. Okay, can I just move that to the next section when we get there?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are there any other questions on Output 1.3 - Legal Policy. There being no further questions, that concludes consideration of Output 1.3.

Output 1.4 – Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will move to Output 1.4 - Officer of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, with your consent and the minister's consent, and I am counting on getting Mr Wood's consent, given that there is work being done in relation to the question he has just asked, I would be happy for him to ask his question again, on the proviso that I have my go after that.

Mr WOOD: The *Hansard*, I presume, has that question, so could we just ask that it be put into section 1.4.

Question on Notice 2.5

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, it was not put on notice or anything like that, so if you want to put, if you would restate the question for the purposes of *Hansard*?

Mr WOOD: This is in relation to 1.4 - Office of the Director and Public Prosecutions. In the annual report on page 45 under Performance Measures for Timeliness for Filing of Indictments Within 28 days of Committal, you show 58% of the actual for 2004-05, and you show 64% of the actual for 2005-06, although your estimate was 85%. Why then did you estimate that in 2006-07 you could reach 85% when you were nowhere near it in previous years?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to take that on notice?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate to that question No 2.5. I understand the minister will get that answer to you, member for Nelson.

Ms CARNEY: Here is a question you have not had before: how many prosecutions were there in 2006-07 under, I believe, section 14 of the *Community Welfare Act*, that is, for failing to report suspected child abuse? How does that compare with the preceding two years?

Mr SHANAHAN: We will just find out from DPP if, in fact, they do prosecute those matters on behalf of FACS, but some agencies actually prosecute their own?

Ms CARNEY: Do you mean - are lawyers still working with FACS? Do you have in-house lawyers there?

Mr SHANAHAN: They are coming under our umbrella but they are outposted out there.

Ms CARNEY: Wouldn't Justice, in any event, have figures on those prosecutions given it goes into the court system?

Mr SHANAHAN: We would have to pull them out specifically.

Ms CARNEY: So, what should we do with this question?

Mr STIRLING: We will take it on notice.

Mr SHANAHAN: We will check with FACS whether they have put the information.

Question on Notice 2.6

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can I ask the Leader of the Opposition to restate the question?

Ms CARNEY: How many prosecutions were there in 2006-07 under the section, which I think is section 14 of the *Community Welfare Act*, namely against someone for failing to report suspected incidents of child abuse? How does that compare with the preceding two years? In fact, what about we change it? We will make it the preceding five years. I think the answer is going to be the same.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to take it on notice?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 2.6.

Ms CARNEY: Is there any chance of getting back with this by 6 pm or is that unreasonable?

Mr STIRLING: We will endeavour to get responses to any question we have taken on notice by the end of the session.

Mr SHANAHAN: If FACS has that information we could.

Mr STIRLING: I will report back if ...

Mr SHANAHAN: If it has to come out of IJIS it is highly unlikely because of a special program they have to run.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So many questions, so little time. I am aware that the member for Nelson wants to ask some questions too. Can I ask some questions about the workload of the DPP? Budget Paper 3, page 78, predicts an increase in new matters for the DPP from 1060 to 1450 in 2007-08. Also in the Budget Paper 3, Witness Assistance Service, which we will call WAS from now on, their clients are going to increase from 660 to 850. Clearly that is an increase, an estimated increase, in workload, minister. The DPP received relatively little in terms of an increase. My question is: is the DPP resourced enough to deal with the increase in workload?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, the Director of Public Prosecutions has not put a case to me as either Treasurer or Minister for Justice in relation to resourcing which, of course, I would expect they would if the outflows were getting beyond the resources that they have to do the job.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Did you read the last available annual report, minister, of the DPP, that is 2005-06 where the present director commented on page 46 and 47 as follows? This is 2005-06:

VIS, victim impact statements, up by over 30% more than 2004-05.

These are all WAS statistics.

Clients up by 251 ...

In other words, 36% from the year before.

Files up by 22% from the year before.

Elsewhere in the report, there is an increase of Summary Prosecutions. Their workload increases significantly. But to back to WAS at page 47, the director said in his report - which I think he would have liked to have thought that you would read - he writes as follows:

It would be unrealistic to expect any further growth in client numbers or more time spent out bush as all WAS officers are working to capacity. Any future expansion of the service will need to be underpinned by an increase in staffing levels, or by refocusing the work of WAS to prioritise the bush. The question is how much more can WAS reasonably be expected to do without extra resources. Alice Springs has not had an increase in staff since the VSU ...

which was its former name, Victims Support Unit -

... was set up in 1997, and Darwin has been operating on four officers for some time.

So my question is: you say that you have not received a representation. Is it not the case that even on these budget figures, over and above what was contained in the 2005-06 annual report that the case is made, and has been made, for increased resources certainly at WAS, certainly in Summary Prosecutions, and it therefore must logically follow on the new matters indicated in the budget papers that the case has been put for a significant increase in the funding?

Mr STIRLING: The case has not been put to me, Mr Chairman, and nor - although we can check with Mr Shanahan, but I suspect nor to the CEO of Justice. The case needs to be made, assessed and resources allocated on merit against all the competing demands of government services. The case needs to be made; I simply make that point.

Mr SHANAHAN: The other thing to note is that the figure we are talking about whilst in the report is referred to as 'new matters' appears to be what they call 'new phases', which are different stages in matters which is the briefing we have from the DPP.

Ms CARNEY: I am looking at the budget papers and it says 'new matters'.

Mr SHANAHAN: What they call 'new matters' is not, in fact, new files.

Ms CARNEY: Footnote number 1 says as follows in relation to new matters, and I quote:

An increase in the number of new matters is anticipated. This is demand driven and outside the control of the Office of Director of Public Prosecution.

Through you, Attorney-General, are you saying whereas it says in the budget papers it is new matters, it is new phases of something?

Mr SHANAHAN: That is what they are talking about.

Ms CARNEY: Is that helpful? No, it isn't is it?

Mr SHANAHAN: The other thing of note is that our figures indicate that the levels they are talking about are below what they were in 2005-06. The actual in 2005-06 were actually higher than what they were estimated at.

Ms CARNEY: That is the new phases of something?

Mr SHANAHAN: The new phases of whatever it is.

Ms CARNEY: Right.

Mr SHANAHAN: The other indicators that we have when we look at court sitting days and the like indicate that the figures have remained pretty steady for the last three years. So, we had some issues around that. The other thing I might mention is that the Witness Assistance Service was the subject of recommendation of the child abuse inquiry.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, that is in Katherine. There was no recommendation about increasing capacity in Alice Springs, which has not had a snip of an increase since 1997.

Mr SHANAHAN: That might relieve some of the Darwin pressures.

Ms CARNEY: It is not going to do a lot for Alice Springs.

Mr SHANAHAN: Another thing is, as the Attorney-General says, he has not received a specific request for funding from the DPP at this stage. If that occurs, obviously it will be considered. In the meantime, the DPP continues to operate ...

Ms CARNEY: Clearly it does.

Mr SHANAHAN: ... clearly it does, and what happens is if it does not have the in-house resources to prosecute matters, it briefs counsels at the local bar ...

Ms CARNEY: Again, through you minister, given Mr Shanahan that you are the CEO of Justice, and given that fairly soon after Labor came to office you merged them in a way that has never been contemplated before in Territory history, would you accept it is your responsibility to ensure that the DPP generally has the services it does?

Mr SHANAHAN: We regularly discuss these matters and if the DPP requests a matter to be put forward, we put it forward ...

Ms CARNEY: Okay.

Mr SHANAHAN: ... then it is part of the normal budget processes. We are very keen to ensure that the independence of the DPP is preserved.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, have there been any increases in the Darwin WAS, in staff. I think they have picked up another staff member somewhere.

Mr STIRLING: I will ask Dr Dreier. It should be here.

Dr DRIER: It will take a moment to dig it out.

Ms CARNEY: Perhaps while you are looking at that, Dr Dreier, back to the new phases of something, which is now apparently the new definition of 'new matters' in the Northern Territory Budget Papers, can I refer you, minister, to the expression contained on page 41 of the DPP's Annual Report of 2005-06, an expression which presumably was in all of the others, and it refers to 'Total Files listed Alice Springs/Tennant Creek'. In 2004-05 they increased from 7954, and 2005-06 they increased to 11 648. Given the increase in the new phases of something, contained in the budget papers, and given what is going to be an increase in WAS clients, do you accept, minister, that the Witness Assistance Service needs more resources, particularly given the focus on child abuse, and will you undertake to look at it favourably?

Mr STIRLING: Absolutely.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr STIRLING: In terms of any of those recommendations, as I said, as more definition is gained from the Commonwealth ...

Ms CARNEY: No, it was not a recommendation.

Mr STIRLING: No, but as we work through with the Commonwealth, I am very happy to look at that. I am looking at a range of information, and I do not think it is in these books, around Supreme Court sitting days, all of NT, criminal sitting days. In fact, month on month, 2006-07 against 2005-06, I see reductions across most months. I know you can use different ranges and different indicators, but those are criminal sitting days and most months are a reduction in 2006-07 compared with 2005-06.

Ms CARNEY: Would you agree that on the basis of the statistics provided from the DPP's annual reports and the information contained in your own budget papers, that clearly the DPP and its Witness Assistance Service will be requiring resources over and above those contained in the inquiry's report released a week or so ago?

Mr STIRLING: We will be looking at it and considering the case.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. In relation to the Witness Assistance Service, your predecessor in an article in the *Centralian Advocate* on 4 August 2006, with photo, announced that \$265 000 would be spent on a new room for vulnerable witnesses and victims at the Alice Springs Court House. That room was upstairs. Minister, do you know if that room is used any more as the witness victim room?

Mr STIRLING: Yes. I think there was consideration when I visited the courts, and I went up there and had a look at a rather large room that did not lend itself in any way to fitting out or being suitable or appropriate for a vulnerable witness room. They did fit out a much smaller room on the ground floor in Alice Springs at a cost of around \$30 000. I was there and announced the opening

of that, complete with video conferencing in and out of the major courtroom. The person in charge of the courts there thought it was a very appropriate fix.

Ms CARNEY: So, there is [inaudible], there is a figure of \$265 000 floating around, and it was the case that the room was completely unsatisfactory. My question is, is the room upstairs ...

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, do not put words in my mouth about what the previous Attorney-General may or may not have said. We may be talking about completely different rooms.

Ms CARNEY: No. You have identified that the room upstairs, that was the big room?

Mr STIRLING: I looked at one room. Was it the same room? I do not know.

Ms CARNEY: Let me assist. There was the room upstairs that, according to the article, according to your government, \$265 000 was spent on a private room for vulnerable witnesses upstairs which, within a matter of months, was found to be, by all and sundry, next to useless. My question is: how much money was spent on that upstairs room that is no longer used? I have a couple of other questions, but I will leave it at that for now. How much money was spent on the room that is no longer used because it was useless as a vulnerable witness room?

Mr STIRLING: I do not believe, looking at it, I could not see that anything was spent on it. I will check whether any money was. I mean, it did not appear to have had any work done to it. But I do not want the inference here about what the previous Attorney-General may or may not have said when I do not know the context and I do not know what room he was talking about with those remarks. I believe we got an appropriate fix, and I think the figure was around \$30 000 on a small room on the ground floor. We can check, Dr Dreier, whether any money was spent on that room upstairs? I suspect not.

Mr SHANAHAN: My recollection was that there were quite significant works carried out on that first level of the Alice Springs courthouse. That was initially to accommodate the DPP, including vulnerable witness facilities, and that was after consulting the DPP and having what we thought was a sign-off from them at the time. After we completed the works, we were told that it was totally unsuitable and they were not prepared to move in there. We then came to another arrangement whereby we quarantined an area on the ground floor so that we could provide the divide between the victim and the accused, and their families and the like. That is the situation which currently exists today where I understand the parties are now quite happy with the arrangements.

Ms CARNEY: I will come to the new room.

Mr SHANAHAN: And then what happened, as I understand it, is the upstairs area is now being used by the court commission for the alcohol court and for the credit court.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. I am wondering what happened to the \$265 000 that, and I am sure there would have been a media release around, from the article, I am happy to show it to you, 'the \$265 000 upgrade of the Alice Springs Courthouse is expected to ease the stress on victims of crime as they await court hearings'. Do we know what happened? Did it cost \$265 000 to get that room?

Mr SHANAHAN: I think it was the whole area, including offices and the lounge facilities and the ...

Ms CARNEY: Okay, perhaps we can make some progress this way. Perhaps I will give you a question on notice and we can find out what happened to that.

Mr STIRLING: Happy to do that Mr Chairman.

Question on Notice 2.7

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, if you can restate the question?

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the \$265 000 that was allocated for the vulnerable witness room on the first floor of the Alice Springs Courthouse, how was the money expended?

Mr SHANAHAN: I do not think it was solely for the vulnerable witness room.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, and that is the answer I am after. So you are you happy with that question pretty much.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So, you do not need it on notice?

Ms CARNEY: I certainly do need that on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to accept that question on notice? I allocate, for the purposes of *Hansard*, that question No 2.7.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Now let us come to the new room, that is all about protecting victims and witnesses which, in the current climate, while we have so many other areas to go to, I believe it is an important to raise in the current climate. Mr Shanahan, through you minister, you started to talk about the new room. I believe you said it is there to provide some separation from the accused and so on.

I have a few questions. I guess we can do it one by one but I will run through them all so that you get a fair idea of where I am coming from.

In relation to the new room for vulnerable witnesses at the Alice Springs courthouse, which is meant to be a private and safe area for them to wait before they are giving their evidence, do you know, minister, that victims still have to come through the front door of the courthouse in full view of defendants and anyone else at a time when a side-door is available that is not used? Do you know that the room in question is about a metre and a half from a courtroom where accused people walk in and out? Do you know why the room is next to - and I mean pretty close, I ke very close - is next to the robing area for lawyers to robe and disrobe, and by lawyers, of course, I mean lawyers acting for the accused? Do you know why victims who use that room have to, when they want to go to the toilet, go through the relatively small but public foyer in the Alice Springs courthouse past members of the public and defendants? Do you know and are you concerned that the room that is meant to provide safety and privacy for vulnerable witnesses, namely or for the most part, women and children, ensures that those women and children - so do you know that the room in question is not satisfactory for vulnerable witnesses because they have to run the gauntlet every time they come in and go out of the courthouse and every time they want to go to the toilet, and for the other reasons I have outlined? Do you know those things, Attorney-General?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I have been in this room once it was completed and set up. I am aware of the proximity of it to one of the courtrooms. The robing function - I am not sure. I think that might have been pointed out to me as being a little bit further down the corridor.

You are painting a picture where the vulnerable witness invariably is going to confront their alleged perpetrator. That is not the picture I got at all when I was there, given that these things can and must be managed by way of simple timing. There would be no need for any confrontation, meeting, bumping into people, notwithstanding that it is in reasonably close proximity, if the defendants are in the court there first, or the vulnerable witness is in the room first, as long as sensible organisation around those matters is adhered to by the courts. I believe they do pay sensitivity to these matters.

The robing - I am aware that that is an issue. Having to exit to go across the foyer to a toilet - I mean what are you suggesting? That we place another toilet down in that corner? For practical purposes, I do not even know whether that could be achieved. As I said, my look at that when I was shown over it by the person in charge of the courts there looked to be a good fix.

Now you are painting it somewhat different. I have not had representation from anyone around those sorts of areas. I am not saying what you are suggesting could not happen. I am saying it ought not happen with, I think, proper organisation of court proceedings. Do we have someone who can organise that for us?

Ms CARNEY: With respect, I do not need any more information because we know how the courts work and basically your answer, and I am not having a go by saying this, basically, your answer is: 'It's all in the timing', and I will move on from there.

In relation to your suggestion about the toilet, if there is \$265 000 floating around for a room that was next to useless upstairs and the cost of getting this new unsatisfactory, and might I say almost ridiculously, small room up and running is \$30 000, would you consider telling someone in your department to give you a brief on whether you can put a toilet somewhere on that side of the building so that vulnerable witnesses do not have to run the gauntlet when they want to go to the toilet?

Mr STIRLING: I guess I am prepared to look at the practicality of that. I have no idea what the cost would be, whether it would be cost effective. I do not think that room is inappropriate at all compared to what I saw upstairs as a very large room in which one would feel absolutely quite isolated. I would have thought that small was good in the sense of an enclosed and secure area and fairly comfortable rather than a very large room in which two or three individuals could almost get lost.

Ms CARNEY: Have you been inside that small room? How long were you there for?

Mr STIRLING: I have sat inside there, probably 10 minutes. I sat down and was interviewed by a journalist.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, okay. If you were a 10-year old kid and you were waiting to give evidence, and you had to get there at 9.50 am for the court to kick off and your evidence was not called until three o'clock, would you like to sit in that room all day?

Mr STIRLING: I would say, no, I would not. Is that the case, does that happen every time? I do not know.

Ms CARNEY: It happens.

Mr STIRLING: You are putting that as a fact that every time that the room is used, this is what occurs.

Ms CARNEY: Well, we will see what we can do. Attorney-General, perhaps I can write to you or counsel some people to write to you. Just because someone says it is right and that is satisfactory, does not mean that it is. So perhaps in the spirit of good will we can do some further work on that together as the months roll on.

Mr STIRLING: Happy to, but I always take the advice of the people in charge of these matters on the ground in the spirit and good grace in which it is offered. If you are prepared to put other views to me, I am prepared to look at it.

Ms CARNEY: Can I ask a general question? You said earlier that you were given advice from the person in charge of the courts. Clearly the DPP, you know, spends a lot of time at court. Who has the final word? Is it the person on the ground who is in charge of the courts, or is it the DPP? Who wins? Who do you as the Attorney-General take notice of?

Mr STIRLING: I take note of all the representation made to me. I do not think this is a gladiatorial contest of one side opposing another. It is simply advice that comes up to me through the agency. That is the situation.

Ms CARNEY: I am just wondering because if the DPP that gave you contrary advice of the person who was in charge of the court, what would you do? And I do not know.

Mr STIRLING: I don't. It is not my role to empower one body against another. It would be my responsibility to ...

Ms CARNEY: I asked you what you would do.

Mr STIRLING: Yes, it would be my responsibility as the minister to acquaint myself with the reality of the situation and in conjunction with Justice make that most commonsense decision that

you can. Not invariably taking one point of view against another. It does not work like that. You look for the best, cost effective, most practical solution that you can, that you can.

Ms CARNEY: You will appreciate, I hope, why it was that - I probably would have asked those questions in the normal course of events because it is important because I am shadow Attorney-General, I live in Alice Springs, and it is in my electorate. So there are lots of obvious reasons why I have asked it. But certainly in the context of the discussions going on in the lounge rooms of this country regarding child sexual abuse, and given the reasonable expectations I think that you and I would both have of more prosecutions particularly in Central Australia, we will see more victims. I think we come back to the point that work is going to have to be done on that room. I will leave that output group at that and wonder whether the member for Nelson has anything.

Mr WOOD: No.

Mr CHAIRMAN: With no further questions, that concludes the consideration of Output Group 1.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 2.0 – COURT SERVICES Output 2.1 – Higher Court Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to Output Group 2.0 - Court Services and Output 2.1 - Higher Court Services. Are there any questions? Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: There are, but in the interests of time, I will leave it at that, thanks, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: There being no questions, that concludes the consideration of Output 2.1.

Output 2.2 – Lower Courts and Tribunals

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to Output 2.2 - Lower Courts and Tribunals. Are there any questions?

Ms CARNEY: Attorney-General, was the position of the Judicial Registrar in Alice Springs advertised? If not, why not?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Shanahan? What was it, Court Registrar?

Ms CARNEY: Judicial Registrar.

Mr STIRLING: The Judicial Registrar in Alice Springs.

Mr SHANAHAN: The position of Judicial Registrar was first created when the then Registrar retired. I think it was about 18 months ago. At that stage, we looked at whether there was an opportunity to engage a legal practitioner who could carry out Judicial Registrar functions as well as Court Registrar functions. The position was not advertised at that stage because we were advised that there was someone who fitted the purpose very suitably who was available, so we proposed to employ them on a six-month basis to give it a trial. After that, we decided that we would proceed with it so I think we extended it one more time and in the course of that last extension, we have evaluated the position. We JESed it at the appropriate level and it is about to be advertised as a permanent position.

Ms CARNEY: So the person has been acting in the position of Judicial Registrar for what, 12 or 15 months? Is that satisfactory without advertising it?

Mr STIRLING: I think Mr Shanahan just explained that. The position underwent, I think you said a JES or a re-evaluation. These things happen.

Mr SHANAHAN: Yet, but initially was to determine whether or not the mix of functions would actually be beneficial to the court and it turned out that it has been, so we are now going to formalise it.

Ms CARNEY: So a person has been sitting in the job for about 15 months – whether it has been JESed or not is, with respect, neither here nor there - as Judicial Registrar in Alice Springs and it has not been advertised. I am surprised at that.

Mr STIRLING: Well, it does make a difference. It does make a difference, member for Araluen. If the job functions and activities and responsibilities and level of the position change, it automatically changes the criteria for selection, and the manner in which you go out and advertise. Now, what are we going to do? Advertise it at the old level or wait until you have it sorted out through the evaluation process, the JES process, so that you know what you are going out for? It seems to me to make a whole lot of sense to wait for the outcome of the re-evaluation of the position, the functions, the activities and the level at which it should be advertised.

Ms CARNEY: And it is going to be advertised when?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Shanahan?

Mr SHANAHAN: I think it is imminently.

Ms CARNEY: Well, given that the definition of new matters was a new phase of something, I would be grateful if you would give me a little bit more than that.

Mr WARREN: Mr Chairman, those sorts of comments are not appropriate, I do not think, and I would ask you to caution the member for Araluen on that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Goyder, if I could just ask you to be guarded against flippancy perhaps.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Shanahan?

Mr SHANAHAN: We think we are going to have it advertised in two weeks.

Ms CARNEY: Two weeks. Thank you.

Mr SHANAHAN: It might take three, depending on what the processes are.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. How much was spent on the Judicial Registrar's room, now apparently called Court 5, which was the old pre-hearing conference room next to the counter at the Alice Springs Court House?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: Is this the room as you walk in on the left?

Ms CARNEY: On the left.

Mr SHANAHAN: My understanding is that it was part of that \$265 000 spent.

Ms CARNEY: Aha! That was my hunch too. How much of the \$265 000 was spent on the Judicial Registrar's room – some people might say is pretentiously called Court 5?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: We do not actually get a breakdown of the different proportions of that contract. We advertise the whole thing in one tender.

Ms CARNEY: Well, earlier, I think you said – even though you took it on notice – that \$265 000 was for the first floor of the Alice Springs ...

Mr SHANAHAN: Actually, I have another briefing here which spells out what the \$265 000 was for. That included some work on the basement, the two interview rooms and the CCTV, and some work around the barrister's room, the hearing room on the ground floor. It included a couple of offices which was, I think, that area which the DPP has now taken over. On Level 1 it was to

cover the existing court reporting area into three private interview rooms , one office, a meeting room, and an area for the vulnerable witnesses.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So, just so we are clear, all of the things you mentioned came from the \$265 000? Yes?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Okay.

Mr SHANAHAN: The actual final cost of that was \$200 000 after the contract was complete.

Ms CARNEY: So, it did not include the new Judicial Registrar's room, did it?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Shanahan.

Ms CARNEY: From what you have said, I do not ...

Mr SHANAHAN: I am guessing that the ground floor hearing room reference is that room. We can check.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. How about we do that on notice?

Question on Notice 2.8

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, restate the question please.

Ms CARNEY: How much did it cost to upgrade what is now called the Judicial Registrar's room at the Alice Springs Court House?

Just to keep it tidy, I will add another part, if that is all right? Did the cost come from the \$265 000 allocated previously?

Mr SHANAHAN: If it did come from that we would not be able to tell you because, when we get one contract they do not tell us it is \$10 000 for this or \$20 000 for that; it is just the whole contract.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, I see.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Would you like to restate the question?

Mr STIRLING: Oh, no, we got the ...

Mr SHANAHAN: We got the gist of it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: You will accept that question, minister?

Mr STIRLING: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay. I allocate that question No 2.8.

Ms CARNEY: Just so that I am clear in my head, if it was an inclusive contract, we have no idea how much it cost to upgrade the Judicial Registrar's room? Correct?

Mr WARREN: Mr Chairman, the questions are being directed to the witness supporting the minister. I ask that the member for Araluen direct questions through the minister. That is normal protocol.

Ms CARNEY: We are all working well, Ted.

Mr CHAIRMAN: With respect, member for Goyder, the minister has indicated at times he is happy for answers to occur when they are follow-up questions and answers. Unless the minister has stepped in, I ...

Ms WARREN: They seemed more like accusations to the minister ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Goyder.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I say to the member for Araluen we will endeavour to get what information we can source, notwithstanding it may not go the breakdown that she is desiring. However, if it does we will provide it. We will try to cover it. We will get whatever information we can.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, thank you for that. I would not like to be concerned that we had a person in the position of Judicial Registrar, who has been sitting in the job for 15 months, whose job has not been advertised, and who has done what can only be described as a very impressive upgrade to her new room. When one compares that with the meagre – and that is being polite - vulnerable witness room, which only received a \$30 000 upgrade – well, I would not like to be concerned in relation to those things. I look forward to receiving information, Attorney-General, thank you very much. I do not think I will press on with this output area ...

Mr STIRLING: I will not be drawn into a character assassination, but, very clearly, the nails are out on this issue, Mr Chairman.

Ms CARNEY: I am sorry you interpreted that from what I said ...

Mr STIRLING: You made it very clear.

Ms CARNEY: I am sorry that you ...

Mr STIRLING: You made it very clear in both the tone and thrust of your questioning ...

Ms CARNEY: Well, minister, they are legitimate questions ...

Mr STIRLING: I would not have thought it was the role of the Estimates Committee to attack public servants.

Ms CARNEY: Attorney-General, it is not unreasonable to do, as you do ...

Mr STIRLING: To attack public servants? It is totally unreasonable ...

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, can you please intervene ...

Mr STIRLING: ... assassinate someone's character who is not even here to defend themselves.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, take a pill, Syd, take a pill.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will intervene in asking for further questions on this output group from other members of the committee. If you ...

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, can I clarify this ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: You have indicated ...

Ms CARNEY: The Attorney-General has suggested that I have attacked public servants. I wish to respond.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition!

Ms CARNEY: There is no such attack ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: No.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, there is no such attack ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition!

Ms CARNEY: There is no such attack ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order! Leader of the Opposition, please.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I have just said you have made ...

Ms CARNEY: ... you are ruling in favour of the Attorney-General?

Mr CHAIRMAN: ... your position clear. The minister has made his position clear. I suggest we move on. Member for Nelson, do you have any questions?

Mr WOOD: A few questions please, Mr Chairman. Attorney-General, there have been complaints recently that our Darwin courts are too small and nothing has been done to improve the situation. Is there any money in this year's budget for upgrading those courts?

Mr STIRLING: Thanks, Mr Wood. No, there is not. In this budget, there have been variations on improvements and modifications to courts come up by way of submission in and around Budget Cabinet at different times in the past. On their own, they have not warranted and have not been funded in the jostling mix of priorities and expenditures right across the board. I am aware of quite recent criticism by one magistrate in relation to commencement of a trial where again, I am not sure it was not an exercise in poor communications of the requirements being made clear to the court by defence or by parties to the case before it started, so that things could have been looked out for. Clearly, what the court allocated for this particular case, in the magistrates view, was inadequate, and I accept that. It does not mean that government ought to tear off and build one new courtroom when, in my view – and I have not had a full briefing from Justice yet – it was probably more a case of organisation, allocation, according to knowledge of any special requirements. No such knowledge was provided, and the court was allocated accordingly and found to be adequate. I think it started the next day, if not ...

Mr SHANAHAN: It was in the Supreme Court.

Mr STIRLING: In the Supreme Court.

Mr WOOD: A follow-on question from that, Mr Chairman. Has the movement of NT Maps to NAB House had something to do with the expansion of the Magistrates Court?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: The movement has provided us the opportunity to expand the Magistrates Court. It is something which has been discussed for some time. It is probably a question you need to put to Lands. It was their decision to move the mapping back to their new headquarters, I think, which is in Chinatown somewhere.

Mr WOOD: Oh, the information I got – because I was not real rapt in NT Maps being moved somewhere else – was that they had been asked to get out of there. Maybe I will have to asked Lands if that was the case. That was the information I had.

Mr SHANAHAN: Twofold – one that we were glad to see them vacate that area, so we could use it for courts but, also, the imperative for them was to become part of their main area of operations.

Mr WOOD: My second question, Attorney-General, and you may know some history of this particular issue. I had a phone call from a gentleman whose father was the subject of a dog attack. They went to court with all the paperwork, the police put all the correct material forward in the right time but, when it came to court, it did not go ahead because it had not been processed or had not gone to the court within 28 days, or whatever that the required time is. The paperwork

was there, the police had done their job, and it was not allowed to proceed to court. I do not know whether you can comment on whether there is a problem with the act that deals with this, there are some regulations that need changing, or is there some other reason this particular case failed?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, my understanding of it was it was a failure of police to do – it is not a question of amendments or anything required. The police failed to get everything they were required to do done in the required time. It may be a better question to the minister for Police regarding what has been done to ensure it does not happen again. However, I will check with Mr Shanahan or Ms Morris that my understanding of that matter is correct.

Mr SHANAHAN: If it – I do not know if we should mention the name – but there is a matter we are aware of.

Mr WOOD: It might [inaudible].

Mr SHANAHAN: If it is the same one we are talking about, we understand that the police have looked at it and have actually met with the person involved and apologised to them. It was only a briefing we had in the last day or so, so you may need to ask the person themselves.

Mr WOOD: I will do that, yes. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 2.2.

Output 2.3 – Fines Recovery Unit

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now move on to Output 2.3 - Fines Recovery Unit.

Ms CARNEY: In the interests of time, no questions, thanks, Mr Chairman.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, could we just, in that case, give a few answers we have been getting?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Answers to Questions

Dr DREIER: One of the questions related to – I do not think it is on notice – staffing numbers. We are advised by DPP that commencing 2001-02 until 2006-07, the number has been constant at six.

Ms CARNEY: That is Darwin or Alice?

Dr DREIER: It is inclusive of Darwin and Alice Springs – four and two.

Ms CARNEY: Four and two?

Dr DREIER: Each and every year.

Ms CARNEY: Right.

Dr DREIER: There could be fluctuations through the years, but I guess they have taken these at the end of each year.

Ms CARNEY: Okay.

Dr DREIER: Question No 2.6: how many prosecutions in 2006-07 under the section of the act for someone failing to report child sexual abuse for the last five years? The answer is zero – no prosecutions in the last five years.

There was another question ...

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, that was known in the last five?

Dr DREIER: Zero – no prosecutions in the last five years.

There was another question about the number of policy lawyers over the last three years. The figure I gave you before was that there would be 10 lawyers and two staff in Budget 2007-08. In 2005-06, there were 11 lawyers. In 2006-07, there were 14.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, Dr Dreier. Could you clarify any of those that were questions on notice which had numbers allocated on them, please.

Dr DRIER: Certainly. I think the only one which had a number was 2.6 in relation to the failing to report child sex abuse, and I think the Leader of the Opposition just wrote on little yellow stickies the other two questions, but I am not sure. I do not have any numbers on them. I am sorry.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that. Were there any other questions for Output 2.3? That will conclude consideration of Output 2.3.

Output 2.4 – Community Justice Centre

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will call for questions for Output 2.4 - Community Justice Centre. Are there any questions?

Ms CARNEY: There are, but in the interests of time, no thanks, Mr Chairman.

Mr WOOD: One question, minister. As the Community Justice Centre was established in 2005-06, can you provide details on how many inquiries, mediations, and presentations you have had so far, and of the mediations that have occurred, how many have been regarded as successful?

Mr STIRLING: In 2003-04, there were 540 inquiries; in 2004-05 there were 423; in 2005-06 there were 545; and in 2006-07, extrapolated, there were 1263. Mediations: in 2003-04 there were 55; in 2004-05 there were 34; in 2005-06 there were 50; and in 2006-07 there were 34. The number of mediations in 2006-07 is less than previous year, but includes three complex multi-party and quite lengthier indigenous community mediations. As of 15 June, they have received 463 intake calls and completed 14 presentations. Your further question was outcomes or successes?

Mr WOOD: One was how many presentations have you had done, and also of the mediations, how many have been regarded as successful?

Mr STIRLING: Presentations 2005-06 were 17; 2006-07 was 14. In terms of a tick, I do not have any indication as to what is ticked off as a success. I guess some outcomes are more successful than others and there is not a qualitative view around that. Perhaps we should have something more in that area, but I cannot provide information of that last point, Mr Wood.

Mr WOOD: I know you gave figures back before 2005-06, but I read here somewhere this has only been established since 2005-06.

Mr STIRLING: It was established in 2004 to provide a mediation service to the community, to assist parties to resolve disputes without going to court. Free, voluntary and timely.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes Output Group 2.4 and I will call for questions on ...

Answer to Questions

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, we have a couple more answers if we can keep them rolling.

Dr DREIER: I believe this is Question 2.8 and I believe the question was in relation to the Alice Springs courthouse. Was the Judicial Registrar's room included in this contract? The answer is

yes. It is referred to as 'the hearing room' and I have a note here it is also known as 'Court 5' or 'jury room'. The answer to the question is yes.

In relation to Question 2.2, I think there was the break-up of the consulting expenditure of advertising, design, production and so forth. The answer we have is advertising, \$18 500; exhibitions, \$20; marketing and promotion, \$6200; and displays, \$5800.

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, can you just slow down a bit? Marketing and promotion?

Dr DREIER: \$6200, displays \$5800 – these are rounded – total \$30 500 and we are unable to break them down in to any lower grain than that.

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, I know we just left that question, but I just to need to clarify with minister. He quoted me some figures on the Community Justice Centre. The annual report says that the Community Justice Centre was established in 2005-06, and at the bottom of the table where there are vacant tables, it says the Community Justice Centre was 'a new initiative in 2005-06 and thus data is not available for the year. Reporting will commence from 2006-07'. That is why I am a bit confused.

Mr STIRLING: So am I, Mr Wood.

Mr WOOD: Sorry, Mr Chairman, I did not have time to find the page when the minister was giving me his response.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you happy to deal with this now, minister?

Mr SITRLING: Yes. It has definitely been going since 2004. I cannot answer that, Mr Wood.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Would you like that question on notice?

Mr WOOD: Yes, if I could.

Question on Notice 2.9

Mr CHAIRMAN: If you can restate the question, please.

Mr WOOD: The question to the Attorney-General is: could you please explain the discrepancy between the section on page 49 of the annual report 2006-07, which states that the Community Justice Centre was established in 2005-06, which was the reason why data was not available for that year, yet in response to my question originally, you gave me figures going back as far as 2004?

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

Mr STIRLING: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 2.9.

Output 3.1 – Custodial Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will now ask for questions relating to Output 3.1 - Custodial Services. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, I have many questions about Custodial Services, which of course refers to Territory goals. There is just no way I can do this justice, no pun intended, in the 15 or 14 minutes we have left. To make it very clear to you, Mr Chairman, and to the Attorney-General, what I will do, in the interests of time and in order to allow my colleague, the member for Blain, to ask some questions about juvenile detention, I will put all of these questions, both on notice in the parliament. I will also write to you, too, Attorney-General, so that I can get some answers. Again, just for the sake of the *Parliamentary Record*, can we be very clear, it is not as though no

questions are being asked about prisons. I have a number of questions to ask about prisons, but there is no way we can get through them inside 14 minutes. As a courtesy to my colleague, as well as the member for Nelson, I will do it a different way. Is that fair enough? Is that okay by you, Attorney-General?

Mr STIRLING: That is absolutely fine, if you did not spend three quarters of an hour assassinating the character of the public servant in Alice Springs.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, Mr Chairman!

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, I do ask that you withdraw that comment.

Mr STIRLING: I withdraw.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, minister. Member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: As much as I appreciate what the Leader of the Opposition said, this is a section that I would have got a lot from, because I need to ask some questions, and I will shorten what I have here.

Minister, if prison numbers have steadily increased from 543 in 1996-97, to 791 in 2005-06, and 850 estimated to be the number in 2006-07, how can you estimate that there will be no increase in prison numbers in 2007-08? You state that temporary accommodation can be made to accommodate up to 950 prisoners? What does this mean, and if this is the number, are we not in danger of having overcrowded prisons, and what issues will that raise?

Mr STIRLING: Thank you, Mr Wood. Mr Wood, our director, who has all this on the top of his head, is in Wellington representing me at a Corrective Services Ministers conference. The (inaudible) rate for 2007 we had 819, and 96% prison utilisation. We are keeping a very close eye on these, particularly when we are under notice from the federal government that we might have gotten increased numbers of illegal foreign fishing prisoners, which would have driven numbers up, which was giving us great concern. Mr Tolstrup, in briefings with me over the past few weeks, has assured me that, with some work and not huge expense, capacity can be increased quite markedly quite quickly, in the event that it is required. I do not doubt that it will be required.

However, at the same time, there is a concerted body of work going into a 10 year infrastructure plan right across the board so that we, I guess, are not in this situation of having to come in with short-term response to build capacity. I probably cannot say too much more than that, because it is a body of work that is gathering pace and will come to Cabinet in the next few months. That will put a whole range of options and recommendations for the Northern Territory government to lay out, I guess, a master plan over the next decade.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, minister. What is the government doing to improve facilities at the women's prison; for example, the education facility which I believe they cannot access because they are not allowed into the men's building?

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, that is not strictly true. I understand women do access the main prison for different training needs and are able to do that. It is not ideal; I accept that. I would think we are going to probably hear more about the inadequacies of the women's prison given that there is a conference here in the next weeks or months. We have had increased programmed space, or will be completed by October 2007, so an additional 12 beds, two management cells including, importantly, programmed space and upgrade of the visit section completed by October 2007 at a cost of \$370 000.

Mr WOOD: Good to hear, minister. Have you given any consideration to work camps out on cattle stations as an alternative to prison, or elsewhere, similar to what is happening in Western Australia?

Mr STIRLING: We do not have a real name for this, but consideration around what other places might call conditional release centres, and that is prisoners in their last, perhaps three or six months of their sentence are placed in such a place. It is not a proper prison. They are given intensive training. It might be driver education, it might be - depending on what they need in terms of preparation for release and a greater capacity, I suppose, to get into the labour market.

Another form of that would be bail hostels. We do have a number of prisoners who are in prison for want of an address, no fixed abode, but there is nowhere, you know, the court says well off to prison you go. A bail hostel would be an option for those. You do not just let anyone into that, obviously, depending on what they are in the judicial system for. So there are those types of considerations in and around the 10-year view that we will be considering into the future.

Work camps: the Wildman River-type camp - I know that you raise this around juveniles a lot. It has been pretty much the case that the juveniles held in Don Dale are held for dramatically more serious offences this day and age than perhaps the years when Wildman River did work. I am not saying Wildman River did not have an effective use at its time. Less likely now, we would suspect, that a facility of that type would be effective given that - and it is a good question for the Police minister - there is a great deal of effort put into diversion for these first offenders, and probably second offenders too, to prevent them getting into the judicial system and into detention, and to try to steer them away from that up front. So that, by and large, probably replaces the Wildman River-style of camp. I do not discount it entirely. The conditional release centres probably go close and there could be different versions, including very close to the concept you are talking about in type of a work camp.

I am not closed to it. We will consider and continue to consider all options. Some of them depend on opportunities out there in the community in terms of infrastructure that already exists, past uses for that and may be a way forward.

Mr WOOD: Quickly, how many prisoners are on home detention and is that figure included in the daily average number of prisoners?

Mr SHANAHAN: We will have to take the first part of that on notice, although we can say that it is not included in the daily prisoner numbers.

Question on Notice 2.10

Mr CHAIRMAN: Did you want to restate the question?

Mr WOOD: The question is how many prisoners are on home detention? And I might just continue on, I know time is tight.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Is this part of the question you want on notice?

Mr WOOD: No, no.

Mr CHAIRMAN: All right, minister. You are happy to take that question? I allocate that question number 2.10.

Mr WOOD: Minister, has there been either international or interstate prisoner exchanges or prisoner movements away from Territory gaols?

Mr SHANAHAN: We can confirm that there have been some interstate transfers but not international.

Mr WOOD: Okay. Minister, you know I had a briefing with you about the therapeutic communities which was the type of prison I was greatly impressed with in Marysville, Ohio. Have you given any consideration to that type of facility, and are you still considering going overseas to at least look at some of these alternative sites?

Mr STIRLING: Only yesterday, Mr Wood, I sadly cancelled a trip to Montreal given everything and really the need to be around to support the communities in my electorate over the next couple of months. And I was taken, I read through the information that you brought back from Ohio and, I guess, the very different way that they approach the offender and seemingly get this good will out of them to turn them around before release. One of the things that I was keen to look at was in Edmonton something Mr Tolstrup, our head of prisons here, had seen in years past. It was an indigenous-run prison in Canada. Whilst I have cancelled out now, I still hope to make that trip and be looking at models and how things are done overseas. I think Australia has a pretty set one

model, you know, everyone does pretty much the same thing. I accept your recommendation. If I get the opportunity, I will look.

Mr WOOD: All right. That is the end of my questions there. I will get them written, I think.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration about output 3.1.

Output 3.2 - Community Corrections

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions for output 3.2 - Community Corrections?

Mr WOOD: I have a few. Why such a low completion of work orders shown, considering it was higher in 2005-06? There are more people estimated to be under supervision for juvenile order and adult order commencements, yet the successful completion of those orders is still fairly low at 65%. We have not improved. We have even more people doing those orders and yet we are not expecting successful completion for those orders to have improved. Is there any reason why?

Ms HUNTER: Wendy Hunter, Acting Executive Director, NT Correctional Services. Mr Wood, I think your question was in relation to successful completion of community orders, is that correct? And the estimate of 65%?

Mr WOOD: And the increasing numbers as well, yes.

Ms HUNTER: In relation to the 65% completion of successful orders, the indicator is based on a national benchmarking indicator that all corrective services report against. To explain it, if someone, in fact, breaches their supervision order and is taken back to court, that does not necessarily count as a successful completion of an order, yet we would say that that is a successful outcome. So that is why that figure is at 65%.

Mr WOOD: I will leave it at that, too.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That concludes discussion ...

Mr STIRLING: Dr Dreier has some answers, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: All right. That concludes 3.2.

Answers to Question

Dr DREIER: The question was: what has Legal Policy paid out to private practitioners for consulting type advice? The answer is: \$3750 was paid to Hunt and Hunt for advice in relation to the unit titles legislation. Again, I apologise, I do not have a number on that.

In answer to question 2.9, the Community Justice Centre performance measures: I am advised that the *Community Justice Centre Act* came into force in 2005-06. Prior to that, the Community Justice Centre was operating as a pilot program. It was operating out of the Office of the Solicitor for the NT. Therefore, formal recording against performance did not commence until the trial was complete.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are now in fact at 6.10 pm, which was the agreed time for concluding this session, given some of the delays that we have had. On behalf of the committee, I thank the minister and accompanying officers from the Department of Justice for attending this session today. I advise members that we will be reconvening at 6.30 pm.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Chairman, I add my thanks to the Chief Executive, Mr Shanahan, and to Dr Dreier, Ms Morris and others who assisted not just with the responses today, but as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out very early this morning, the tremendous amount of work that goes into the preparation of responses for the Budget Estimates process. I thank the staff at Justice for that, and I thank the committee for allowing me to duck out the back when I needed to.

The committee suspended.

CHIEF MINISTER'S PORTFOLIOS

Mr CHAIRMAN: I call the Estimates Committee to order. I note for *Hansard* purposes that the member for Nelson has been replaced by the member for Braitting, and the member for Goyder has been replaced by the member for Macdonnell. Welcome, Chief Minister.

Ms MARTIN: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Before I invite you to introduce the officials accompanying you, I remind witnesses that evidence given to the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, however the giving of false or misleading evidence to the committee may constitute a contempt of the Legislative Assembly pursuant to powers and privileges legislation.

Officers should also be aware that when they are requested by their minister to provide answers to questions, they are not required to comment on matters of policy. For the efficient recording of *Hansard*, I ask people to state their names prior to proceeding with their answers. If anyone has a mobile phone, could you please switch it to silent or switch it off? Thank you.

Chief Minister, if you could introduce those officials accompanying you and if you wish to make an opening statement on behalf of the Department of Chief Minister, please do.

Ms MARTIN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. The past year has been a busy one for all agencies across government, including my own, the Department of Chief Minister. I would certainly like to acknowledge at this Estimates the dedication of officers in my department throughout the past year and in particular the enormous amount of work that goes into preparing for Estimates, so I thank them very much.

The coming year will be a busy one for my government and I want to take this opportunity to say I certainly look forward to working with my team in the Department of the Chief Minister led Paul Tyrrell, the Chief Executive, and ensuring across many different areas within the Department of Chief Minister that our Territory keeps growing and developing as it has done to date under our government's stewardship.

So I take this opportunity to introduce officers from the department who are here with me today: Chief Executive of the Department of Chief Minister Paul Tyrrell; Deputy Chief Executive of Policy Graham Symons; Deputy Chief Executive Indigenous Policy and Regions Dennis Bree; Chief Financial Officer Karl Dyason; also here is the Director of the Cabinet Office, Julie Nicholson. That is my brief opening statement, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Chief Minister. Are there any questions in relation to the opening statement? Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Thanks, Mr Chairman. Chief Minister and team, welcome. I add my thanks for the preparation for Estimates. We in opposition do have an insight into the long and hard preparation that you have.

Chief Minister, I would like to ask some general questions that arise out of your statement. The Deputy Chief Minister agreed to do so, so if you do not mind I would like to ask you the following questions. We can get them out of the way and move on to other things. How much of the total appropriation goes towards corporate and executive services? If you have that in table form, I would be grateful.

Ms MARTIN: I am happy to answer that. We will just have to get that figure. You will have to excuse my voice, Mr Chairman; I suspect it has probably decided to move on. Can I hand this to my Chief Executive?

Mr TYRRELL: Corporate overheads for the department for next year's budget are \$7.05m.

Ms CARNEY: 05 or 85?

Mr TYRRELL: 05.

Ms CARNEY: That is for 2007-08?

Mr TYRRELL: 2007-08.

Ms CARNEY: That is it. Okay. What is the cost per square metre for cleaning offices and is it undertaken by contract or internal cleaners? I appreciate that it may be within DCIS Property Services, but if you have the answers can you let us know?

Mr DYASON: The cleaning is undertaken by people arranged through DCIS Property Services, and they would have the cost per square metre of it.

Ms CARNEY: What is the square metre size of the CEO's office?

Mr TYRRELL: Thirty square metres.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Advertising – how much ...

Ms MARTIN: It is the one that was previously held by, I believe, Chief Minister Marshall Perron. There has been a little adjustment since then.

Mr TYRRELL: It has been reduced in size.

Ms MARTIN: Yes, reduced in size.

Ms CARNEY: We will see who wins the competition at the end of Estimates, Chief Minister. I would like to ask some questions about advertising, and none of these will come as a surprise, I am sure. How much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of advertising and, what are the design and production costs for radio, television, newspaper, magazine and any other medium?

Ms MARTIN: Can I clarify that question? Is it marketing and communications? That is the area we deal in.

Ms CARNEY: Everything.

Ms MARTIN: So it departmental marketing and communications, including things like our skilled worker campaign.

Ms CARNEY: Everything.

Ms MARTIN: Everything, okay.

Mr TYRRELL: The total cost of marketing and communications for the department is \$2 587 738. You asked a question about advertising, and that is \$897 823. I think you might have asked about DVD/Video, or ...

Ms CARNEY: No, I did not, but you should throw that in.

Mr TYRRELL: Okay, \$31 239.

Ms CARNEY: I am not sure whether I should ask it here, but I asked the Treasurer about his office advertising, and he said that it came from the Department of the Chief Minister. Does the figure you gave me include all advertising for all ministers, or is it just Department of the Chief Minister?

Mr TYRRELL: No. It is the total department, which includes the support for executive ministers.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. What is the cost of advertising media which included the Chief Minister's image and, what is the cost of advertising media which included all other ministers' images?

Mr TYRRELL: The total cost of publications which included a photo of the Chief Minister or ministers was \$406 352 in total, which includes reports, brochures, newsletters, electronic newsletters and advertising websites.

Ms CARNEY: What is the cost of postage associated with mass communication to Territorians, and can you include letterbox drops as well, if there are any?

Mr TYRRELL: The cost of mass mail-outs to Territory households, the total expenditure was \$95 751, but that would be the total cost, including postage.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will just make clear that was Mr Tyrrell. I am sorry to be pedantic, but there are people, we do get messages about these things, Mr Tyrrell.

Mr TYRRELL: Sorry, I will pick it up eventually.

Ms CARNEY: What is the cost of issue or policy research or message development research, which obviously will include focus groups and that sort of thing?

Mr TYRRELL: Sure. The cost of research, including focus groups, is \$90 050.

Ms CARNEY: I want to ask a couple of questions about media liaison and monitoring. How much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of media liaison and monitoring?

Mr TYRRELL: The total cost was \$1900, I think, for the department and that was ...

A witness: That was the external.

Mr TYRRELL: Sorry, I apologise. The total cost was \$3520.

Ms CARNEY: And what is the cost of media monitoring, and what costs were associated with the transcription of media interviews?

Mr TYRRELL: I am sorry, I do not have that information.

Ms MARTIN: That would be the Media Unit. I don't think we have that.

Ms CARNEY: Can I ask it on notice?

Mr TYRRELL: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Please, go ahead.

Question on Notice 3.1

Ms CARNEY: What is the total cost of media monitoring, and what costs were associated with the transcription of interviews?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister, are you prepared to take that on notice?

Ms MARTIN: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question number 3.1.

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation has gone towards the cost of reviews undertaken this financial year?

Mr TYRRELL: The two figures are \$9091 for a literature review and \$6545.

Ms CARNEY: Can you provide, and if you have it in table form can you table it, a list of reviews, including those that were finished, those that were commenced but did not finish as of today, when they started, when they were due for completion, their names, their cost and whether they will be made public?

Mr TYRRELL: There were two reviews. One was a literature review report of the Stage 1 of the *Indigenous Generational Reform Process* for the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Generational Reform. The findings are publicly available. It was the Menzies School of Health Research, and that was the \$9091.

The other review was the review of the *Regulatory regime governing the transport of dangerous goods in the Northern Territory* which followed the accident on the Stuart Highway. The consultation phase is in progress, the interim report is pending, and the name of the consultant is Chemical Systems Consulting, and that is a cost of \$6545. The total cost of the consultancy is around \$100 000, and I will try to get an accurate figure for you on that, but it is in that order.

Ms CARNEY: Just so I am clear, we have two costs: one review for \$9091, and another review \$6545.

Mr TYRRELL: That has been spent.

Ms CARNEY: That has been spent, so the predicated costs are in relation to the dangerous goods review?

Mr TYRRELL: Predicated costs, and I will get an accurate figure, but it is in the order of \$100 000.

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of engaging consultants, and can you tell us how those consultants were appointed; whether it was by tender, certificate of exemption, or short-term contract; how many consultants were there; what were their specific tasks; who were they; and what did they cost?

Mr TYRRELL: The method of engagement of consultants can be by public tender in accordance with the procurement guidelines depending on the value, which could be one quote, three quotes, but in general, once you exceed the figure where you need quotes, we appoint consultants either by public tender or by the use of panel contracts.

I think you asked about the total value of consultants. Expenditure to date this financial year to 31 May is \$2 101 568.

Ms CARNEY: How many consultants were there? We didn't answer that one and what were their tasks specifically and who were they?

Mr TYRRELL: There is quite a long list ...

Ms CARNEY: Were you going to table that. I think traditionally we table that.

Mr TYRRELL: Sure, sure. So that is consultant by value of contract. We can get that.

Ms CARNEY: That will provide cost, task, who they were, how many?

Mr TYRRELL: No, there are two documents that we can table. One is in answer to your question about the value of per consultant. The other, the consultancy description of service, the output it refers to, method of procurement and the payments made to date.

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation goes towards staffing and in particular can you tell us the number a full-time equivalents and the number of employees at each level? I am thinking you may have a document to table on that.

Mr TYRRELL: You are looking for the numbers we have full-time equivalent at the moment? You are looking at the value in the budget to pay for staffing costs, and further ...

Ms CARNEY: And the number of employees at each level.

Mr TYRRELL: At each level.

Ms CARNEY: Would you like me to ask another question, while Mr Dyason looks through his paperwork?

Mr TYRRELL: Yes, that would be a good idea.

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation goes towards the cost of airfares between Darwin and Alice Springs?

Mr TYRRELL: What we have is the cost of interstate travel for the department by output. The break up between Darwin and Alice Springs, I think we would have to get that for you. The value of intrastate travel, for example, is \$971 520 for the department, so obviously a significant part of that would relate to Darwin to Alice Springs.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So that I have got it clear, intrastate is \$921 000?

Mr TYRRELL: \$971 520.

Ms CARNEY: 971. Okay. And interstate?

Mr TYRRELL: Interstate is \$641 067.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. I have some questions that are generally environmental. How much of the total appropriation goes towards greenhouse gas reduction strategies?

Mr TYRELL: I do not have an answer to that, I am sorry.

Ms CARNEY: On notice? Would you be happy to take that one?

Question on Notice 3.2

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, if you would restate the question please.

Ms CARNEY: How much of the total appropriation goes towards greenhouse gas reduction strategies?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister, are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, I am happy to take that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I allocate that question number 3.2.

Ms CARNEY: The government committed itself to a target of a 1.5% reduction in emissions from NT government commercial buildings by the end of June 2007. What adjustments to buildings and specific measures and activities has your department done to reach that target?

Ms MARTIN: Just to say broadly that government is committed to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and over the last reporting period, which I think is three years, this department reached its target. I would have to defer to my Chief Executive to look at the detail of that. We certainly did reach that target and I think a little more, actually.

Mr TYRRELL: I cannot recall the precise amount, but I know that, as the Chief Minister says, we were ahead of the target.

Ms CARNEY: Well done. Okay. The government committed itself to a target of a 5% reduction in per kilometre emissions from the NT government's passenger fleet. What specific measures has your department undertaken to reach this target? My question also includes obviously how many hybrid and LPG vehicles in the fleet.

Mr TYRRELL: There are two ways to do that. One is to change the nature of the vehicle fleet from six cylinder to four cylinder. Then, of course, there are hybrid vehicles. The other important point is the number of vehicles. We've taken a look at the number of vehicles we require, and we've increased the number of replacement vehicles from six cylinder to four cylinder. So we are moving in that direction. I don't have particular quantities for you, but we are moving from six cylinder to four cylinder, and having a very close look at the number of vehicles we have with a view to reducing them.

Ms CARNEY: Government has set itself a 10% carbon emissions reduction target. Can you outline what specific measures your department is undertaking to meet or beat that target?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, I thought the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiencies was probably best answered two answers ago, that we have set targets across government agencies and the Department of Chief Minister has bettered that target over the reporting period.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so your answer is it includes your answer for the 1.5% reduction in emissions and the 5% reduction in per kilometre emissions from NT Fleet vehicles?

Ms MARTIN: I might refer, if there are details, to my Chief Executive, but the for the broad Greenhouse strategy of government, the strategy of energy efficiency, certainly the department met that target.

Mr TYRRELL: Nothing further to add than in terms of the vehicle fleet where, again, we are looking from six to four and the numbers, which will have a combined effect of a reduction in the things you are talking about.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. That concludes those questions. Thanks for accepting them. We are going back to the question of full-time equivalents and employees at each level. Do we have the answer?

Mr TYRRELL: The number of full-time equivalents we have is 270 at the moment. The employee expenses estimated for 2006-07 in total is \$26 000 923. The details of the staff at the level, I think we can probably put that together and get that total before the end of the session for you.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, I am happy with that. Thank you for those answers. I now move on to the other output groups.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions of the opening statement?

Mrs BRAHAM: You have tabled the number of staff you have. Could you tell me how many staff you have in the Office of Indigenous Policy and who heads up that department?

Ms MARTIN: There are 11 staff in the Office of Indigenous Policy. Dennis Bree, as the Deputy Chief Executive, Indigenous Policy and Regions, heads up that area.

Mrs BRAHAM: Chief Minister, in your agency profile, for instance, you say that you are working to ensure the gaps in social and economic outcomes for indigenous Territorians are reduced, with a strong focus on development of a 20-year generational plan to address indigenous disadvantage. We have had an Agenda for Action, a 20-year plan. Where are we at the moment? What has your Office of Indigenous Policy done to address all these concerns?

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, that is in Output 1.2.

Mrs BRAHAM: This is just general policy of the department.

Ms CARNEY: It is specifically in relation to indigenous policy.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If the Chief Minister is happy to answer that at this time ...

Ms MARTIN: I am happy to answer it. I mean, the office is an office of policy, and there are a number of different measures that the office has put in place to achieve those outcomes. The Intergenerational Plan for overcoming indigenous disadvantage was a proposal that I took to COAG in the middle of last year. It was about trying to work out what was an effective way that the endless discussion, it seemed to me and it seemed to my office, talking about how we did things to overcome Aboriginal disadvantage, and yet there was not any strategy or long-term plan. So, with support of my state colleagues and the support of the Prime Minister, we agreed at COAG that it would be pursued. It would be an Australian plan. Each state would have a state relevant plan because of different circumstances, but we would, as a country, as a COAG, we would make a commitment to doing that.

There were further discussions at the last COAG of last year, and a lot of that work has been put in place. As you can imagine, it is very detailed. There have to be discussions between the states and the federal government. I do not whether either Graham Symons or Dennis Bree would like to add more to that, being personally involved in what is happening.

Mr SYMONS: I can add a bit more in relation to the national level, if you like. Dennis may want to add something about the NT. At the national level, in April, COAG agreed to a number of steps. One was for more detailed work to be done by a national working group that the NT chairs, to flesh out, if you like, the in-principle directions that COAG endorsed in April. There are some very specific things. In addition to working up particular multilateral measures that states and the Commonwealth would agree to, they would be supported by individual state and territory actions relevant to their particular circumstances.

There was also some funding agreed to in April to establish a national clearing house to collect and disseminate information on what works in the indigenous area, and some funding set aside to improve actual data collection. For example, the information that was collected by the Productivity Commission measuring gaps in outcomes between indigenous people and other Australians, ensuring that was accurate and comprehensive.

Mrs BRAHAM: Thank you. The purpose of my asking that question of the Chief Minister is it seems to me that since we do not have an Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the focus has gone off the operational side and has become policy. Could you tell me whether you will reinstate an operational Office of Aboriginal Affairs to address problems in remote communities?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, I know that the member for Braitling has raised this possibility before and I have said clearly why we do not agree. Indigenous policy has a very specific task and what it does is work on broad policy but also coordinates agencies of this Territory government which do the service delivery to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across the Territory. Now when you have about a third of our population, probably about 30% of our population, who are Aboriginal, to have a separate department of Aboriginal Affairs does not make sense. We want to have education delivered for all Territorians, no matter where you live, delivered effectively. The same with health. The same with housing. There is no doubt that if you are living in a remote area of the Territory, it is a tough ask for government to deliver, but it should not be an ask that is not part of the general direction of government. I strongly believe that. Indigenous policy has a very specific task and we coordinate different service delivery agencies and are involved from a whole-of-government point of view in a lot of different initiatives right across the Territory.

Mrs BRAHAM: Chief Minister, do we not have an Office of Multicultural Policy? Do we not have an Office of Senior Territorians? Do we not have an Office of Young Territorians? We seem to be able to address their needs, but you are saying by focussing on indigenous communities and indigenous problems, we cannot do that just because they are indigenous. I would have thought that your Office of Indigenous Policy is not delivering on the ground at the grassroots.

Ms MARTIN: The Office of Indigenous Policy is not an agency that delivers.

Mrs BRAHAM: That is right, and that is your problem.

Ms MARTIN: We have housing that is delivering, and certainly the increased funds that we have put into housing above and beyond what is the kind of allocation that comes through the federal government is going to make a difference. We had the best part of a \$150m additional committed from the federal government. As you are aware, in housing, \$60m of that is now in question because of the difficulties we have had in Alice Springs with the town camps.

In Health, I mean, why would you say: 'Let's just have a separate health delivery for Aboriginal Territorians'? That just does not make sense. We are delivering health services and we have the most highly diversified health service delivery in the country.

Mrs BRAHAM: So what would you say was your success rate of the Office of Indigenous Policy in achieving outcomes ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will just break in here. Excuse me, Chief Minister.

Mrs BRAHAM: I thought you might have.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes. I have allowed latitude previously and that is why I have let you go. If there are no further ...

Mr MILLS: There are.

Mr CHAIRMAN: There are? Member for Blain.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Mr Chair. Chief Minister, the consultancy contracts by supplier has been tabled and this may be a very simple answer to a simple question. I notice that Media Monitors, Media Networks and Sprout Creative, there are about four different projects that are described but no payment was made for these. How could these contracts be described but no-one receive any payment?

Mr TYRRELL: That would be the contract was in place or coming to an end. Quite often you can have a contract in place, but you might not access it. It is in place with rates to perform if you want it, but unless you order a service, then you do not have any expense.

Mr MILLS: Could you perhaps find another way of explaining it to me? Does that mean that you ordered something and you have changed your mind and it is sitting there and you might pay for it when you want it? I will put it this way: has the work been done?

Mr TYRRELL: There could be some work being done. I would have to check the details in each one like that because the bill might not have come in and may have not been paid yet and come to account. Quite often, you can have a contract in place that will provide a service on demand. In other words, if you want a particular product, you then get it and whatever the unit rate is, you pay for it.

Ms CARNEY: Like people on panel contracts? Did some of them do that?

Mr TYRRELL: That is a little different because a panel contract is where you ask people to nominate their expertise, their rates, their experience, past performance, those sorts of aspects, and you can order up any one from that panel contract, depending upon the nature of the products you have. So therefore, you would enter into a contract with someone on the panel contract and that would be for a certain service and a certain amount. In some other contracts you might have in place, which could be media monitoring, unless you ask them to do something, then you will not pay for it, like period contracts, for example. You have a period contract but if you order something it will cost you \$10 per unit; unless you order it, you do not have to pay for it.

Mr MILLS: So here is a practical example. Here is Sprout Creative. Their task was to create Darwin's Future brochure, Preserving our Suburbs, design and layout. The method of tender was panel contract communications and marketing, zero dollars. I thought I had seen that brochure.

Mr TYRRELL: No, that is one you have not seen, actually. That is one in production and there is an estimate of the amount of dollars that it might cost to prepare it, but it has not been finalised. It is an additional brochure to the set that was issued last October.

Mr MILLS: Okay. So you will not have a register in the far right column until payment has been made?

Mr TYRRELL: Exactly, and that is at 31 May. So if it came in June, of course, then it would register.

Mr MILLS: Thank you.

Output 1.1 - Policy Advice and Coordination

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will now call for questions relating to Output 1.1 - Policy Advice and Coordination. I remind you that where a question is referred, if the person can state their name. I know when you get involved in a backward and forward conversation, it seems to flow, but if I can just ask people to state their name. Thank you. Leader of the Opposition, questions?

Ms CARNEY: It is not a natural thing for people to do to before they answer a question, so I accept how difficult and unusual it is. In relation to this output group, does the Policy Advice and Coordination Unit have its own media-specific unit similar to those that exist in other departments?

Mr TYRRELL: Yes, we have a Communications and Marketing cell within the Policy Advice and Coordination.

Ms CARNEY: That is what you call it. Can it also be called a media unit?

Mr TYRRELL: No.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so it is ...

Mr TYRRELL: We have one person who could be classified within the team of people there as media but, no, it is communications and marketing.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. If it just does marketing, what is the dollar cost, the actual cost incurred or paid for the marketing it did in 2006-07?

Mr TYRRELL: The Communications and Marketing Unit in 2006-07 spent \$986 833 on external costs, and additional to that were employee expenses of \$893 000 and normal operational costs of \$181 116.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So I got the answer to what were costs the incurred. This may have been answered earlier in relation to the general questions, but can I ask a pretty simple question? Let us pick Minister Vatskalis when he sent a mail out to people in Alice Springs about the new power plant. I mention that because some people got between six and 12 copies of the same letter.

Ms MARTIN: We were very keen about it, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: You were very keen to advertise that one! Who pays for that? Where does it come from? Where does the postage and the production and the paper come from? How do you track the costs?

Mr TYRRELL: That would be within the Government Business Support area in the ministerial area.

Ms CARNEY: So, it is not ...

Mr TYRRELL: Probably – I do not know. I am pretty sure would be.

Ms MARTIN: I can say with a level of confidence that would come from that minister's office, so it comes within the Business Support area.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Inside the Policy Advice and Coordination Unit, it does a chunk of marketing, a lot of marketing, \$900 000 worth of marketing. Then you have ministers' officers which do bulk mail outs and so on. Correct?

Ms MARTIN: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the Communications and Marketing Unit, how much was spent on salaries in 2006-07?

Ms MARTIN: That was the figure we just gave you.

Mr TYRRELL: Yes, that's right.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, sorry. Employee expenses, yes.

Ms MARTIN: That was the previous figure, Leader of the Opposition. Do you want it again?

Ms CARNEY: Oh, no. I got it the first time. I will just put an arrow and we are done.

Mr TYRRELL: It was \$893 000.

Ms CARNEY: Yes. Okay. What about ministerial advertisements that we see in newspapers? If you look at the *Centralian Advocate* after the Alice Springs sitting, there is a very long ad across the *Letters to the Editor* page every time the minister comes to town. Is that paid for out of the Communications and Marketing Unit, or would that come out of a minister's office?

Mr TYRRELL: The minister's office.

Ms CARNEY: What about a different ad, the one that appeared in the *NT Business Review* in April? That was a bigger ad. It was this one, a whopper. Does that come out of the Chief Minister's office or the Communications and Marketing Unit?

Ms MARTIN: It is Chief Minister's office.

Ms CARNEY: How much would that have cost, do you reckon? Do not know, do not care?

Ms MARTIN: I do not know, but if you would like to specifically know, I will get back to you on that one.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, we will put it on notice.

Question on Notice 3.3

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, could you restate the question, please?

Ms CARNEY: How much was the cost of the advertisement that appeared in the *NT Business Review* in April 2007?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister, as you prepared to take that on notice?

Ms MARTIN: I am. We must have been very excited about that. It is quite a large one.

Ms CARNEY: It looks like you were pretty excited about it yourselves because there is not a lot of information there.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purpose of *Hansard*, I allocate that question number 3.3.

Ms MARTIN: I can say very similar, but perhaps a little larger than many of the ones for the Opposition Leader, also paid for by the Business Support area.

Mr Mills: A bit more information than that.

Ms MARTIN: Protecting our great lifestyle. How often can you say it?

Mr Mills: At our expense.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Where does the relatively new creation, the thing called the NT Government Newsroom, come out of? Does that come out of Policy Advice and Coordination Unit

or does that come from somewhere else and, if so, where? Or perhaps, who pays for it? Where is it?

Ms MARTIN: Let me just seek some advice on that. You learn something new all the time. There are two employees in what was called Media Monitoring. It has now been renamed. There are two full-time employees and three casual people who do some monitoring over the week-end on a rostering kind of basis. I am glad you asked that one.

Ms CARNEY: You may not be. Does it come out of the Communications and Marketing Unit?

Ms MARTIN: No. No, it is on the 5th floor.

Ms CARNEY: And is it part of your office?

Ms MARTIN: Can I just say that it continues a long tradition that the previous government had of media monitoring.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, but this is the one that coordinates media releases and disseminates them. You are saying it also does media monitoring, as in listening and transcribing?

Ms MARTIN: When media releases go out, they actually do go out from that area, using their e-mail or website address. Mostly, it would be done by a media advisor.

Ms CARNEY: So who coordinates it? One of your staff members, not someone from the department?

Ms MARTIN: Oh, no, no, no. It has nothing to do with the department.

Ms CARNEY: Perhaps the Director of Communications, that sort of person?

Ms MARTIN: Well, it would come within the area of the Director of Communications, who works with media advisors.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So each minister's office has a media advisor, and then you have this central registry, if you like, that also does the media releases, sends them out and does media monitoring?

Ms MARTIN: No, it does not produce media releases; it is the website that is used, that is all.

Ms CARNEY: And you have got a total of five people doing that?

Ms MARTIN: No, two. Two full-time, and then some media monitoring is done casually over the weekends by the other three, but not together, so there would be a roster on one at a time over weekends.

Ms CARNEY: Last year, you advised that the unit, that is the Communications and Marketing Unit, had 13 staff. How many does it have this year? Sorry, you had 13 staff but it had been reduced to nine. That was your answer last year. How many does it have this year?

Ms MARTIN: I think last year we were talking about Community Liaison and Media Monitoring together, as I understand it, so the numbers for what was media monitoring were two full-time and three casual, and Community Liaison has five, so you have seven FTE. No, no that is wrong, seven plus whatever, seven and a bit.

Ms CARNEY: Seven and a bit?

Ms MARTIN: A bit. You know, it is probably a 0.5 or something like that, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: With the Communications and Marketing Unit, they outsource, but do the people in that unit actually sit down and design brochures as well? What do the people do in this Communications and Marketing Unit? If massive mail-outs are done by ministers' officers, and the

people printing it and licking the envelopes are ministerial staff, what do the people at the Communications and Marketing Unit do with their time?

Ms MARTIN: Can I say, Mr Chairman, they do a lot and they certainly contribute greatly to marketing the Territory, and specific marketing that is whole-of-government. Their talents are wide-ranging. The unit produces quite a wide range of brochures and booklets, many of them specifically focussed on marketing the Territory, and I can give you some examples of that.

Ms CARNEY: Did you say they design as well, so you have got design-type people there, or is it all outsourced?

Ms MARTIN: Just to give an idea of some of the levels of skill, those who work in the production of the *Territory Q* magazine, for example, writing and photographs, the web maintenance, developing strategies for marketing, looking at areas like our Skilled Workers Program and the communication that needs to go with that. I cannot see anyone here specifically with design skills, but I defer to my Chief Executive.

Mr TYRRELL: Most of the work is contracted out and in fact they manage something like \$701 000-odd in contracts per year. There is a lot of work in identifying what the requirement is, whether it is for the road safety campaign or the *Creating Darwin's Future* campaign; developing the briefs; getting the work done; whether it is a series of contracts or one big contract; making sure the quality is right; and, as the Chief Minister said, there are other tasks in there of the *Q* magazine, so all the writing is done internally for that, and the photographs are taken internally. There is the management of the web site, and managing the advertising program. So there is a lot of management of a lot money and a lot of programs by the people there with a small amount of internal expertise, apart from *Q* magazine.

Ms CARNEY: Out of the seven and a bit FTE's, were all of those positions advertised in the marketing unit?

Ms MARTIN: No, we are talking two different things. Sorry, it is 11 within the Department of Chief Minister in Marketing and Communications, which is different from the work done in ministerial offices. So we have two things. That is essentially media monitoring and community liaison, and this is marketing and communications on behalf of government and promoting the Northern Territory. When I travel overseas, I take brochures about the Northern Territory with me. We have brochures on the trade route and gas manufacturing, and they are produced by Marketing and Communications, and can I say they are terrific.

Ms CARNEY: I am sure you would and I am sure they are.

Ms MARTIN: Well, I make the point that when you travel overseas, meeting people who do not know that much about the Territory, it is good to have brochures to get a sense of location and opportunities here, and they work very well. It makes an enormous difference when you can put a map and pictures of the Territory down so people can identify with what you are talking about. Whether it is the CEO of a major international company or whoever, they really appreciate that kind of presentation.

Ms CARNEY: Yes. Were those 11 positions advertised?

Mr TYRRELL: To the best of my knowledge, yes. To the best of my knowledge. There are a couple of ways you can achieve a permanent position within the public service. That is through advertising or, in particular circumstances, seeking the permission of the Commissioner of the Office of Public Employment for direct appointment.

Ms CARNEY: Was the latter done in respect of any of the 11 employees?

Mr TYRRELL: I cannot recall that, but I am happy to check. I know that in one particular case, a position was advertised and a person was put into it on a temporary basis, and within a certain time frame that was converted to a permanent appointment with the permission of the Commissioner of Public Employment.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the work that the unit undertakes, in an answer to an earlier question you talked about focus groups. I would like to know how many focus groups the unit met with or focused on? How many; who were they; and what was the cost in 2006-07?

Ms MARTIN: I refer that to my chief executive, Paul Tyrrell.

Ms CARNEY: Of course, you may have it in table form. If you do I would be happy for you to table that.

Mr TYRRELL: I don't, but it should not take long. There were four separate market research activities in Blue Mud Bay, Moving Alice Ahead, NT Police recruitment and a road safety awareness campaign. For Blue Mud Bay, I will give you a little information. The cost was \$16 000. Focus group details: they were held in April between Darwin (two) and Palmerston. I do not have the numbers. Forty people.

The next one, Moving Alice Ahead, was for a cost of \$15 500. I will see if I can find the details for you. Yes. That particular one was a phone survey of 227 residents and businesses, which was conducted to gain an understanding of the public perception of the issues in Alice Springs in terms of living and working in Alice Springs.

The NT Police recruitment campaign ...

Ms CARNEY: Can I just go back to that one? You did not say when. Can you give me a when in relation ...

Mr TYRRELL: That was in April.

Ms CARNEY: Was that before or after the Alice Springs sitting? I think it was before.

Mr TYRRELL: It was before.

Ms CARNEY: Do you have an exact date?

Mr TYRRELL: No.

Ms MARTIN: I think, ultimately, it was during April.

Mr TYRRELL: It was just during April, is all I have here at the moment.

Mr MILLS: Do you have a list of the questions that were asked?

Mr TYRRELL: Not here, no.

Ms CARNEY: Will you take that question on notice?

Mr MILLS: Could they be provided?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Will you restate your question for the purposes of Hansard?

Ms CARNEY: In relation to the phone survey conducted of Alice Springs people before the Alice Springs sitting, can you provide a list of the questions asked?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you happy to take that on notice, Chief Minister?

Ms MARTIN: No, Mr Chairman. There are things that government does in talking to the community quite legitimately - quite proper activity for government. It is not necessary. It informs activities like Moving Alice Ahead and it makes sure that we can understand where the emphasis should go, where the areas of concern are for the people of Alice Springs. I would not want to set a precedent to talk about those questions that were asked. No, I will not do take it.

Mr MILLS: Mr Chairman, these questions were asked of 200 people. Surely, they can be aired to members of this committee - nothing to hide.

Ms CARNEY: With public money.

Ms MARTIN: No, nothing to hide. That work was done. You did not ask me the questions that were asked in Blue Mud Bay research. I am just saying that ...

Ms CARNEY: Well, I am asking you will you provide the questions that were asked of the people of Alice Springs before the Alice Springs sitting that were paid for by public money?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, no I will not.

Mr Mills: That is outrageous!

Ms CARNEY: No, you won't? I appreciate Mr Tyrrell, that I have stopped you in full flight, as it were. However, as a result of this, I might just ask another couple of questions, if I may.

Chief Minister, will you accept the assertion that could be put as a result of your refusal to provide the list of questions that, in fact, you had your Marketing and Communications Unit polling the people of Alice Springs to see what the issues were because you did not know – which is why 500 people turned up at the convention centre. You used public money to do polling of the people of Alice Springs. You can laugh if you like, but can you see how some people might form that view?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, I can see how the Leader of the Opposition might form that view, because she has a history ...

Ms CARNEY: I reckon the people of Alice Springs might form that view too, Chief Minister.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, let the Chief Minister answer please.

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, we needed to develop the second phase of Alice in 10. It was important that we were properly understanding the community of Alice Springs. It was definitely - definitely - not polling. That is quite proper work for governments. If you look at governments all around Australia, they use focus groups and surveys to understand how communities are feeling. That certainly did inform. It does not take away the fact that people of Alice Springs who came to protest outside parliament were very forceful and put a clear message across. However, the use of focus groups by government is nothing mysterious and is very carefully done so that it does not cross the line into anything like party polling. It is just not on. If the Opposition Leader wants to string her ideas about this, it does not make a fact.

Ms CARNEY: With respect, Chief Minister, your refusal to provide the questions that the people of the Northern Territory paid for does not put you in a good position. Of course people - and I am one of them – would infer that you used this device for political purposes. I would like to know, for instance, whether they were asked question about how the Opposition Leader was travelling, or how the member for Greatorex was travelling. Can you ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you going to ask a further question?

Ms CARNEY: Yes, I am. Can you categorically tell us that questions like that were not included?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, I would have thought that, if a government looking at the issues for a community like Alice Springs, had asked questions like that, the Opposition Leader would have heard in two seconds flat.

Ms CARNEY: Is that a no?

Ms MARTIN: Absolutely!

Ms CARNEY: It is a no?

Ms MARTIN: I am saying you would have heard.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. No ...

Ms MARTIN: You would have heard.

Ms CARNEY: I am asking you the questions. I know you do not like to answer them, but ...

Mr MILLS: Why don't you answer the question?

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Well, none of us will ever know. We will see if we can make it an FOI request and see how far that gets us but, of course, we note your timing.

Mr Tyrrell, back to your list. Blue Mud Bay and there are no questions for that because that was a focus group. There may have been questions. I guess there were questions asked. I assume that the Chief Minister is not going to give us any information that was used with the focus groups or the 40 people who assisted with your Blue Mud Bay polling - oh, did I say that word? - focus group research.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, there is no need to engage in that.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, will you provide the questions?

Ms MARTIN: Sorry, the questions?

Ms CARNEY: In respect of the focus groups for Blue Mud Bay, what they were asked?

Ms MARTIN: What was being asked in those focus groups, quite legitimately, was what people understood about what changes were there because of the Blue Mud Bay decision in the Federal Court. It was important for government to understand what people did or did not know about the issue, a very complex legal issue, so that we could have good information conveyed. Very straight forward; very simple.

Ms CARNEY: So we have Blue Mud Bay, Alice Springs, and I think we had police and road safety.

Mr TYRRELL: The next research that was undertaken was the NT Police recruitment campaign, indigenous market research. That was face-to-face market research conducted with stakeholders in three remote indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. It was conducted in support of developing strategies to attract more indigenous people to work for the NT Police force in a variety of roles including Aboriginal Community Police Officers and mainstream constables. Total expenditure was \$43 350. Market research was requested to assist in developing a plan that would attract indigenous Territorians, as I said, assist the transition of current ACPOs to constables, keep the career as a police officer in the minds of indigenous 10 to 14 year olds, and keep the career as a police officer in the minds of indigenous 14 to 17 year olds. It involved research in December 2006 involving 63 face-to-face in-depth interviews.

Ms CARNEY: For the sake of completeness, will you provide a copy of the questions asked in the interviews?

Ms MARTIN: No, we won't.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. The final one would be road safety.

Mr TYRRELL: The road safety awareness campaign was independent market research to assess the message recall among the general public in terms of the road safety awareness campaign. It was after the implemented integrated public awareness campaign to support the government's introduction of a comprehensive range of road safety measures. Research was required to ensure that in fact, the communication was effective in terms of people understanding what the details of the strategy were. The research was conducted in November. It involved 405 telephone interviews in Darwin and Alice Springs, and the cost was \$15 200.

Ms CARNEY: That was at about the time the government announced its changes to road safety, so it was it before the announcement? I do not have the exact date.

Ms MARTIN: No, it was after.

Ms CARNEY: It was after, was it?

Mr TYRRELL: The announcement was October, I think. This was designed to see how effective the communication campaign was.

Ms CARNEY: Again, for the sake of completeness, will you provide us with questions that were asked?

Ms MARTIN: No, we won't.

Ms CARNEY: That completes my questions in the interests of time for that output group, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions? Member for Braitling.

Mrs BRAHAM: Chief Minister, part of what you have been talking about is focus groups and consultation with the general public to form policy. At the moment, you have a consultant running forums in Alice Springs on antisocial behaviour. Does that consultant continue to run forums in remote communities around Alice Springs to gauge their reaction as well?

Ms MARTIN: There is a series of forums being run. There is one being run that targets business, youth, Aboriginal leadership, Aboriginal communities and government service providers, so, yes, a very key component of having those discussions is community leadership from right around the Central Australian area. I would like to thank the member for Macdonnell for the great help she has been in putting that together with the member for Stuart.

Mrs BRAHAM: So they will be travelling out of Alice Springs?

Ms MARTIN: There will be a meeting. There was some discussion about where the meeting with the community leaders from around Central Australia will be held. I think at one stage it might have been thought to be held at Hamilton Downs, but it is actually going to be held in Alice Springs.

Mrs BRAHAM: Can you give us some sort of reassurance there are people travelling from remote communities to attend the forum?

Ms MARTIN: Very much so. It is a key component of, as you understand, all the changes that are coming into place in Alice Springs, particularly the public dry areas legislation, that the measures are very clearly spelt out to all who might come to Alice Springs.

Mrs BRAHAM: So do you intend to run some sort of advertising campaign on the measures your government has introduced with regard to alcohol restrictions?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, and we are working together with the Alice Springs Town Council to do that.

Mrs BRAHAM: Will they be run on TV as well as radio, CAAMA?

Ms MARTIN: At this stage, what we want to do is to communicate that as widely as possible. I know we are going to use CAAMA. I think Imparja was part of the mix. Certainly, posters and other communications to communities was a key part of that as well.

Mrs BRAHAM: I just wanted to make sure ...

Ms MARTIN: I think the Mayor wanted banners around the town.

Mrs BRAHAM: Yes, it was not just going to be focused on the town people.

Ms MARTIN: No. As you can understand, member for Braitling, and as you know, a lot of the issues for Alice Springs involve visitors and so that change of policy, change of what is expected, needs to be communicated very clearly and very effectively.

Mrs BRAHAM: My other question is from the member for Nelson. Chief Minister, you have held a number of forums regarding the question of industrial development in the Darwin Harbour, and you stated in parliament recently there were no complaints aired when you said to leave Glyde Point and look at further development in Middle Arm. Chief Minister, how can you justify that statement when you had a petition of 6332 petitioners praying that Darwin Harbour be declared a National Conservation Park? Did you not consider that they were a group that is expressing their opinion when you actually said there were no complaints? I would have thought that was a complaint. Does it mean that you are not actually taking notice of people?

Ms MARTIN: On the question from the member for Nelson, read by you, thank you. The member for Nelson seems to have this unusual way of describing development in the harbour as being 'in Darwin Harbour'. I had that discussion with him in parliament. It is actually on the land around Darwin Harbour, it is not in Darwin Harbour itself.

Just to go back, Glyde Point has, for many, many years, been identified as future major industrial development for the Darwin region and at some stage, we would hope maybe there might be something like an aluminium smelter built here. It is not likely, but you would need to have that quite significantly removed from Darwin.

There has been quite considerable concern expressed about Glyde Point, about its environmental values, about the potential environmental damage and so as part of *Creating Darwin's Future*, which was looking at more than just the CBD, but the broader Darwin area, for six months, we talked about should we continue to keep industrial development at Glyde Point or should we be looking at further industrial development and gas-related industries on Middle Arm? That was talked about widely; we had displays at shopping centres, there were brochures, there was a website. I ran a number of forums where it was asked should we be considering moving that kind of activity to Middle Arm. Really, I was at every single one of those forums and it was not raised as an issue. In fact ...

Mrs BRAHAM: Yet there is a petition from 6000 people who say the opposite.

Ms MARTIN: We will talk further with people, but if we are going to look at further industrial development, do we look at an area like Middle Arm, close to the port, where we currently do have an LNG plant with capacity for expansion, or do we go to an area that has significant infrastructure demands and also considerable environmental concerns being expressed about it? It was broad consultation with the community and, as I said to the member for Nelson, I hope that he put in his ideas about that. I will certainly be following that up.

Mrs BRAHAM: I am sure he will continue this debate.

Ms MARTIN: Oh, I thought you might have had a couple more tries on it, Loraine.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on that output group? Are there any other questions? No.

Ms MARTIN: Sorry, Mr Chairman. We have got some answers to previous questions which we could take now if you would like.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is fine.

Mr TYRRELL: It was not a question on notice, but it was information that was sought by the Leader of the Opposition, which was the extent of the value of Darwin to Alice Springs airfares. The total cost in Darwin to Alice Springs was \$436 334.

In response to Question on Notice 3.1, which was regarding media monitoring, an amount of \$3520 was for the Communications and Marketing Unit within the department. The major projects in Asian Relations and Trade output spent \$14 265 for a total cost to the department of \$17 785. The total cost ...

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, how much?

Mr TYRRELL: \$17 785. The total cost of transcripts was nil; it was done by internal staff. For Question on Notice 3.3, the cost of the half-page April edition of the *NT Business Review* was \$1283.45. We can table the staffing that we now have, too.

Ms CARNEY: That is the number of employees?

Mr TYRRELL: By classification.

Mr CHAIRMAN: This time, that really does conclude consideration of Output 1.1.

Output 1.2 – Indigenous Policies

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will proceed to Output 1.2 - Indigenous Policies. Are there any questions? Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, thanks, Mr Chairman. Chief Minister, last year at Estimates when we talked about indigenous policy, you referred me to a document that you had released only a few months before called *Agenda for Action* and you said that it was and I quote:

...a very specific document about what we are doing across government for Aboriginal Territorians.

I have read the document. Six priority areas are listed, and they are called priority areas, and child sexual abuse is not one of them. My question is: why not? Will you be producing another report to add child abuse as a priority for you and your government and Office of Indigenous Policy?

Ms MARTIN: In terms of the *Agenda for Action*, it has strong broad areas, which does not preclude an area like child sexual abuse, but I think with the issue of child sexual abuse that we currently have on a national level, the commitment we have seen from the federal government, the commitment from the Territory would make doing further reports a pointless exercise. We have a major issue in front of us and the *Agenda for Action* is about a whole complex area of tackling indigenous disadvantage. The issue before us today and has been before us for a number of weeks now, specifically of protection of Aboriginal children, is one that has leapt beyond the other things that we are doing.

Ms CARNEY: In the *Agenda for Action* document, there is not one single reference to the words, 'child abuse' and there is not one single reference to the words 'child sexual abuse'. Why not?

Ms MARTIN: The *Agenda for Action* had six main indigenous affairs priorities that reflected those agreed with the Prime Minister in April 2005 in the overarching agreement that I signed with the federal government here in Darwin on indigenous affairs. Our *Agenda for Action* matched those priority areas that have been agreed between the Territory and the Prime Minister.

Ms CARNEY: When you talked about this document, *Agenda for Action*, on 20 June last year, you said:

It is a very comprehensive and detailed strategy for the future.

My question is: how would you like to describe this document now?

Ms MARTIN: As I said, the document matched the agreement with the federal government, which was one that the Prime Minister himself was very proud of, about bilateral agreements with the federal government on a number of key issues. The issue of child protection, the resources that needed to be put into the child protection area through Family and Children's Services was not something that we were ignoring. If you look at the difference between this government's commitment to child protection, it quadrupled the dollars going in under the CLP. I know we have said that a few times, but when we came to government, the attention and the resources going into child protection really was virtually negligible and we lifted that performance.

While the *Agenda for Action* focussed on the areas that we were working with specifically with the federal government, we had a very strong focus on child protection as well. That does not

mean, as the inquiry report has shown, that we were doing enough, but it certainly showed, and through the 97 recommendations, that we were stepping in the right direction and there is a lot more to do. If you go back to the *Agenda for Action*, we were working in a complementary way with the federal government. We have been doing that for many years. We have worked closely with the federal government through the Office of Indigenous Policy and our other agencies on issues right across the board to do with Aboriginal Territorians on better service delivery, better outcomes, better education, better health, and we will not stop doing that.

Ms CARNEY: You said in your answer that child abuse was not something we were ignoring. How can that possibly be the case when one of the stated aims in Budget Paper No 3 at page 36 of Indigenous Policy is:

Improving social wellbeing and living conditions for indigenous Territorians

And when the words 'child abuse and 'child sexual abuse' do not appear in the very document that you said is very comprehensive and is a detailed strategy for the future? How can you reconcile your statement that it is not something we were ignoring with what I have said?

Ms MARTIN: I go back to the fact that the *Agenda for Action* was a document on which we had complementary measures happening with the federal government. If we were writing that document now, both John Howard and I would be certainly looking at the area of child protection in one of those bilateral agreements. Bilateral agreements were looking at some of the structural issues for the future and certainly, if you said to the Prime Minister and myself now would we need a much greater focus than the one we had, I would say yes, yes and yes.

Ms CARNEY: In order for me to understand what you have said correctly, if you were writing the *Agenda for Action*, your blueprint for indigenous Territorians, now, it would include a focus on tackling child sexual abuse, correct?

Ms MARTIN: It would specifically mention that, but if you look at some of the aspects of that *Agenda for Action*, you are looking at health and wellbeing for indigenous Territorians. You are also looking at one of the key areas, which is safer communities. The primary focus was on the personal development, healthy lifestyles and work readiness of ...

Ms CARNEY: I have read it, yes. I know that it what it says, but my question, which you have answered, is yes, you would include child sexual abuse in that document now.

Ms MARTIN: Very specifically.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Ms MARTIN: It does not mean that it was not one of the focuses of government, but for this document, it was more broadly wrapped into those broader areas.

Ms CARNEY: I am interested in your answer about if you were writing it now, you would include a focus on child abuse because I am going to put some things to you and I will be very interested in your response.

On 17 June 2004, the former member for Port Darwin Sue Carter asked your then Minister for Family and Community Services whether she would establish

...an independent external inquiry into child abuse and child protection in the Territory.

That was following some media reports detailing that there were 197 cases of children under 14 with STIs in the 2002-03 year. It followed a flurry of media activity and I think a man who is broadly respected, Charlie King, was also of the view that there should be an inquiry. I think Mr King was a member of the Top End Child Protection Team. Your Minister at the time refused, saying that she

...does not need an independent inquiry.

That was in June 2004. You announced the inquiry into sexual abuse, the report on which you received recently, on 22 June 2006. What changed between June 2004 and June 2006?

Ms MARTIN: I was discussing this with the minister involved, the member for Arafura, only in the last week. She recalled that question in parliament and why she had the response she did. It was about the fact that we had increased resources significantly in that area and the minister felt that to do an inquiry was not going to be as productive as putting those resources in and the focus that was needed.

The minister had worked on the volatile substance abuse legislation and when you look at a community like Mutitjulu that had a history of being really disruptive and dysfunctional, and one of the key areas was petrol sniffing, the fact that the volatile substance legislation made a significant difference in a community like Mutitjulu, I think the minister, quite rightly at that time, was focused on action. I am not going to be criticising the minister for action. The minister also at the time knew the work we were doing on putting in place alcohol management strategies. She knew the work that we were piloting on Groote Eylandt and was very focused, as she very much is, on action.

Two years later, what we have seen was that effort, the efforts through extra police right across the Territory - and admittedly, we still do not have enough - but extra resources into child protection, we were not seeing what I described when I announced that inquiry, which was a breakthrough of that veil of silence that the police had found in terms of, when there was report of abuse, witnesses were not forthcoming. Rather than be able to take the complaint and get a perpetrator to court, they were frustrated in that. I was really taken aback by the number of people who were spoken to in Mutitjulu when police were following up the complaint. You had something like 170 people were spoken to and they could not get any evidence to make a prosecution.

The difference between a minister who has got increased resources, quadrupled resources to tackle a problem, looking at the impact of volatile substance abuse and legislation, and the greater powers that gave to police, at that stage, she was focused on getting things done. Two years later, it seemed incredibly clear to me that, despite those extra resources, particularly in Police and Family and Community Services, that we were not getting the results we needed. That is why the inquiry.

Ms CARNEY: You are also on the record as saying you called the inquiry as a result of the *Lateline* interview. Which one is it?

Ms MARTIN: If you go back and listen to what I said, I said that was partly responsible, but the bigger issue was that veil of silence, and the wall that Police and Child Protection often met in communities. The report done by Rex Wild and Pat Anderson talked about that as well, and it is a major issue. Sitting with my bush members today, again, in relation to the federal plan for tackling child abuse, they said one of their fears is that if we do not find the right way to take strong action, we will see that veil of silence increase. It is a very serious issue. What I felt the inquiry did was open the door. Sitting down and talking with Rex Wild and Pat Anderson about the number of people who bravely talked about this issue, both men and women, we need to make sure that, rather than the door closing in a sense, the door stays open and, in fact, becomes wide open all the time.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, with the greatest of respect, that is an astonishing thing for you to say, that it opened the door. The door was open for years and the horse had well and truly bolted. In parliament on 17 June 2004, you knew, if you did not already know beforehand, that there were 197 cases of girls under 14 with STIs. Notwithstanding that what you say is remarkable, my question is: what advice or instruction did you give to the Office of Indigenous Policy following the revelations that were made in parliament on 17 June 2004? Did you tell your Office of Indigenous Policy to do anything in respect of all of those children with STIs?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, the Office of Indigenous Policy is a coordinating policy area. The Minister for Family and Community Services has responsibility for child protection, working together with the Police minister. We were very conscious of the additional resources that an agency was in place: people, resources and strategies. The minister was very active.

Ms CARNEY: Did you issue an instruction or give any directions to your Office of Indigenous Policy as a result of the information coming to light about so many children with STIs?

Ms MARTIN: I did not talk to the Office of Indigenous Policy. The minister was very active and working hard with her agency and the resources there to tackle the problem.

Ms CARNEY: But, of course, my question is not about the minister; my question is about you. What did you do? I think you have done very little, which is why you find yourself in the position you are now in. I note that the Office of Indigenous Policy has, as one of its roles, to improve social wellbeing and living conditions for indigenous Territorians, and that it communicates the government's policies to the indigenous and wider communities. I will put it to you that you had, as the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and captain of the ship as Chief Minister, not the slightest bit of interest in 197 kids getting STIs in communities in the Northern Territory, and you said: 'No, I will not do anything because I do not need to. I will leave it to the minister'. Do you accept that assertion?

Ms MARTIN: Again, the Opposition Leader has an extraordinary way of just making things up. The fact that we as a Cabinet had increased funds to health broadly, had increased specifically funds for child protection was a great commitment. The fact that we lifted police numbers way beyond anything the previous government had in place and we actually had the resources to tackle those problems was something that every single member of government was committed to it. Let me tell you, every single member of Cabinet was committed to it as we made those decisions around the Cabinet table.

Ms CARNEY: So you did not give any advice or instruction to the Office of Indigenous Policy? Did you give any advice or instruction to your CEO to say this is a serious issue, what should we do about it? Did you seek any advice and, if so, did you obtain any from your CEO?

Ms MARTIN: I go back to the fact that we had a very committed minister who had taken some important complementary action in terms of legislation like Volatile Substance Abuse legislation, had increased resources allocated by this government, and was wanting to take action at that time and said so very clearly in parliament. I had great confidence in my minister and thoroughly supported him.

Ms CARNEY: Had my question been do you have great confidence in your minister, your answer would have fitted. So I will ask the question again: what advice or instruction did you give to your CEO as a result of the 197 cases?

Ms MARTIN: I, quite properly, left the action with the minister involved.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so you did not do anything with your CEO. You did not seek or obtain any information. My final question on this part is: what advice or instruction did you give to the minister in relation to this story about the high rate of STIs?

Ms MARTIN: The minister was very articulate in demonstrating that her agency had more resources, they were going to be targeting, and I had great confidence in that area to be able to do that work. That does not mean that it was going to be easy. It does not mean that it we did enough, and I think that the inquiry's report showed that we did not.

It was interesting that while the mechanisms that started to be put into place then, and before then, to tackle the problem we had, were moving, as the inquiry said, in the right direction, we have not done enough. That is something that we all feel very deeply: we have not done enough and it is making us more determined to work with the federal government to shape what is happening now for long term solutions than we have ever been before.

It was interesting to listen to the CLP's member for Greatorex saying that, and this was Friday of last week, it is true to say the CLP failed to address the issue properly when they were in government. The CLP said: 'I failed to address the issue properly when we were in government'. I am not trying to say that you should be judged necessarily by the previous government ...

Ms CARNEY: I think you are on record as saying you don't want to play party politics with this stuff.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, cease interjecting on the Chief Minister, please.

Ms CARNEY: You go your hardest. See if you can dig yourself out of this hole.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition! Chief Minister.

Ms MARTIN: I do not think any government around the country would say they had done enough to tackle the issue of child sexual abuse, particularly in the areas of remote Aboriginal communities. We will continue to work on this issue. We will continue to see it as one of the very highest priorities in the Territory. I will work in the greatest cooperation with the federal government to make sure that the resources are there for effective long term solutions that are really focussed on protection of children.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, in August 2004, your former Minister for Family and Community Services made a statement to the parliament about child abuse. She not only made the statement but it was copied and distributed far and wide, no doubt. The former minister said, and I quote:

The easiest thing for me and the government to do would be to announce another review.

She went on to say:

While information is important, it is action, not information, that is needed now.

Do you say that between what you tried between August 2004 and when you called the inquiry in June 2006, you failed?

Ms MARTIN: The minister decided and had support for action with the increased resources that she had. If you look at where we got to between 2004-06, we did not achieve what perhaps we hoped we could. Certainly, we did not do enough. We needed to do much, much more, but that does not mean the determination of the minister in mid-2004 to use the resources that she had within her agency, the increased resources working with police, was not the very best way forward at that time.

Ms CARNEY: When you say 'at that time', can I remind you of something you said on 13 June last year? It was when you were censured in relation to your poor handling of the child abuse issue. You said confidently:

We have our strategies in place.

You said that just a year ago. You are now saying that in August 2004, everything was going according to plan. You say tonight you had lots of resources but at the end of the day, it was not enough. Yet, a few days or a week before you called the inquiry, you were saying in parliament everything is fine because we have our strategies in place. Do you understand why it is that your credibility is slipping whenever you give answers to questions about child sexual abuse?

Ms MARTIN: Child sexual abuse is probably one of the most difficult issues that we face in Australia. When you have a government that puts in extra resources, an agency and minister putting in place strategies to tackle what is a long term and difficult problem, government is making its best efforts, as opposed to the CLP who did very little previously. I have to say this because when you put additional resources in, when you put effort and energy in to tackle a difficult problem and you are criticised by those who were the previous government, what you are having to deal with is a massive deficit in a really important area.

Because we did not achieve what we thought we could doesn't mean that the intention was wrong in the first place. It is important for governments to recognise when you haven't done enough, when you need to think differently. If the resources and plans you put in place are not producing the results you want, you rethink it. You step back, you look at what the issues are, you ask expert advice and in this case we did. We had an expert team to advise government, to advise Territorians, to go and talk to communities and get advice about how we can do it differently and how we can do it better.

One of the frustrations is that if you put those resources in and they are not delivering, there is no point continuing with those resources because you do not get those outcomes as well.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, what work did the Office of Indigenous Policy do on child sexual abuse between June 2004, which is after the story broke in parliament about 197 children with

STIs, until 22 June last year? What work did your Office of Indigenous Policy do on the area of child sexual abuse?

Ms MARTIN: The Office of Indigenous Policy is not the service delivery area. We have funded the service delivery area to tackle the problem. They were working with police and had confidence that they were headed in the right direction. We can sit back now and say it wasn't enough and we needed to have done better, but, as I said before, it did not undermine the determination by Family and Community Services and the minister, and subsequently another minister, to get those results. The Office of Indigenous Policy coordinates across government. If there is an issue identified then we will bring different areas of government together, but on that one, Family and Community Services was doing that work.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, your Office of Indigenous Policy, as described on page 36 Budget Paper No 3 provides, whole-of-government strategic policy advice on indigenous affairs, including, and then there are a number of bullet points. In your answer, all I got was that the Office of Indigenous Policy had done some work with police. I have a couple of questions in relation to your answer: what sort of work had they done with police?

Ms MARTIN: No. I did not say done some work with police, no.

Ms CARNEY: What were they doing with police? You said police.

Ms MARTIN: I said Family and Community Services were working with police.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. What did your Office of Indigenous Policy do in relation to child abuse or specifically how to tackle it between June 2004 and 22 June 2006?

Ms MARTIN: What we are talking about is whole-of-government. We are talking whole-of-government in every agency working on issues and service delivery agencies specifically doing that task. Now that is not the task of the Office of Indigenous Policy, but one of those tasks that was very high on the list of the Office of Indigenous Policy was one of those components that was important in getting long term outcomes for the problem of sexual abuse of Aboriginal children, and that was housing.

One of the most difficult issues we have faced and one that needed a very thorough re-evaluation was the fact that the federal government does not recognise that there is a significant backlog in housing in the bush, which they have a great responsibility for, and so a lot of work was done working with the service delivery agency, which is Local Government and Housing, and my agency about getting a new approach to the federal government, looking at how we could put extra resources in, work more effectively in the building of houses, looking at more cost effective housing and that is quite proper work for the Office of Indigenous Policy to be doing.

Ms CARNEY: Did the Office of Indigenous Policy do any work and, if so what was it, on the issue of child sexual abuse between June 2004 and 22 June 2006?

Ms MARTIN: The issue of child sexual abuse and the disadvantage for Aboriginal Territorians was part of every work that was coordinated by the Office of Indigenous Policy. Another key area during that time was the Town Camp Task Force in Alice Springs. If you look at the inquiry's report, the issue of town camps and the vulnerability of children is one of great concern to them. So one of the driving forces in the work done, in fact coordinated the report done by the Town Camps Task Force, was the Office of Indigenous Policy, and of course that is a key area in tackling the area of child sexual abuse, in tackling the problems of alcohol abuse and the shortage of housing.

That was a specific task which did not have as its banner headline child sexual abuse, but it was fundamental to why we went in to get a new approach to town camps in Alice Springs. That is very proper work, very important work for the Office of Indigenous Policy. The fact that we are still in discussion with the town camp organisation Tangentyere does not mean that a lot of the other work is not taking place. There were very strong and good recommendations out of that Town Camp Task Force. Shouldn't we have done that?

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, how do you reconcile what you have said, your three previous answers, in light of the fact that your own document *Agenda for Action* which was made public

three months before Estimates last year, which you at the time described, your words not mine, as 'a very comprehensive and detailed strategy for the future' when it does not even contain the words child abuse or child sexual abuse? How can we believe what you say? You are giving the impression that lots of work has been done, but what ...

Ms MARTIN: Well, you can say no work was being done, but that work on the town camps in Alice Springs is fundamental to the future of the Territory. I do not think anyone would deny that. As Opposition Leader, you can demean it and that is fine, that is your task

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, I am not demeaning anything.

Ms MARTIN: You are saying ...

Ms CARNEY: I am just trying to get some answers in relation to child sexual abuse and you are talking about everything else, but I am used to that.

Ms MARTIN: You are saying we did nothing because it was not under the banner of child sexual abuse, and what I am saying is: I take you back to the inquiry. The inquiry's report talked about whole-of-government. There is a myriad of issues across government, ranging from tackling alcohol abuse, town camps, tackling housing, town camps, tackling education, town camps, all those things that we have to tackle. One of the issues of most concern to me – and I would have thought as someone living in Alice Springs, of most concern to you and the members for Braitling and Macdonnell, all of us - was what was happening in town camps. So for my office to be tackling those issues, fundamental to that was the concern that we had about the safety of children. Now, it is not written up there in banner headlines, but it is implicit and fundamental to the work we did in town camps, fundamental to the work we are doing in housing and the other things that were coordinated by the Office of Indigenous Policy.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, we will move on. Chief Minister, last year I asked you a number of questions about what you called your 20 year plan. Where is it, and can you table a copy, please?

Ms MARTIN: If you heard the answer previously when Graham Symons, Deputy Chief Executive, was answering a question from the member for Braitling, he spelled out where that generational plan was. It is part of the COAG agenda. It is something that the states and the Prime Minister have signed up to; the importance of tackling the whole range of issues to overcome indigenous disadvantage. That work is being done at officer level, and I can get Graham Symons to go through it again. Graham.

Ms CARNEY: No.

Ms MARTIN: You asked the question.

Ms CARNEY: Yes. I have asked the question: do you have it and will you table it? You do not have it and there you cannot table it?

Ms MARTIN: It is a COAG document and it is being developed with the states and the federal government.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So the answer to the question is: you cannot table it. That is fine. Thank you, Mr Symons, but I know what he is going to say because he said it before. That is why I asked you the question I just did. So thank you. Can I ask another question, please?

Ms MARTIN: Certainly.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Chief Minister, last year in Estimates, you said that you would have 'the framework of such a plan', that is, your 20 year plan, by the time you go to COAG. You have indicated that you are not going to table it. Are you prepared to table drafts of your plan that you were so diligently, apparently, working on before you went to COAG last year? Have you got any drafts? Anything?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, it is very baiting, is it not? There has been a lot of work done on the different indicators, as Graham Symons indicated, on the broad range of what we need to tackle. It was interesting, looking at the discussions and the letters that I sent to minister Brough

and the Prime Minister in June last year, which outlined those areas that we need to tackle for overcoming indigenous disadvantage and making generational change. They are all spelled out in those letters, particularly the areas of child protection, greater policing, better attendance at school, more housing, all those areas which are fundamental to generational change are spelt out with the Prime Minister in discussions, not just a letter flung into the ether, in discussions, both with the Prime Minister and minister Brough 12 months ago. It has been a great frustration. I have raised it many times. For example, linking family benefits, about \$47 a fortnight that is actually a family benefit, to attendance at school. We put that to the federal government 12 months ago. We went back to them, said 'Have you done work on it? Where is it?' Just as we are thinking that it cannot get traction with them, last week, they come out with the announcement..

Congratulations. That is good because in the discussions that have happened subsequently, there has been talk about the federal government imposing this condition on Aboriginal communities. Do you know where it came from, Mr Chairman? It actually came from the Aboriginal communities themselves, from Aboriginal people saying: 'It's time to get tough on us, and it's time to get tough on parents who don't send their kids to school'. So all those elements of this generational plan are there, and are certainly the subject of a lot of work to make sure that we have got those 5, 10, 15 and 20 year targets in place.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, on 19 May last year, I wrote you a letter that I note with interest, has not been acknowledged, to which I attached a four-page suggestions for a plan of action, from memory, one of which included tying Centrelink payments with school attendance. I am sure that the Prime Minister at least acknowledged your letter.

Ms MARTIN: 12 months later.

Ms CARNEY: You said yesterday on ABC radio that you had provided a package of proposals to the federal government to deal with child abuse and other issues affecting indigenous people in remote communities. Can you table a copy of this package of proposals?

Ms MARTIN: We can table that. I do not have it here with me.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Just so we do not lose it, are you confident we can table it before the end of the session?

Ms MARTIN: Certainly.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Ms MARTIN: If you go to page 5 of the *NT News* today, it spells it out. I think it is page 5, a very fine article by Nigel Adlam.

Ms CARNEY: I do not always rely on newspapers, so I look forward to receiving what you actually sent.

Chief Minister, only nine days before announcing the inquiry into sexual abuse in remote communities, you said in parliament:

We know what we have to do; we have our strategies in place. If the federal government wants to assist, great!

You said with confidence nine days before you announced the inquiry that you had your strategies in place and you knew what to do. Is it not the case that the only thing that changed your position, notwithstanding some of your answers tonight, is that you were subjected to public and media pressure? That is why you called for the inquiry and that you had not given advice or instructions to your Office of Indigenous Policy at any time between June 2004 and June 2006 as to how it might deal with child sexual abuse?

Ms MARTIN: Again, I go back to what I have said previously. An agency is where the carriage of those service delivery areas are, and we had an agency with a lot more resources than it ever had before, confident that they had a range of actions to start making some change in the level of child sexual abuse. Yes, absolutely there was medial pressure, but when I balanced, as Chief Minister, the resources in both police and child protection, the innovations we have put in place

and the fact that we were not seeming to get those breakthroughs in prosecutions, then of course I am going to step back. I am going to step back, take some advice, work out how we can do it better. Government can be stubborn and say we have our strategies and keep banging its head against the wall, but that's not really smart government. To step back and say: 'Can we do it differently?' is what I did. That is why I called the inquiry and that is why I was very specific about the inquiry, saying it was about breaking through those barriers. You can say we have a strategy here, we have police working here, but if it is not producing the results that the Territory needs and our children need, then step back and do it differently.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, in June last year in parliament, on 13 June, you said in response to a censure motion in relation to your handling of child abuse:

Should you stand publicly and go on about it or should you do something? I know what I will do. I will do something. That is exactly the reason why endless talkfests about issues of domestic violence and child abuse facing Aboriginal communities are not the way to go.

Apart from nine days later calling an inquiry, I note that in recent days you have supported one of your fellow premiers, I think it was Premier Beattie, who suggested a national summit. You did not go ...

Ms MARTIN: No, a COAG meeting. Mr Beattie. Sorry, ask me your question and I will answer it.

Ms CARNEY: Not a summit. An extra special COAG meeting is it, or is it the schedule COAG meeting?

Ms MARTIN: No, you ask your question, and I will give you an answer.

Ms CARNEY: No, you go for it. You were anticipating; great anticipation.

Ms MARTIN: I do not know what the question is, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: You said a year ago: 'No more talking; I will do something'. You also said, in relation to the summit which minister Brough called in May last year: 'No way; it is a talkfest'. Now, from what I understand of your public comments, and I am sure you will correct me if I am wrong, you seem to have taken a remarkable and sudden interest in what some people might call a talkfests. Can you elaborate on that?

Ms MARTIN: Not at all. If you look at the number of national discussions which have been held about issues of violence in Aboriginal communities, it was in 2001 that the Prime Minister called Aboriginal leadership together and my colleague, the member for Macdonnell, was one of those Aboriginal leaders who was in Canberra for that meeting. The issues we have seen spelled out through the inquiry were put to the Prime Minister at that meeting. That was a major summit looking to the depth and shame of many of those issues. When you looked at, I do not think one thing changed coming out of that summit, not one thing. Aboriginal leadership had a lot vested in that. There was a lot of talk and a lot of strategy, and nothing came out of it. You can say that you have to be cynical about those kinds of summits if you do not have action out of them. The Prime Minister had a summit and nothing changed. No resources of any substance came out of that, nothing.

Now with the Prime Minister calling a national emergency, quite rightly, state colleagues are saying: 'Well, if we are all being told this is a national emergency and each state has a responsibility to act immediately,' then, quite properly, to have a meeting of those state leaders is a sensible way to go. To have half a day where state leaders get together with the Prime Minister is a sensible thing. Peter Beattie does not call for summits. Peter Beattie is not a summit man; he is a man given to action, but in this case when the Prime Minister suddenly says we have a national emergency and targets the states over this, then quite properly the states say: 'Okay, Prime Minister. Let's sit down and talk'. I am grateful to the Prime Minister that I have my opportunity to talk to him on Thursday because initially, he said his diary was full.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I interrupt at this point to note that the member for Braitling has been replaced by the member for Nelson on the Estimates Committee.

Ms CARNEY: I think your answer, in essence, was that you now want to talk to people about this issue. Chief Minister, I asked you a question last week in parliament and I do not think you specifically dealt with it. I will ask it again but in a slightly different way: when did you first become aware of the report issued by the National Research Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse last year in which the authors said that they:

... do not feel comfortable with the priority given to child welfare and protection in recent years in the NT.

When did you first become aware of that report and the authors' comments?

Ms MARTIN: I cannot specifically remember when I became aware of that report. I think I would probably have had some briefing from my agency about it, but no, I am not in a position to say.

Ms CARNEY: A follow-up question was: were you briefed in relation to that report. Can you answer that?

Ms MARTIN: To be honest, I cannot remember.

Ms CARNEY: Can you ask the people around you whether they briefed you; whether you received one?

Ms MARTIN: I could not specifically remember a briefing. My advice is that the report would have gone to the relevant minister, Family and Children's Services.

Ms CARNEY: I think it went to all members of parliament, Chief Minister. It arrived in my electorate office. I am sure they did not take you off the list. Did you ever seek a briefing in relation to that report?

Ms MARTIN: I can't remember specifically.

Ms CARNEY: You can't remember. I take it that it therefore follows that you can't remember whether you issued any advice or instruction to the Office of Indigenous Policy in relation to that report?

Ms MARTIN: As my advice is, that report was dealt with by the relevant agency and the relevant minister.

Ms CARNEY: Given that while the report talked about child abuse of black children and white children, I am wondering whether, given the focus on child abuse in remote communities that took off from May last year, the Office of Indigenous Policy did any work in relation to the findings of that report. Can you answer that question?

Ms MARTIN: Implicit in this is that this report criticised the direction of the Northern Territory. That report would have been examined by the relevant agency, Family and Children's Services, or the relevant part of that agency. Is interesting to note in this, and I am not quite sure what point the Opposition Leader is making, but in the recommendations made by the Child Abuse Inquiry Report, there was a level of confidence. I am not saying 100% in any way, but there was a level of confidence in the strategies that the Territory government had in place and that because of the complexity of the issue of child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities, where we were focusing our attention was considered by the report's recommendations to be in the right direction. What they wanted was more action. While you are saying that we have been criticised by one report, I am saying at another level dealing with the same kind of area that the direction we are taking has been supported.

Ms CARNEY: I have asked a lot of questions in this area and I have some more to go. If I want to ask other ministers and other departments, I can do that, but my questions are all about you and your department and in particular your Office of Indigenous Policy, the one that provides you with strategic policy advice on indigenous affairs. You are not only the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, but you are the Chief Minister.

What I have so far is that after some serious issues were raised in June 2004, you gave no instruction or advice to either your CEO or Office of Indigenous Policy. Your minister said in August 2004 that she did not need any more reports, what was needed now was not information but action. You said, nine days before you called this inquiry, you had the strategy in place. At about the same time you said you did not want anymore talkfests, and then in one of your answers earlier, you said that the inquiry's report had opened the door and it wasn't an issue that you were ignoring. Then of course you had another report last year that noted concern about how your government has tackled child abuse and child protection.

I suggest to you that, using your own words, the door was well and truly open and that it was something that you were ignoring, you as Chief Minister and you as Minister for Indigenous Affairs. Do you accept that criticism?

Ms MARTIN: I suppose from the point of view of doing enough, we as a Territory weren't, so I accept criticism absolutely. I accept criticism that we as a Territory were not doing enough to protect Aboriginal children. That is apparent in the findings of the report, absolutely apparent.

The issue that you are not representing correctly when you are talking about opening the door was the issue of a veil of silence around people in communities feeling confidence to identify perpetrators, to be witnesses to police and children protection. That was the door I was talking about that we needed to open up. When you talk to Rex Wild and Pat Anderson, that is what they told me. They felt that their work, the inquiry's work, had opened that door which had been closed for so long and had been a frustration for so long.

That is a very specific reference to the work done by the inquiry, and the importance of keeping the door open and keeping that communication open, about what is a very sensitive and difficult issue, but one that we have to tackle.

So while you can say that I have a minister in 2004 who says we are taking action, we are heading in the right direction, the Office of Indigenous Policy was doing work that complemented that and, clearly, if you look at the inquiry, that was the right way to go. There were other issues that needed to be dealt with to tackle the whole broad area of protection of children, and that is in the area of housing; it is in the area of town camps.

There is no apology from my office in coordinating a whole-of-government approach in those areas and many other areas. Saying that I have to have an Office of Indigenous Policy that replicates what is happening in agencies all the time is not the point. It is to look at those areas we need to work on, and if there is an area identified as needing work, then we will be involved and we will work across government. That is the challenge for the Department of Chief Minister now, and that work happened as soon as the report was received by me, the earlier copy that I got from the inquiry. Agency heads, coordinated by my department, were there looking through the recommendations, working out how they could be applied. That, again, is the proper work of the Department of Chief Minister and the Office of Indigenous Policy.

Ms CARNEY: I find your hypocrisy astounding, Chief Minister, because you talk about the report and how it opened the door. When the second *Lateline* story aired, I think it was on 21 June, you and your government, and your Deputy Chief Minister in particular, were pernicious in the extreme in criticising everyone who had anything to do with that program. Do you accept that some people would say that the second *Lateline* interview opened the door of your office and probably opened your mind for the first time in a serious way to the issue of child abuse?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, I am not going to go through those issues again. We are dealing with a budget process, an Estimates process. I believe that I have dealt with those issues quite appropriately.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Chief Minister, let us talk about Mutitjulu, the community of Mutitjulu. You would not have written it because you have people to do that for you, but in a media release issued on 7 September 2006, it said, in relation to the Mutitjulu police station - it has got your face on it and it has got this in quotation marks coming from you:

The community welcomed our announcement that an additional police constable will be stationed at Yulara with special responsibility for Mutitjulu. That officer will supervise and

assist two Aboriginal Community Police Officers to be stationed at the new police post in Mutitjulu when it is commissioned later this month.

Chief Minister, it is well known that one of the ACPOs left not long after he started and, at times, a lot of the time, there were no ACPOs at Mutitjulu. My question is: when did you first become aware that either one or both of the ACPOs were not at the Mutitjulu police post?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, we have had a lot of discussion that is not necessarily Estimates-based. This is a question directly for the Police minister and I am going to leave that question for the Police minister. I do not allocate the funds through my agency for ACPOs at Mutitjulu or the police station at Yulara. It is time for me to say that is a question that should go to the Police minister.

Ms CARNEY: Can I say in response, Chief Minister, that you are not backwards in coming forward putting your picture on things when you want to give yourself a line on something. You are, after all, the minister for indigenous affairs. Mutitjulu has indigenous people there. Are you seriously suggesting that you will not answer the question I have asked in relation to when you became aware of one or both of the ACPOs not being there because it is a police issue? If so, why do you go around issuing media releases?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, this is very clearly a question for the Police minister. He answered it fully to the media yesterday and I think that he should deal with it when his time comes before this committee.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Further, Leader of the Opposition, you could have anticipated that a repeat of the question would have ended up with a repeat of the same answer, so please move on.

Ms CARNEY: I will. When you wrote what has now been described as the famous Mutitjulu memo, which I think was in 2005, you said and I quote:

Without adequate policing, there is a risk that lawlessness within the community will spread.

Chief Minister, you have had a lot to say about Mutitjulu and policing. In fact, you wrote a memo on it that you did not want the world to know about until *The Australian* found it under FOI. In relation to Mutitjulu, do you acknowledge that in relation to that agreement, your government did not keep up its side of the deal by ensuring that police officers were there, or ACPOs were there?

Ms MARTIN: Again, I say, Mr Chairman, this is an issue for the Police Minister very specifically. The Police Minister answered it fully to the media yesterday and I think it is appropriate that those kinds of question go to him.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so you do not want to answer that one. We will try this one. Chief Minister, the federal government will surely be deploying an additional 50 police officers in remote Aboriginal communities in the Territory. Will you commit to recruiting and additional 50 police officers to replace those federally funded officers when they return their home states?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, the announcement from the Prime Minister was one that had very little detail to it when it was made last week. There have been a lot of discussions with the federal government. I think they have been working out what their broad statements actually mean when it comes to a practical application in a long term way on the ground in the Territory. We are continuing those discussions.

When I talked to the Prime Minister and minister Brough last year, we talked about the need for additional police resources. We had the Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough say that he would commit money for those additional police resources and it took a long while for any of those funds to even start being talked about in terms of specifics in the Territory.

We put forward four communities that we considered were the ones, in assessment by police, needing police officers as a high priority. We got some leverage from the federal government about Galiwinku. So with all those discussions that happened 12 months ago, we have not seen a lot of action. I am pleased that we now have action and we will have very productive discussions with the federal government.

Can I just say, going back to Mutitjulu, Mutitjulu, as everyone understands, is run by the federal government. It is within the park and it is 75% funded by the federal government. The agreement that was struck with them at the time of the building of the police post was that there be two ACPOs there. It was not that it would be a police station. The police station is up the road 20 minutes away and so that was an agreement with the federal government signed off by them.

Ms CARNEY: That you provide the ACPOs.

Ms MARTIN: Yes.

Ms CARNEY: Yes. So why you did not provide the ACPOs? Why did you not keep your eye on it? Did you ever ask: how the ACPOs going at Mutitjulu?

Ms MARTIN: Again I say that is a question that was answered yesterday by the Police Minister and can be directed to the Police Minister.

Ms CARNEY: I will put the earlier question to you again since you, in rather spectacular fashion, did not answer it. Chief Minister, the federal government will shortly be deploying an additional 50 police officers in remote Aboriginal communities in the Territory. Will you commit to recruiting an additional 50 police officers to replace those federally funded officers when they return to their home states?

Ms MARTIN: The whole issue of protection of children has to have long-term strategies. We are in discussion with the federal government and have been for well over 12 months specifically on this issue of police resources. When I had discussions with the Prime Minister and minister Brough, we said we will increase our police resources, but we needed the federal government to increase their commitment to police resources as well. We will continue those discussions.

Quite clearly, from the Territory's point of view, we need to have more child protection workers, we need to have more resources in health, particularly GPs in the bush, we need to have more resources in early childhood. That is something that the recommendations of the report were very specific about. In all those areas, we need to have increased resources if we are going to tackle the problem. I am not going to say at this stage this is what we are going to do in any particular area, but we are continuing to talk with the federal government. I am taking the Prime Minister at his word: this is an issue of national importance, of national emergency, as he described it, and that the federal government, with its vast surplus, needs to invest in the Territory.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. I think that is a 'no' for recruiting an additional 50 police officers. We will try this one. Chief Minister, the federal government's plan of action to deal with the social disintegration in many Aboriginal communities may result in the federal government replacing the Territory government as the funding body for certain needs in Aboriginal communities. Will you commit to ensuring that any expenditure savings made by the Territory government as a consequence of the federal government's intervention will be spent on indigenous affairs?

Ms MARTIN: In what areas are you talking about?

Ms CARNEY: I am talking about indigenous affairs. If you are going to make savings ...

Ms MARTIN: But you are saying the federal government is going to pick up in some areas, but ...

Ms CARNEY: Looks that way.

Ms MARTIN: Let us just take one of the first statements that came from Canberra last week. That was about taking over 60 Aboriginal communities and sending in managers for them. As we tested what that actually meant it was, as we have currently in Wadeye, there would be a manager of federally-funded government services in those communities. That is something that we have in Wadeye. We have had that for a while and they work in a complementary way with the Territory government.

A weekend is quite a long time in politics because now we find that those 60 managers are now nine and those nine are going to be working very carefully and clearly with our changes in local

government. We have nine shires. There will be one manager of Commonwealth government funded programs working with us in those shire areas.

At this stage, it is very difficult to say how this will emerge. There are some areas of the proposal from the federal government that we do not accept. I have made it very clear from day one that we do not believe that permits should be removed and we will stay very clear about this. There is a very strong and growing voice from our Aboriginal leadership and communities that it is actually counter-productive when you are talking about child protection. We have a lot of work to do with the federal government. I will be talking to the Prime Minister and minister Brough along with the Minister for Local Government and Housing on Thursday in Brisbane.

Ms CARNEY: If any savings result as a result of federal government taking over Territory powers as a result, I may say, of your inaction, if there are any savings to be made, will you ensure that those savings are spent on indigenous affairs in the Territory by your government?

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, it is very clear, just in the discussions that have been had so far, that this requires additional resources from both governments and that is a commitment that we make.

Ms CARNEY: Chief Minister, on 25 May 2005, you launched the Territory government's new Indigenous Economic Development Strategy. The strategy set a target of creating 2000 jobs per year for the next 10 years, with the intention of creating parity between economic indicators for indigenous and non-indigenous Territorians. Chief Minister, how many nett jobs have been created for indigenous Territorians in the last two years? Has any movement towards economic indicator parity been achieved in those two years? How is the move towards or, indeed, away from parity being measured?

Ms MARTIN: That is a very important question. It is one of the areas that has been identified as sadly missing in the federal response to protection of children. You can talk about better health, better education. You can talk about the need for tackling alcohol. They are all absolutely legitimate, but unless you talk about all those issues in the context of employment and training, then you really are not creating a long-term strategy. We set a bold plan for indigenous employment. There are many areas of that plan that I am sure my colleague, the Minister for Business, Economic and Regional Development, will happily talk about, but I would like to refer the specific answer at this stage to Dennis Bree.

Mr BREE: One of the issues associated with this is that as we have worked through this issue, we found that measurement is a difficult issue across this area, and a lot of work has been done with the Australian Bureau of Statistics on it. So in terms of being certain about the outcomes since this strategy has been announced, it would be courageous to say that we have got there. In fact, I think if you look at the statements over the period of time, the statement of 2000 jobs per year for 10 years was really a statement of the challenge which was ahead of us rather than initially a target, however that is what we have been working towards.

There is some hope that we have achieved it in a number of different areas, however I would not even start to think we have got to the 2000 jobs per year at this stage, but we will know better when the Census figures come through.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, Mr Bree. If you do not have the figures in front of you, perhaps we should do it on notice, but as a result of the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy, how many nett jobs have been created for indigenous Territorians in the last two years? Has any movement towards economic indicator parity been achieved in those two years? How is the move towards or, indeed, away from parity being measured? I would like my question answered, please.

Ms MARTIN: Dennis Bree.

Mr BREE: The actual issue of measuring the parity, we cannot give you the answer to that because it is one of the things which has been identified, particularly on an annual basis, which is what we would like, as unavailable. There is a project working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics underway at the present moment to try and rectify that situation, so the first figures we will have to judge how we are going will not be available until the Census data comes out. I think the employment figures come out in October.

That is the first issue; we cannot measure it right now. The other issue I would say is that it was a strategy. In terms of measuring the outcome of the strategy, it would be wrong for us to take credit for any job that has occurred. We set a framework and encouraged people, so the sorts of things we would be looking at would be the areas we have great hope in, such as the pastoral industry. We know there are real things happening there. In the area of mining, there are good things happening and we are working with people in that area. The Task force on Indigenous Economic Development is starting work with the retail industry and there have of course been significant and measurable outcomes in the public sector. That has gone up quite a number of points since the strategy began. That is the one area that we can measure.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. How many nett jobs have been created as a result of the Indigenous Economic Strategy? The target was 2000 jobs. How many jobs have been created?

Mr BREE: I thought I explained at the beginning, Leader of the Opposition ...

Ms CARNEY: I still don't have a number.

Mr BREE: We are not in a position to measure that at present.

Ms CARNEY: When you say 'to measure it', I assumed it was measuring the economic indicators between indigenous and non-indigenous Territorians. Surely you can measure how many jobs your strategy has come up with.

Mr BREE: Actually, no.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. In relation to your comment that you have measurable outcomes in the public service, can you elaborate on that?

Mr BREE: Can I take that on notice to get you the exact figures? I think, from a guess, it has gone up from about 50%, but I will get you the figures.

Question on Notice 3.4

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, would you restate the question, please?

Ms CARNEY: What are the measurable outcomes in the public service that Mr Bree referred to when trying to answer my last question?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, we will take that question. We do track, very carefully, public service numbers so that you can actually work from one year to the next in terms of the profile of the workforce.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question number 3.4, and I might suggest that might be a good spot for a couple of minutes.

Ms CARNEY: I reckon we should bolt to the finish for this area if that is all right. I only have about two more questions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you questions in relation to this output?

Mr WOOD: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Will that take very long?

Ms CARNEY: I will be finished soon, sorry Gerry.

Mr WOOD: Not as long as the Opposition Leader! No, not long.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, we will complete this outcome.

Ms CARNEY: I have nearly finished, thank you. Chief Minister, on 19 October 2006, you announced that the Northern Territory government would invest an extra \$100m in remote housing for indigenous Territorians over the next five years. How many houses for indigenous Territorians in remote communities have been built since that announcement?

Ms MARTIN: I do not have a number on how many houses have been built, but those additional funds that we are working together with additional funds from the federal government, a lot of work has gone to be able to use those additional funds, and that is on top of the regular amount, something about \$50m or \$60m a year, and we are looking to make sure that we can build homes economically, that we can tie in training, and that we are going to be using a public housing model. The person who is very much more involved from the Office of Indigenous Policy in setting those new directions is Dennis Bree.

Mr BREE: Mr Chairman, the housing agreement that we are reaching with the federal government has a significant lead time in terms of actual construction of houses on the ground, so the current program continues, but the new program is about to start. The first stage of that will be significant investment this coming year in land servicing. I think you will understand that first of all, we have to provide the blocks on which to build them, including water, sewerage and the roads. In parallel to that, there will be significant work on renovation of existing houses in this coming financial year, with new houses from this program being commenced in the next calendar year.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. I do have many other questions, but time is very much against us. My final question is in relation to indigenous policy. I have been advised that on ABC television tonight, the member for Arafura said that grog should be banned from every outlet in the Northern Territory. Chief Minister, if that is the case, do you agree with the member for Arafura's call and, if so, what is the timetable for banning the sale of alcohol in the Northern Territory?

Ms MARTIN: My bush members came together today to talk to the media about the reaction in their communities to what had happened so far since last Thursday. The focus of our discussion was that it is important to get out the reality of what is being proposed to the communities, and the importance of every bush member in government being part of delivering that, and the importance of listening to the community and listening to where their concerns are and what they would like to see.

The member for Arnhem, as part of that discussion, said – and people had gone around in front of the media and said this is what I am hearing from my community, this is what I am hearing from my community – ‘From my community they are saying, let us get really tough with grog and we would like to see it banned everywhere’. She was just reflecting back the words of her constituency. That is what we honestly did today. I thought members were very honest. They certainly went to the heart of some of the fears that we are seeing right around the Territory.

It is important for government, all members of government, to be out on the ground, and that is what my bush members are going to be doing over the next couple of weeks, talking to communities. So that reflection back of how Aboriginal people are feeling is very important, and of course we will be talking further with the federal government about the measures that we would like to see put in place.

On alcohol, we have some very tough measures in place. Look at what is happening on Groote. There is no take away in Jabiru, and Alice Springs, what we are doing there. I need to talk further to the federal government about the importance of having locally owned alcohol plans that, as we see in the case of Groote, really work.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, in the Anderson-Wild report under the heading *Leadership*, this was said:

While everybody has a responsibility for the protection of all children, the Northern Territory government must provide strong leadership on the issue of child sexual abuse and that this be expressed publicly as a determined commitment to place children's interests at the forefront in all policy and decision making, particularly where a matter impacts on the physical and emotional wellbeing of children.

Chief Minister, would you accept that although you said that you have you have been discussing this issue for a long time, and although you have said you are working towards long term programs to help in this area, the fault was that the perception in the community was that you didn't come out when this report was first released, you didn't come out publicly with a determined commitment. The perception that most people have is that the government did not have that commitment and that is why the federal government stepped in.

Ms MARTIN: Member for Nelson, this inquiry was independent. I am not telling this inquiry what to do and I think you respect that. I got an early copy of that report. Straight away, heads of agencies started looking at those 97 recommendations, what the resource implications were, what their priorities were. There are a lot dollars involved there, and the inquiry quite clearly said we need to work in partnership with the federal government. We have to determine, because it was a report given to the Northern Territory government, where those breakdowns were and what kind of proposal we would take to the federal government. We were not sitting on our hands. I came out saying we are strongly committed to making change, and it can be interpreted in any way that people choose about getting an early copy and doing nothing.

That might suit some politically. It was not the reality. We certainly are very committed to making change. What worries me the most is that we will have a raft of short-term changes that won't make a difference in the end. That is the challenge for this Territory government: to work with the federal government to get those resources on the ground so we don't see another raft of short-term solutions that leave us in the same position in five years' time.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, I know you had an early copy. Isn't that more reason that when this was released publicly that on the day it was released, you had some determined commitment to do something?

Ms MARTIN: That is exactly what I said. You must have been there.

Mr WOOD: What I am saying is that is not the perception I am getting from the public. What I am saying is: do you feel that is the issue; people haven't felt that you showed that determined commitment? I am not saying that you are not committed. I am not saying that you are not genuine. No one is doubting that at all, but in this case, compared with the federal government, it looked like you were dilly-dallying. I am not saying you hadn't good reason for saying we have long term programs and we have to think them out, but there was not that forceful statement that said we support all these recommendations and we will work through them and we are determined to do something. That didn't seem to come through.

Ms MARTIN: That is what I said.

Mr WOOD: I know, but that did not seem to come through. I think that is what ...

Ms MARTIN: One of the problems with this is people looking for some magic bullet kind of answer. That was part of this, but it was a careful report that went through a whole lot of issues and said very clearly there is no one measure here that is going to make a difference and government has to look at the whole myriad of recommendations.

That is what I said: absolutely committed. We will do this but it is going to take some time to talk to the stakeholders who have been identified by the report, the federal government, the non-government sector and, importantly, Aboriginal people themselves. If you are going to make long term change, you can come out and make some explosive short term comments or you can actually make them long term and sustainable. We needed dollars and that work needed to be done. So my words were very strong ones, not backing off any level of commitment, but we had to do that work, and doing that work across government does take some time.

Mr WOOD: I accept that, Chief Minister, but my criticism really is that the feeling I have got out there is that the words were not strong enough at the time. I am not denying you have not got commitment, but perception is important in politics, and that is the perception I have seen. Be that as it may, I have a couple of other questions.

There is a quote in the report from Fred Chaney who was interviewed on the ABC 7.30 Report. I will read this little bit and ask for your comment because it tends to be a little bit opposite to the way the federal government is doing things at the moment:

One of the things I think we should have learnt by now is that you cannot solve these things by centralised bureaucratic direction. You can only educate children in a school at the place where they live, you can only give people jobs or get people into employment person by person, and I think my own view now is that the lesson we have learnt is that you need locally based action, local resourcing, local control to make changes, but I think government's persistent thinking that you can direct from Canberra, you can direct from Perth or Sydney or Melbourne, that you can have programs that run out into communities that are not owned by those communities, that are not locally controlled and managed, and I think that is a thing we should know does not work.

I know this is being driven now from Canberra. Will you be at least working on the ground with the federal government to try to make sure that the people who are going to be affected by this, not the bad people, but the communities will be able to control and have some ownership of what is going to happen?

Ms MARTIN: That is our entire intention. We already had my two deputy Chief Executives on their way to Canberra to talk to the federal government about what could be put in place when this announcement came out. We had those discussions in the previous week and we were looking to have those discussions in a measured and sensible but urgent way with the federal government. The fact that the announcement came out, there is not much I can do about that, but we are determined to work with the federal government to make sure that any of the announcements, the plans that we heard last week, on the ground are workable, that Aboriginal people understand what is happening. My bush members tell me that because we do not understand what is happening and it shifts per day, per morning, per afternoon, then it is very hard to tell Aboriginal people in the bush what in fact is happening. Our challenge is to make sure that we sit down with the federal government, I will be there in Brisbane on Thursday with the Prime Minister, and to talk about this and to make this a very positive plan for the future.

Mr WOOD: Through, you Mr Chairman, what concrete things are being done to tell Aboriginal people what the federal government's proposals are? They could be scared of some of these things if you read the initial media release, but is there anything concrete being done at the moment to give people the correct information, not the information you sometimes see in the newspapers?

Ms MARTIN: Member for Nelson, you tell me what the correct information is because what we are finding is that it is moving on, as I said, sometimes an hourly, but a daily basis. What bush members are going to be doing over the two weeks is being in communities talking about what we do know and saying don't over-react; work with us while we find out from the federal government what they are planning to do. You would think, if this is a positive plan for the future, that the federal government would be communicating that as well.

Mr WOOD: I presume you will be taking that particular issue up with the Prime Minister.

Ms MARTIN: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, now the government has brought out all these measures, what happens to this? Is this overtaken? Is it going to be included in the government's measures, or does it just sit on a shelf? What actually happens? Is this going to be upfront with the federal government's proposal?

Ms MARTIN: There are a number of proposals coming from the federal government to do with alcohol, to do with pornography - nothing much about housing, but that is fundamental. Some elements of what the federal government is talking about work with our priorities from the report, and we have to run parallel courses here. We will be talking to the federal government; we will be trying to make sure that what they are talking about is sustainable for the future and is workable, and we are absolutely committed. Why have an inquiry with some very thoughtful, careful recommendations that build on what we are currently doing and walk away from them? We are not going to.

Mr WOOD: And the federal government will not be allowed - well, I cannot say not be allowed to walk away from it, but ...

Ms MARTIN: I would like them not to be able to.

Mr WOOD: No, no but ...

Ms MARTIN: I think that is a good one, actually. You cannot come out with the statements that we have heard over the last five days and simply not resource what you are talking about. I think there is a real sense from the community, certainly from the Territory, that once you have raised this issue to the level that they have, then the dollars and the commitment have to follow.

Mr WOOD: Just one other quote, and it is probably a favourite of mine. Dave Curtis is from Tennant Creek, as you know, and has been there for many years. He said if the federal government is fair dinkum, put real money up for employment. I have long believed that we should have full employment, especially in remote communities and without that, you are wasting your time because what happens is that people are bored. Boredom is a classic reason why people get into all sorts of trouble, whether it is drugs or gambling or sexual abuse.

I have written to Mr Brough and I have written to Joe Hockey. I have bureaucratic answers. I still do not have full employment on communities. Chief Minister, would you at least put that concept to the Prime Minister? I have worked at places like Bathurst Island. I have had full employment with men, mainly, because I worked with the Council. It is possible, except at the moment we tend to treat Aboriginal communities as second rate. We say work for the dole and CDEP. Surely through our local councils, whether amalgamated or otherwise, the federal government, if it is going to be fair dinkum about this, can supply enough funds to provide full employment for every remote community and for every person who wants to work - no unemployment benefits; they provide full employment at a good rate and rate of pay. Would you agree with that and, if so, would you at least put that to the federal government?

Ms MARTIN: There have been considerable discussions with the federal government. As you understand, employment conditions in remote areas are changing. There has been lifting of remote areas exemption. There have been changes to the length of time you can be on CDEP, and part of that of course is about proper full-time jobs, which is fundamental, as you said, to the sustainability of communities in the future. Dennis Bree has been involved in a lot of those discussions. Do you want to add anything further, Mr Bree?

Mr BREE: Mr Chairman, just to say that there are ongoing discussions about how such a program could be instituted through the local government reforms in regard to the shires. It is a matter of preliminary discussions at the present moment. I will not try to raise hopes because, like you, we keep trying on this one, but we will keep trying.

Mr WOOD: In the United States, the Marshall Plan was there for emergency. This is supposed to be national emergency. Employment is a key factor to this. It is not just a factor on the outside; it is a key factor. Who are the people mainly charged with sexual abuse? It is mainly males. We need to have an holistic approach including employment otherwise we are wasting our time. Education – there is no point if there are no jobs. Anyway, I should not make a speech. I am supposed to be asking questions.

Chief Minister, how will you guarantee that the people who would come to the Territory would be the right sort of people? Is there some input you have to make sure that the people the government is wanting to put in these communities are qualified, have some knowledge of the conditions and understand the people they are dealing with? One of the worst things you can do is put people into these areas who have very little cultural knowledge, probably not even enough knowledge about the Northern Territory, which has its own culture.

Ms MARTIN: Member for Nelson, you have to appreciate this is the federal government's plan and we are only just being involved in it now. Ideally, for a long term sustainable plan, the federal government would have talk to us and there have been questions asked about why that did not happen and where the commitment is for the long term.

For police, that is an issue. Remote policing has a whole suite of skills attached to it, which our police do very well. To send police in from other parts of the country means that the police are talking to the federal officials about how we make the best of that, to use those resources, but also have those officers able to deal with remote conditions. That applies across the board.

We are talking about the federal government saying they will send in health teams with GPs. It is actually the task of the federal government to provide those GPs into the Territory on a long term basis. So I carry a level of cynicism about a short-term task force that does one health check and moves on. That is not sustainable; it is not about change for the future. There are a lot of issues here and we are having a lot of discussions.

Mr WOOD: I will ask about Aboriginal leases. The minister has said, basically, if communities have not fulfilled the conditions of their leases then the Commonwealth will take over. What conditions do these communities have that he would make that statement?

Ms MARTIN: Member for Nelson, they are talking about town camp leases and the conditions of those leases.

Mr WOOD: Do you know what those conditions are?

Ms MARTIN: I do not know individually what the conditions of those leases are. We have been in discussion with the Alice Springs town camp organisation, Tangentyere, about changes in the town camps. When you are looking at child protection, and when you are looking at that area, (inaudible) asked whether Paul Tyrrell could go on. I was very pleased to do that. Two other members from the Territory are on it, and I am confident that Paul will be talking to those issues when the task force meets. It is meeting in Brisbane on Saturday.

Mr WOOD: The other question, which has nothing to do with the report, is indigenous employment. When you get the figures for education for indigenous literacy and numeracy standards, once upon a time we used to break the figures into remote indigenous communities and urban indigenous communities. Have we divided Aboriginal employment into remote employment as against urban employment? The reason I ask is because sometimes when we talk about Aboriginal employment, I get the feeling that there are more people in the urban areas that get employment in the public service, but the people out there in the bush, the more remote Aboriginal people are not getting the same growth in employment as in the towns. I do not know whether those figures are available.

Ms MARTIN: I refer that to Denis Bree.

Mr BREE: I think you are correct in most of the employment in the public service is in the urban areas. We currently have a project looking at service delivery in remote areas with a view to, in the first instance, employing school leavers that are now coming through Year 12. So there is a project to target those areas that have Year 12 students coming through and offer them a job in the public service at entry level as the start of their career.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output Group 1 and, as I indicated, if we had a couple of minutes break just to stretch the legs, and then reconvene. Thank you.

Ms MARTIN: Literally, a couple of minutes, Mr Chairman?

Mr CHAIRMAN: I can go to five minutes, but then I am conscious we will be late five minutes at the end so we will go to 11:05 if we do that.

The committee suspended.

OUTPUT GROUP 2 – MAJOR PROJECTS, ASIAN RELATIONS AND TRADE

Output 2.1 – Major Projects, Asian Relations and Trade

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order. The committee will now consider Output Group 2, Output 2.1 - Major Projects, Asian Relations and Trade.

Ms MARTIN: I introduce Brian O’Gallagher who is the Executive Director of the output Major Projects, Asian Relations and Trade.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Mr O'Gallagher. Member for Blain.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Yes, I have questions. Thank you for the opportunity to ask in this area, Chief Minister and Minister for Asian Relations and Trade. Upon taking responsibility for Asian Relations and Trade in the last reshuffle, you obviously had specific objectives in mind to advance this very important portfolio. What were they?

Ms MARTIN: My objectives in advancing the portfolio of Asian Relations and Trade were to build on the strengths that we currently have, and that was in things like the live cattle trade, but also to build on our services. Depending on where you are talking about in the Asian region, you are talking about public sector capacity building, education, health and, at the same time being Tourism Minister, the idea was using the position of Chief Minister to be able to, when we talk about services in to the region, you are not talking about just one minister for Asian Relations and Trade.

If you are talking about educational services into the region, you are talking the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. If you are talking about health services in to the region, you are talking about Health. What I said at the time was that there would be more than one minister for Asian Relations and Trade; in fact, there would be a number. Whether you have primary industries, tourism or the area of mining, we would have multi-faceted activity into the Asian region coordinated through Chief Minister.

Mr MILLS: So do you have objectives that are measurable? All of that, I understand, and it is fine, but do you have objectives that can be assessed?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, pretty well so. Pretty well so.

Mr MILLS: Can you tell me about those, please?

Ms MARTIN: If you take things like building better links into the Asian region with shipping, then over the last few years we have a direct service into China and announcements last week of a direct service into Indonesia. That is measurable. That is at this stage two out of two. You can look at some very measurable activities. You can look at the growth in export. You can look at opportunities for Territory businesses with servicing the mining industry, particularly in the area of Kalimantan, and you can look at how programs are working in areas like Indonesia through the mosquito eradication. There are a number of programs that we are building, particularly through that AusAID money.

However, in terms of that broader theme of better links into the region, I said at the outset our strategy was to build those shipping links, and our two target areas were China and Indonesia, and I am delighted last week that we hit the second.

Mr MILLS: I am a little surprised. I was hoping there would be something more concrete than, with respect, a grab bag approach of picking things that come to mind. Is there a specific objective? Is there a clear set of guidelines against which you can measure your progress and achievements in Asian Relations and Trade? It is a very important portfolio and I still do not have a sense of core guiding objectives. It is a grab bag of things that are in the field, or in the area of Asian Relations and Trade. Is there something specific which is clearly measurable so we can track and have some accountability, whether we as a Territory are moving forward or not?

Ms MARTIN: Member for Blain, if you take the area of education, what I said at the outset was that we want to grow the links between the Territory and our immediate neighbours in terms of students coming to the Territory at either a secondary or tertiary level. Work has been done. I took a delegation to Brunei and Sabah last year; I took the Vice-Chancellor of the university and the head of education to start those discussions with English speaking neighbours and to look at those links. That was the start of building some of the activities between Brunei and Sabah and the Northern Territory.

A delegation went to Vietnam in March. Part of that delegation was not only about live cattle, but about educational links. As we have seen, part of how we have to develop this strategy is looking at how our air links develop and an opportunity presented with Tiger Air and its new links through Singapore into Asia to look at those countries where those air links happen. It is all very well to have a strategy which says we want to see educational interchange, students coming to do

a variety of courses in the Territory from Asia, but if you cannot get cheap airfares to support that, and quick links, then it is not sustainable. Education has been a strong emphasis for me as Asian Relations and Trade Minister, and there has been complementary work done, particularly in the BIMP-EAGA area, through Health.

Mr MILLS: Are there or are there not specific objectives that are agreed and can be reported on - core objectives, not a grab bag of interesting things that are happening?

Ms MARTIN: I am not sure, member for Blain, what you are saying in terms of our strategy. I mean, the strategy is as I have said. You might not like that strategy, which ...

Mr MILLS: I do not know what it is. I am asking.

Ms MARTIN: It is to grow our relationships and trade in, first, the BIMP-EAGA area, but secondly, strategically into areas in Asia. China was, of course, a market for us as the commodities boom happened. Japan is an important area for relationships in terms of gas investments, and we now have now a prospective area opening up in Vietnam. We have to keep doing assessments of which countries are prospective. The underpinning of air links is very important.

There are two areas. There is building trade, and that is important; building on the fundamentals from the past and adding new components. There is no doubt that one of the Territory's strengths, and this is the assessment we did, is in services, education, health and public sector capacity building. The other one is building those relationships in the Asian region, which is a fundamental part of our role in BIMP-EAGA.

Mr MILLS: Are you achieving your objectives?

Ms MARTIN: When I talked about the shipping links, I would say that was an achievement of objectives because I would have thought that at this stage we might still have not seen those shipping links developed. We have had a great deal of confidence in the future of the Territory shown by Hai Win in that monthly shipping service between Shanghai and Darwin, and now it with the new shipping service between Surabaya and Darwin, and again a lot of work by my agency, a lot of travel a lot of discussion to get that shipping service in place.

Mr MILLS: Thank you, Chief Minister.

Ms MARTIN: Just on two elements, we are not doing badly.

Mr MILLS: Yes, fine, but this is Estimates, a process of endeavouring to see how we are going in key agencies. I have not had a description of what the objectives are, therefore I can't have any sense of whether you are achieving those objectives or not. I don't understand the strategic plan. It has not been explained in a way that I can grasp it. Is there a place where I can go to have clearly explained to me the core objectives of Asian Relations and Trade so that I can see whether they are being achieved?

Ms MARTIN: We have a trade route strategy, which is a core part of that, and it is a document.

Mr MILLS: Is there a place that I can go to see it?

Ms MARTIN: On the web. We actually discussed it in parliament. My memory is that you responded to it. I don't know whether you have forgotten about that, but it was a ...

Mr MILLS: There is no reason to be churlish, Chief Minister.

Ms MARTIN: No, I am just saying ...

Mr MILLS: This is an opportunity where I have access directly to you to ask you about the core objectives. It is a very important agency. I hope that you are able to explain when you took over Asian Relations and Trade, you set an agenda and you would be able to explain that agenda to me and see whether we are achieving or not on behalf of Territorians. I am still at sea. I don't understand where we are going with this.

Ms MARTIN: We have a document that has been into the parliament that we have had a discussion about. It establishes the growth in trade, the priorities that we have in terms of the AustralAsia Trade Route, in making those connections into our region, in growing Darwin's capacity as a service hub, it is very clearly spelt out. We are not walking away from live cattle. We are looking at how we can expand in strategic areas and that is clearly spelt out. That is something we put into the trade strategy. I don't think anyone would dispute it. Part of that is the development of the Timor Sea and the relationships that need to be built for strategic investment there.

Mr MILLS: Okay, we will stop it there. It is not for me to tell you what I recall from the statement that was made in parliament. This is an opportunity for you to describe very clearly what those objectives are. I still don't have them. I will find out. What is most important, where I wanted to go, because I thought I would go quickly to the next step, was against those objectives to see achievement. For example, you have mentioned, it appears to me you are plucking things from the air, education. How many students do we have in the region and where are they?

Ms MARTIN: As I said to you, the purpose of what I am doing as Asian Relations and Trade Minister is to create that facilitation, create the relationships that an institution like Charles Darwin University and our international secondary students can take advantage of. Part of our strategy is to open up those relationships and that I did last year with Brunei. We had not been formally to Brunei to talk to government, to talk to the university. I certainly raised it with the Sultan himself. We can get numbers for you about whether - I know that there has been some development between Brunei and Charles Darwin University; but also with Sabah and the university. There is a lot of enthusiasm about the ...

Mr MILLS: That is fine. There are good things happening ...

Ms MARTIN: That is what it is about.

Mr MILLS: No, all right. I thought we would be given the opportunity to assess achievement, and I don't get an idea of how we can measure anything. It seems to be fluffy. Perhaps I will go to something that is more concrete. How many times have you travelled wearing the hat of Minister for Asian Relations and Trade?

Ms MARTIN: In what period of time?

Mr MILLS: Since you have taken the position.

Ms MARTIN: We are talking about the last budget period. There was a trip, as I said, to Brunei and Sabah, which was last August. There was a trip in January to Tokyo to talk to investors in gas. I think they have been the two trips this year so far.

Mr MILLS: Two trips, okay. I think you mentioned in Brunei and Sabah, you had the Vice-Chancellor. Who else attended that delegation with you?

Ms MARTIN: In that delegation, as I said, the Vice-Chancellor of the University was there, Helen Garnett, and the Head of Employment, Education and Training, Margaret Banks. We are just finding out the others. That also linked with the Sabah Expo and we were meeting the traders at that Expo so the trip to Brunei linked in with that. My particular delegation was really focused on Helen Garnett, Margaret Banks and then there was a private sector delegation. That was the educational component, but because of the Expo, minister Kon Vatskalis was in Sabah and there was a private sector delegation that goes to the Sabah Expo.

Mr MILLS: In your role as Asian Relations and Trade, you facilitated the Sabah component of that?

Ms MARTIN: In terms of the Expo?

Mr MILLS: Well, my understanding is that you are Chief Minister and the Asian Relations and Trade Minister. What role did you play in the Sabah component of the trip?

Ms MARTIN: In terms of the delegation going from the Territory, we are part of the organisation of that.

We have key people as part of the Expo, but in conjunction with that in Sabah, we visited the Education ministry and the University and that was done with Margaret Banks and Helen Garnett.

Mr MILLS: Right. I am interested in your role in facilitating connection with the Sabah part of the trip. Were you involved in that at all?

Ms MARTIN: The private sector exhibits at the Expo. That is something that has been done for many years. I met other ministers, I met the Chief Minister, who I have met a couple of times now, and other key ministers, and we talked a variety of issues, but my specific task was the educational one.

Mr MILLS: I understand that and with respect, I am looking at the operation of the Ministry of Asian Relations and Trade. It has merit carrying Chief Minister plus Asian Relations and Trade, but I am endeavouring, through the process of Estimates, to measure the effectiveness of this and whether we are making gains. Go to Tokyo. Tell us about the Tokyo trip.

Ms MARTIN: The Tokyo trip was a very important one because it was meeting with investors in the Territory in gas and the development of gas. So it is ConocoPhillips, Impex, the Japanese Minister for Energy, Mr Watanabe, it was Tokyo Electric, Tokyo Gas and Osaka Gas. They are very much key players in terms of customers of LNG, but also those who are making decisions about the resources in the Timor Sea.

Mr MILLS: Was there a private sector accompaniment?

Ms MARTIN: No.

Mr MILLS: At the end of a trip such as this, who do you report to, being Chief Minister and Minister for Asian Relations and Trade?

Ms MARTIN: I reported to the parliament.

Mr MILLS: To the parliament. In the agency, is there a report generated so that we can progress the objectives that have been set? Is there a travel report or a trip report?

Ms MARTIN: There is a trip report. I mean I just don't just run off by myself.

Mr MILLS: No, no, I appreciate that. I am not having a go at you. I would just like to know how this stuff works.

Ms MARTIN: It is a constant exercise of looking at how we further develop gas resources, how we link that into gas-based developments in the Territory. Part of the meeting in Tokyo, which was a very important part, was meeting with the Asia-Pacific head of Dow Chemicals, Jim McIlveney, who then came out and we saw him here this month in Darwin.

Mr MILLS: So there was a trip report?

Ms MARTIN: Yes.

Mr MILLS: Can I request that trip report? I request the trip report so perhaps it assists me in seeing the progress of these sorts of ...

Ms MARTIN: But I can also say to you that I reported back to the parliament, quite appropriately.

Mr MILLS: I understand that.

Ms MARTIN: As the Shadow for Asian Relations and Trade, you can ask for a briefing any time you like.

Mr MILLS: Well in a sense, I am asking for a briefing now.

Ms MARTIN: No, no. There is a task for you to do to have briefings in between Estimates. I do not know whether you have asked for one, but I have not been told that you asked for one.

Mr MILLS: Well, put that aside for moment.

Ms MARTIN: No, no. It is actually a very important issue. If you are going to be an active player as a shadow minister, you need to ask for a briefing. We are very happy to provide that detailed briefing.

Mr MILLS: I am sure you are and I have had no problem any time I have had the time and the need to seek a briefing to get one, and they are excellent.

Ms MARTIN: But you have not. Sorry, member for Blain, you haven't.

Mr MILLS: Yes. Well, that is fine. We will not go into that.

Ms MARTIN: Member for Blain, you have not.

Mr MILLS: No. I do have 11 shadow portfolios and I do the best I can and I will seek a briefing when I feel I really do need one. Every time I have sought one, it has been fine so let us put that aside. Chief Minister, what I am seeking from you is the trip report.

Ms MARTIN: I am very happy to give you a briefing so if you let us know, we will give you a briefing on the outcome of that trip. I have reported properly back to parliament and talked about what we are doing in terms of proceeding with further investment in the Timor Sea, further development of LNG and, certainly, the possibility of having down streaming industries from gas here in Darwin.

Mr MILLS: Okay. So there are two trip reports from those two trips. I now request copies of those trip reports.

Ms MARTIN: We can give you a briefing and it is not a problem.

Mr MILLS: I am not asking for a briefing.

Ms MARTIN: We will also give you a briefing, which is something I also reported back to parliament on, on the Territory government initiated delegation, which was private and public, to Vietnam in March, and that had a fair amount of publicity as well.

Mr MILLS: I know all the publicity and the comments that are made in parliament, but I think this is an area where a little bit more grist and a bit more information to see how we are really tracking. So that trip report, will you make it available or not, Chief Minister?

Ms MARTIN: Come and have a briefing. You are very welcome to have a briefing.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, will you make the trip report available or not? Yes or no?

Ms MARTIN: Come and have a briefing. Come on.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, this is a trip that is conducted on behalf of Territorians. Do I have seek an FOI to find out what business was conducted on our behalf? Do I have to get an FOI ...

Ms MARTIN: I have reported publicly. I reported to parliament on where I travelled and what my outcomes were. If you had taken the time, rather than come here to Estimates and ask 'What's measurably happening in this very important area?', if it is so important, member for Blain, get a briefing. Do your job as a shadow.

Mr MILLS: I am in the position at Estimates now, asking you to provide, and obviously you refuse to provide ...

Ms MARTIN: I have publicly provided trip reports. You as the shadow can get briefings.

Mr MILLS: No, no. All right. If someone from another department, let us say Primary Industry, travels overseas, are they required to produce a trip report?

Ms MARTIN: You would have to be talking to the Minister for Primary Industry. We have a coordination group within the major projects area that makes sure that when we are talking about overseas trade opportunities, we are talking across government so that if you are looking at a live cattle visit into the region, we ask: 'What else can we gain from it?' That was my purpose in having the role of Asian Relations and Trade in the Department of Chief Minister so we could have that coordination. What I did not want to see was necessarily an *ad hoc* kind of approach to ministers going to various parts of Asia and not getting the greatest benefits we can from those trips.

Mr MILLS: Well, we only have, with respect, assertions. I am not able to assess anything that is substantial here. I have not had any clear definitions of objectives. I do not know whether you are achieving them and when it comes down to the details of a trip report, there is nothing. You are not going to be talking about the shopping that you conducted. It is just the hard data of the outcomes of the trip. There is nothing offensive in that, surely.

Ms MARTIN: But it has been reported to parliament, and I can say, from a trip like the one to Japan, we had one of the most senior people in Dow Chemicals coming to Darwin, which is a great outcome, to look at downstream developments and look at the potential of Darwin. We set out to build our trade links, to build those shipping links into Asia, and you are telling me we have not had an outcome because we have got two shipping services?

Mr MILLS: I have not said that.

Ms MARTIN: I do not know what an outcome is if we cannot see ships berthed at the port doing the business in Asia that we set out to do. I am not sure what your constant going on about measurement is. Two shipping lines is not bad.

Mr MILLS: To make it really simple, if you go to a rifle range and you have got a target, you fire at the target and you go down and see whether you hit the target, that is what an objective is and you know whether you have achieved your objective. I do not know what your target is. You can say that ships have come in, and if that is not your objective, well that is just an accident. So I ...

Ms MARTIN: It was our objective. If you remember that trade strategy was to get that link to China, that direct service to China.

Mr MILLS: Oh, well, there we go. It should not be too hard.

Ms MARTIN: I am assuming you knew that. The direct service to China was a fundamental. Getting a direct service into Indonesia to Surabaya, another target, and a lot of work has gone into that.

Mr MILLS: Chief Minister, this was not the purpose of my question, whether I know. I wanted to know whether you are able to describe what your objectives are so that we have got a sense, on the public record, that this agency has a clear vision, led by the Chief Minister who has taken responsibility for this portfolio, and that we are actually going somewhere and we can talk about things that are real and concrete rather than fluffy things.

Ms MARTIN: I have never actually seen a ship as fluffy, but that is fine.

Mr MILLS: How many people work in Asian Relations and Trade? What is it called, an agency or department, Chief Minister?

Ms MARTIN: It is a division.

Mr MILLS: A division. How many work in that division, Chief Minister?

Ms MARTIN: I will refer that to the Executive Director, Brian O'Gallagher.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: We have budgeted for 22.

Mr MILLS: Twenty-two people?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: We currently have 16.

Mr MILLS: Okay. Would you say that 16 are working directly in the division of Asian Relations and Trade?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Yes.

Ms MARTIN: And major projects. So it is Major Projects, Asian Relations and Trade.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Yes, it is all one division.

Mr MILLS: Right. That is why I am asking because I have been a bit unsure about how many are working specifically in Asian Relations and Trade. Can you tell me how many are working in Asian Relations and Trade?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: In the division, all people can work across all areas depending on the priorities. We do nominally allocate people to the functional areas of Asian Relations, Trade, Major Projects. However, having said that, all people in the division, depending on the priorities, can work in Asian Relations at one time if that is a priority, more work in Trade or Major Projects, so it is a pool of people.

Mr MILLS: Okay. I have had the briefing, Chief Minister, I assure you. That is the reason I have asked for these ...

Ms MARTIN: Do not mislead. You have not had a briefing.

Mr MILLS: I beg your pardon? Are you telling me that I am not telling the truth?

Ms MARTIN: Have you had a briefing in the last 12 months?

Mr MILLS: No, I have not had a briefing in the last 12 months.

Ms MARTIN: No, okay. Fine.

Mr MILLS: However, I have had a briefing about the structure of this department, and that is the reason I have asked for these specific objectives, because what we have had described there is an organisation for which I am having difficulty assessing whether it has a clear and understandable objective, and from the discussion we have had, it has taken nearly an hour, I do not have that, nor do I have a clear idea of how many people are actually working in Asian Relations and Trade, which was once a department.

I will ask you a question then, perhaps to give me further information and a better understanding: how many trips have been undertaken by members of the division to advance the objectives of Asian Relations and Trade?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: In the last year up until 31 May this year, there were 13 international trips directly relating to Asian Relations and Trade. There have also been two trips since 31 May.

Mr MILLS: That is good to hear. I request details of those trips; the destinations, and the purpose of those trips. That is that okay, Chief Minister?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Yes.

Ms MARTIN: Certainly, there is no mystery to this.

Ms CARNEY: Mysteries to others, but not that one.

Mr MILLS: There are mysteries to yours, though. Are there descriptions in what you will be providing me, Chief Minister, objectives as to what was the purpose of the trip and whether you achieved your objectives?

Ms MARTIN: What we are going to table includes both overseas and interstate trips. There are 13 specific to overseas, and it says what the intention of the trip was.

Mr MILLS: Okay. Does it report on the success; whether you are removing closer to achieving objectives or not? Is there any report on these trips, or is it just ...

Ms MARTIN: This is a list of the travel and the purpose of that travel.

Mr MILLS: So I must go and knock on doors and ask 'Please can you tell me how it went', to fulfil my responsibility as a shadow. Is that how it goes?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, we can give you a briefing.

Mr MILLS: That is very nice of you, thank you. There is nothing written down, any reports that are made that can be tabled so we know we are tracking? You are only in this seat for a bit, and it will be passed on to someone else, Chief Minister. I trust the objectives that you have set now will be passed on to someone else. This Estimates process is a public process so we can have some clear record of how things are going so we can build on that. It is not all about you, Chief Minister.

Ms MARTIN: No, but there is an implication in what you are saying that we have not set this trade strategy out ...

Mr MILLS: Well, you have had an hour to explain it.

Ms MARTIN: ... and it was actually put into the parliament in February 2005. We had a substantial discussion about it. That is what we are working to.

Mr MILLS: All right.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Following up on the trip reports, etcetera, for a number of trips, we do actually make trip reports, quite detailed.

Mr MILLS: Good.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: They then feed into the parliamentary report for the Chief Minister by the Chief Executives, so the key outcomes of that form the basis of the parliamentary report. In terms of our own coordination, we certainly have a task force across government, with all relevant economic agencies that we pull together, both in the Trade area and the Asian Relations area. This coordinates the general activity. We find out what all agencies are planning, and try to make sure it is coordinated so we understand, from our perspective, clearly what we are doing in the primary industry sector, the mining sector, the education sector and so on. We try to see how we can maybe maximise that involvement and how that representation can be maximised, be it the Chief Minister or other ministers travelling overseas.

Mr MILLS: I was only hoping that these reports would be entrusted to someone other than government, like the shadow minister. That is really the issue. I note that it is sifted and reported by the Chief Minister. Surely, there is nothing secretive in these reports; they are just reports of travel which has been undertaken. For someone who is interested in the area, surely it would be something to benefit.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: There are a number of items in the reports that become commercial-in-confidence, which include business relationships which we have become aware of. The businesses we talk to tell us in confidence and have to respect the commercial confidentiality of that. Sometimes we have different layers of the report. Some information is public and some has to remain commercial in-confidence at the request of the businesses we discussed it with.

Mr MILLS: All right. In the interests of time, I will not investigate these matters further. Chief Minister how many memoranda of understanding does the Territory have with countries in our region?

Ms MARTIN: There are a number of memoranda of understanding. I can get you the numbers. The one that I have been particularly interested in is the one with Indonesia. I certainly pay tribute to the previous government for that. It is something that has facilitated a strong relationship with Indonesia. President Yudhoyono and I, in our last discussions, talked about his interest and his predecessor's, Megawati Sukarnoputri, in building that relationship.

Our MOU with Indonesia is about the Eastern provinces. Our intention is to build, as two Presidents now have said, a very strong relationship, which has good political sense to it between Timor Leste, Nusa Tenggara Timur, and the Territory. I am talking about this one because it is an important for us. There are many MOUs throughout the Asian region; this one probably is the real strength of the Asian relations, but it has been difficult with the instability in Timor Leste to get the relationship developed. I think it was a year ago that we planned a tourism forum between East and West and us in Kupang and because of the instability, it was cancelled. It is something we should be striving for. It is certainly part of our strategy. It is proving to be difficult. I can get you the number of MOUs.

Mr MILLS: Yes, MOUs are very important. What effort is made to service and maintain those MOUs? Are you able to get a report on that?

Ms MARTIN: We can give a report to you but there are different priorities within those MOUs.

Mr MILLS: I am sure there are.

Ms MARTIN: For example, the one I chose to talk about has a very high priority.

Mr MILLS: If it has such a high priority, you were invited to a meeting there last year in West Timor, in Kupang, that was inaugural meeting, and you failed to attend.

Ms MARTIN: There were difficulties with that meeting. My advice was in the end because it was not the meeting that it was intended to be, I was going to be invited another time. That was simply it.

Mr MILLS: There was the Darwin City Council, a representative from Charles Darwin University was invited and attended.

Ms MARTIN: But the initial intention of the meeting, my advice from the organisers was not to come this time, but they will have another meeting.

Mr MILLS: My advice from the organisers, Chief Minister, and I am reasonably close to them, was that they were very disappointed that you failed to attend.

Ms MARTIN: We had different advice.

Mr MILLS: I will check my organisers. I do not know which organisers you are referring to. I have been involved in that. The trips that are going to be provided that were undertaken by members of the division, do they describe who attended? I do not mean the names and addresses and secret business, but whether the private sector attended or not.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: The table I have basically lists the members of the division and the purpose of the trip. It does not go into further details of who they then met because there is a whole itinerary against ...

Mr MILLS: Oh, sorry. I think you misunderstood. I want to know whether trade delegations, representatives from the Territory business sector, attended. Would I be able to tell from that document?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Not from this particular document, but we do document which members of the private sector are going with the trade delegations as particular part of those visits.

Mr MILLS: Could I request that particular document?

Ms MARTIN: Happily. The trip to the Sabah International Expo, I will be happy to provide the details of that.

Mr MILLS: Sure.

Ms MARTIN: I think it was public at the time.

Mr MILLS: I am sure it was. Estimates is an opportunity to get all this information in one hit.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: As a recent example, the Balikpapan trip, you know we had 10 members of the Territory business community going up there, so that information we can provide.

Mr MILLS: Okay.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Sometimes that information is tabled in parliament as well.

Mr MILLS: I am sure it is, yes. I was hoping through Estimates, and I hope it has not been offensive to you, Chief Minister, for just a little bit more information than I get through the two minute responses that I get without notice to a report that you make. It is simply that. I am sorry to offend you by seeking further information. In Balikpapan, there were attendees, I think, who were from outside the Territory. Is that correct?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: That is correct.

Mr MILLS: Did they receive subsidies from the Northern Territory Government to attend?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I would have to check. I do not think the outside ones did unless they were actually doing an involvement within the Territory itself. The purpose, I guess, of the outside companies were they had expressed a very direct desire to either set up operations in the Territory or trade via the Territory.

Mr MILLS: Are you able to give a report on how that is progressing?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: We do have a report on it and can certainly provide you a form of a report.

Mr MILLS: Okay. I appreciate that.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: If the Chief Minister agrees.

Ms MARTIN: Yes, fine.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. In the interests of time, I will stop there. Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, looking at the figures of trade out of the port of Darwin, the trade in container units has dropped off and yet you have ships to Shanghai and Sabah. Will these two shipping routes increase the container units arriving in Darwin or are they bringing other materials such as cement and those sorts of materials into the port?

Ms MARTIN: I refer that question to Brian O'Gallagher.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: The shipping service from Shanghai to Darwin is a mixture of great bulk cargo, which is the project cargo, construction material, chemicals for the mining industry, etcetera, as well as containerised freight. It is currently operating a monthly service. I understand from the proponents that they hope to be increasing that to a fortnightly service within about three months or so. On that basis, I think we could assume that the amount of freight coming in on that service from China will increase.

Certainly, the new shipping service between Surabaya and Darwin, which is predominantly there to service the mining sector across Northern Australia including the Territory, so it is coming into Darwin and then it is going down to Dampier and Port Hedland, then coming back via Darwin to Surabaya. It has obviously just started, but the proponents have confidence they can grow that trade and that it will grow both import trade coming in, as well as export trade going out. A classic example, I guess, even though it is only in a small way is as a result of the recent Balikpapan trip, one of the local Darwin companies is looking now to bring motors or big engines down from the mines in Indonesia, bring them back to Darwin on the service, refurbish those engines here, repair them here, and then send them on the service back up to Indonesia. So there is a new trade starting in the mining supply sector for Territory business.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, when the railway was built, Darwin was going to be the gateway to Asia. There were going to be boats, you-beaut fast speed boats flying to Asian ports with lots of vegetables and fruit and things from southern ports. Has that happened or are we along way from achieving that, considering that most of what we are talking about in exports is live cattle, manganese and a reducing number of container units? Where are we in relation to the Darwin becoming the gateway to Asia in relation to the rail and the port?

Ms MARTIN: I would happily talk, but Brian is very keen to do it, so go for it.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I guess in terms of the freight that we were looking to generate, if you go back to even the *Growing our Trade Routes* strategy, there are some key elements there. For the railway, I guess, its first priority was to capture the domestic freight task, basically to move stuff from road to rail up that Adelaide to Darwin corridor. So that was the first priority in terms of the railway, but freight, I guess, comes in many forms. It comes in great bulk cargoes, which is construction equipment, timber, etcetera, as well as containerised form.

We always hoped there would be a significant increase in container freight, but we also said that it would be a mixture, it would be a tonnage. I think the target was set that was either containers or equivalent tonnage. The priority for the railway has certainly come in the bulk minerals. One of the key strategies in the *Growing our Trade Route* strategy was to develop the Port of Darwin as the port of choice for bulk mineral exports out of Central Australia. We are now seeing that being achieved. We have seen that through investment by the government in bulk handling facilities. We now see Bootu Creek, which is 650 000 tonnes per annum going, we have the Territory Iron project coming on in around August, which is about 1.5 million tonnes per annum. We are certainly going to try to win some exports out of South Australia as well, for that bulk handling. So that is the next priority, and it links in with the rail's priorities as well where it has a competitive advantage.

The containerised freight, whilst it has been small, maybe in a general sense it might have gone down, in terms of new international trade from China and particularly imports, it is certainly starting to work now. We are now doing the new Indonesian service, and that complements the existing shipping services that we have here operated by Perkins Shipping and Swires Shipping.

Mr WOOD: Is uranium yellowcake still moved by rail from Olympic Dam in South Australia? There was originally a trial of yellowcake being exported out from the Port of Darwin. Is that still continuing and, if not, why not?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I understand there have been some shipments, but they have been done on a charter basis. The company has brought in the charter shipping into Darwin, and that cargo has been brought up by rail. As to how that is going, at the moment, I would need to seek further information from the rail company.

Mr WOOD: One other issue on the rail, the Prime Minister announced that they were going to put \$12m into the doing the feasibility work, or maybe not even the feasibility work, the planning work for a railway line from Melbourne to Brisbane. Has there been any discussion at all in relation to whether that line would continue across to the Northern Territory?

Mr TYRRELL: No. The challenge of building a rail from Brisbane to Darwin is quite considerable. It was hard enough getting one that cost \$1.3bn rather than one that costs \$3 to \$4bn given the trade. What you have is 85% of the road freight converted on to rail now, so you have that freight already coming from South Australia. I just do not believe there is a chance, in our lifetime, of seeing it.

Mr WOOD: There was discussion about that previously in relation to the rail coming through, you might say, the fruit bowl of Australia, and then getting a direct route through to the Northern Territory. You think that is not really on the cards?

Mr TYRRELL: The cost of such a project and the freight that could be generated just does not equate at the moment. That does not mean to say that you would not have that on the horizon for some time in the future, but just at the moment, we are working to make this rail highly successful, and that is the challenge. That was \$1.3bn rather than \$3 to \$4bn, and I just do not think that will happen.

Mr WOOD: Okay, thank you. Chief Minister, you just mentioned Dow, you probably know where this will go, too. What ...

Ms MARTIN: As long as we build it in the electorate of Nelson, that is fine?

Mr WOOD: No, doesn't have to be, as long as it is built in the right place. Chief Minister, what is the proposal by Dow, and I understand that this would be at a very flimsy stage, but do they have some sort of concept as to what sort of chemicals they will be looking to produce and how big a plant this would be?

Ms MARTIN: You are right, it is very early stages. Really, the discussions with Dow have been about whether Darwin has capacity to be able to service such a part of the industry. The key element for Dow, to get Jim McIlvenny here, and as you understand, the CEO of Dow in the world is Andrew Liveris, who was raised here in Darwin and has a strong attachment to Darwin, and so to get one of his senior people here, Jim McIlvenny, to do an assessment of Darwin and our capacity was very important. It really is a first step. There has to be the right amount of ethane available for their development from a gas source and it has to be available for them to even start this process. It is incredibly early days.

Mr WOOD: Glyde Point, under the Litchfield Land Use Objectives, is the area for heavy industry. I imagine a chemical manufacturing facility would be regarded as heavy industry. Considering there has been no environmental impact statement done yet for people to consider, why are you tending to lean away from Glyde Point when we have not yet had the opportunity to consider an environmental impact statement first? There is also a 100 m corridor which includes rail and public utilities already planned from the port and already planned from Weddell. The land has already been excised from private land. With those two things in mind, why would you start to think that this is not the right place for that development?

Ms MARTIN: I feel as though I have answered this question because the member for Braiiting asked it virtually on your behalf earlier on.

Mr WOOD: I just asked the Clerk whether she asked it. I am sorry. He said: 'I do not think so'.

Ms MARTIN: Yes. It was asked at the opening of this session. Could I refer you to the previous answer?

Mr WOOD: All right.

Ms MARTIN: With all respect.

Mr WOOD: That is okay. I would not have asked you if my advisor said it had been asked.

Ms MARTIN: If your advice had been better.

Mr WOOD: Just quickly then, we have land set aside which is called Howard Peninsula. It is between Robertson Barracks and the forestry land at Howard Springs. It is the site for the regional waste dump; not the radioactive waste repository. It is the site that has been put aside by the government for that particular purpose. It is an extractive mining area. It is five minutes from Palmerston and is closer to the port than the sites proposed by the planning people in Middle Arm Peninsula. I have yet to have any decent answer as to why that land, which is not sitting in amongst our pristine harbour, has never seriously been considered as an alternative for industry - not Dow, but for the general industry you are talking about associated with gas - rather than plonking it in the harbour. 6500 people do not agree with you, but why have we not looked at that particular area?

Ms MARTIN: I give you a commitment that I will ask DPI to give us a really thorough assessment of that. It is a fair point to make, but I am hoping that you put all those arguments fully into *Creating Darwin's Future*, member for Nelson. When we went out with: 'What does our community want?', do we want to see development at Glyde Point or would we like to see development in an area like Middle Arm, we had a fairly positive reaction to it. That was a really genuine effort to say to the community: 'With all the concerns expressed about Glyde Point, do

you want to see this as the future site of major industrial development, or should we be looking further into the peninsula at Middle Arm?' As I said to the member for Braitling, it is not building it in Darwin Harbour. That is unfair and emotive language that you are using, member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: If you go right opposite where East Arm port is you will see that part of the peninsula comes ...

Ms MARTIN: But I give you a commitment about the Howard Peninsula.

Mr WOOD: Chief Minister, when you ask the public of Darwin about something that they have hardly even been to, it is a bit like asking many people in the rural area: 'What do you think of the Alawa hockey ground?' or something. Many people in Darwin city think you have to take a cut lunch to play soccer at Freds Pass; they have had a day out in the outback. Sometimes, the people you ask really have no idea of what portion of land we are talking about because ...

Ms MARTIN: I think you are being condescending towards Darwin people ...

Mr WOOD: No, I just ...

Ms MARTIN: ... because we took *Creating Darwin's Future* into the rural area, and people in the rural area know exactly what we are talking about. Your constituency would be very well informed, I am sure.

Mr WOOD: They would, but the people you are listening to are more urban people, but I digress. Chief Minister, I thank you for the opportunity. I have put many times in parliament and Estimates the issue of Howard Peninsula and I have come up with a blanket no from the planners.

Ms MARTIN: Okay, I give you a commitment: we will take a good look at it.

Mr WOOD: Can I just make one comment? The defence hub that is being proposed is in this area. That is industrial. It is right on the Howard Peninsula. So the government is looking at that. They must have something in mind.

Chief Minister, the waterfront is one of your areas. What happened to the sound shell? Has it gone off the plan? I remember a Development Consent Authority ruling that had been amended to exclude the sound shell. Am I correct or incorrect?

Ms MARTIN: We will just get some advice on that.

Mr TYRRELL: I have just had advice that the Development Consent Authority did not want that to be approved because they would not approve amplified music in such a confined area, and it will be an open space now. We will be able to have performances but the concern was that the amplified sound coming from the sound shell was not appropriate in that area.

Mr WOOD: It reminds me of the amphitheatre.

Ms MARTIN: I thought, member for Nelson, you had great confidence in the Development Consent Authority.

Mr WOOD: From time to time; not all of the time.

Mr TYRRELL: A further point, Mr Chairman, was that the arts strategy for that area too was inconsistent with some of the objectives of that, so it just did not seem to quite fit.

Mr WOOD: Is the cost of that being removed from the project shown within the budget?

Mr TYRRELL: The cost of the sound shell in relation to the total project would be a pretty small item.

Mr WOOD: The wave pool: what sort of costs are we looking at? Has it expanded since it was first put forward as the proposal for the site and what is it now?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, the wave pool has and I will refer it to Paul Tyrrell.

Mr TYRRELL: The cost of the wave pool is in the order of \$17m which is an increase of over \$5m from that at financial close.

Mr WOOD: What is reason for the extra \$5m?

Mr TYRRELL: It was one of the items in the community infrastructure that needed a lot of design development after the contracts were signed. Being design and construct, a lot of research needed to be done to identify the best sort of facilities and machinery format. Concrete piling was required because of the nature of the site. So there was a cost increase as a result of the design development. Putting it in context of course, in terms of the community infrastructure and the project as a whole, there has been a nett gain to the government of something like \$40m when you weigh up the cost of say the wave pool as opposed to some of the other increases and netting that back against the increased revenue from property returns. So while that has been an increase, in terms of the cost to government there has been a decrease.

Mr WOOD: In relation to property sales, I have been told there is some difficulty in selling some of the first stage. Is that correct or am I given wrong information?

Mr TYRRELL: Our advice is second hand from the developers, but practically all the units have been committed except for two out of 139 or 140. So there are two that have not.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Still a chance.

Mr WOOD: No, I could not get a HomeNorth loan to buy one of those. The last question I have relates to the expo which we normally have at Darwin High School. Can you give us an update on whether it still happening? Is it something which is going to continue?

Mr MARTIN: That is run privately by the Chamber of Commerce and I will refer the detail of that to Brian O'Gallagher.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: We have been working with the Chamber of Commerce about how the expo might be reinvigorated or restarted. Part of that will also link into the availability of the new convention centre, perhaps utilising that as part of a new expo. It is really a matter for the Chamber, I guess, and how they are prepared to move forward. Certainly the department is working constructively with them.

Mr WOOD: Do you have any financial input into the expo?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: At this stage we do not, however it is something we will explore with the Chamber.

Ms MARTIN: Can I just add that one of the problems with the timing of the expo was that it was in such a busy part of the year, and an opportunity with the convention and exhibition area is that you can actually have it in a shoulder season, if you have a big airconditioned space such as the exhibition centre. The Dry Season is so busy that to remove it from there and put it in the shoulder season might just see it revitalised.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr MILLS: Mr Chairman, I have a couple more questions related to subsidy arrangements for Hai Win. What were the subsidy arrangements for the Hai Win shipping service Shanghai to Darwin?

Ms MARTIN: We have an arrangement in place which is about port charges for new services, and they are available to any new shipping line coming into Darwin. For the detail, I will refer that to Brian O'Gallagher.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Yes, Hai Win accessed the same levels of support open to all pioneering shipping services out of East Arm Wharf to or from a new international destination. It is a rebate on the port charges controlled by the Darwin Port Corporation, so it is generally berthage and wharfage charges. It does not include the private sector charges such as stevedoring or pilotage

and so on. It is generally a rebate of about 50%, but I think for new pioneering services they might give a 12 month waiver.

Mr MILLS: Of what, sorry?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: Of the port charges.

Mr MILLS: Okay.

Mr O’GALLAGHER: That same offering was provided to Swires Shipping when they first started their service. The same offering is being looked at for the new Motion shipping service, and it is available to all new shipping services going into East Arm Wharf.

Mr MILLS: Does it have a dollar value? Can you give me a rough idea, on a daily basis?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: That varies depending on the frequency of visits and so on, whether it is monthly or fortnightly because berthage is on a per visit basis. I would have to check with the Darwin Port Corporation. They would have an estimate of the revenue foregone.

Mr MILLS: Can I take that on ...

Ms MARTIN: That question could be put to the minister responsible, the member for Karama, to follow that up, because that is her carriage.

Mr MILLS: We have been unsuccessful getting that far down that particular line owing to time restraints during the last couple of years. How long is a shipping service regarded as a pioneering shipping service?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: Pioneering is actually a new shipping route, so between Darwin and Surabaya, there is no existing service. That is where the term ‘pioneering’ comes in.

Mr MILLS: So it is pioneering until another shipping service comes in?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: The rebate, as I said, is generally just for a period of the first year.

Mr MILLS: Only for the first year?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: Yes, for a one year period.

Mr MILLS: So Hai Win no longer receives the rebate?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: You would have to check that with the Darwin Port Corporation, but I believe that is the case.

Mr MILLS: Have there been recent visits from Hai Win?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: Yes, they are coming in basically every month and, as I said before, I understand they are looking to, hopefully, go from a monthly service to a fortnightly service later this year.

Mr MILLS: And they are not getting the rebate now?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: As I said, I understand it is the case they are.

Mr MILLS: Thank you. Has there been an analysis done of the economic benefit to the Northern Territory of the Surabaya line?

Mr O’GALLAGHER: It is certainly supporting the trade priority we have of developing mining exports into eastern Indonesia. That is one of the key benefits we see in the service itself, as well as potentially also taking imports coming in from China, possibly on the Hai Win service, such as mining chemicals, which can then be re-exported into Indonesia for the mines there, so you grow a trade. The service itself is a commercial proposal, it has commercial components. The only

financial subsidy or whatever from the Northern Territory government relates to that rebate from the Port Corporation.

Mr MILLS: Okay, I will leave it at that, thank you.

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, a question asked previously by the minister for Blain on MoUs, I can give that answer now, but I do not have the actual number of the question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I have not recorded the ...

Ms MARTIN: Perhaps it wasn't a Question on Notice.

Mr MILLS: You just said that you would get it for me.

Ms MARTIN: Are you happy to have it now?

Mr MILLS: Yes, sure.

Ms MARTIN: We have seven current MOUs. One I have mentioned, with Indonesia, another with Bali, East Kalimantan, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Khanh Hoa Province in Vietnam and Meizhou in China. There is a new one under way with Vung Tau Province in Vietnam, that as part of the follow up from the trade visit in March.

In total, we have 27 agreements and seven are current MOUs. Others are memo of agreement and other working documents which are mainly at departmental level across government.

Mr MILLS: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output Group 2.

OUTPUT GROUP 3 –GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SUPPORT **Output 3.1 - Support of Executive Ministers and Leader of the Opposition**

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to Output Group 3 and Output 3.1 - Support of Executive Ministers and Leader of the Opposition. Are there any questions?

Mr MILLS: Not related to that, but is that it, or are you going to table that with regarding those MOUs and agreements?

Ms MARTIN: I gave you all the information available.

Mr MILLS: The 27 or so ...

Ms MARTIN: You asked about MOUs. We have seven MOUs and one underway.

Mr MILLS: All right. Okay. I forget what I asked for.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. From the last available annual report, 2005-06, your office has a budget of \$2.258m. I want to ask you some questions about that budget and your office. Perhaps I will just follow up a document tabled by the Speaker this morning. I asked how many functions had been hosted in Parliament House and she gave me a document.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Perhaps we can get a copy.

Ms CARNEY: For some reason, it does not have a number, but I am happy to hand it over. I may not need to. It says 25 functions under the heading Protocol-hosted Hospitality Functions 2006-07 and 2005-06. What it does not tell me is the cost of those functions. It tells me the hours, but not the cost. How much did you have to pay for the 25 functions that you hosted at Parliament House?

Ms MARTIN: What I would need to see is whether they are Protocol functions.

Ms CARNEY: Have a look.

Ms MARTIN: What I can do is table the Protocol functions that were held, and also table the functions that were not necessarily held at Parliament House, but hospitality expenditure by ministers. That is the best I can do. We have a list of Protocol expenditure for ministers' offices, and then there is another list that is hospitality expenditure but it is not Protocol. I cannot give you a breakdown of that; they are just broad figures.

Ms CARNEY: So you are going to provide me with two documents, and thanks for that, but does either document give me how much the Protocol functions were?

Ms MARTIN: This document here gives you the actual dollar amount for each Protocol function.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, thank you. Can I have a look at that before you copy so I can work out whether I ask the next question?

Ms MARTIN: We will get the other one tabled as well.

Ms CARNEY: Sorry. The other one is?

Ms MARTIN: It is hospitality that is not Protocol, but is ministers and yourself over the year to 31 May.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, thank you. Do you have a document that tables the alcohol bills for your office and the other ministers' offices? How much was spent on alcohol in your office in 2006-07?

Ms MARTIN: Let me just get some information on that. Mine is probably \$1.50.

Ms CARNEY: So is mine.

Ms MARTIN: We do not have the information by alcohol expenditure.

Ms CARNEY: Can I ask it on notice, please?

Question on Notice 3.5

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, could you restate your question for Hansard please?

Ms CARNEY: Can the Chief Minister provide how much was spent on alcohol in her office and other ministers' offices in 2006-07?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister, you accept that?

Ms MARTIN: Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purpose of *Hansard*, I allocate that question number 3.5.

Ms CARNEY: Can you provide details of entertainment expenses incurred or spent by you and other ministers in 2006-07?

Ms MARTIN: I am sorry, Opposition Leader; I am distracted over the previous question. What was the last question?

Ms CARNEY: Can you provide a list of entertainment expenses for your office and other ministers' offices, please?

Ms MARTIN: Leader of the Opposition, when we tabled the Protocol functions, I tabled another one which is actual hospitality expenditure, which was not Protocol, so that includes those figures.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. I need to have a look at the document to see whether it is ...

Ms MARTIN: It was tabled, and we will get the breakdown on alcohol.

Ms CARNEY: Yes. Do ministers have ministerial credit cards or whatever their official name is?

Ms MARTIN: No, definitely not.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. I am still waiting on the hospitality one. I have the one about the Protocol functions and Joanne is copying one.

Ms MARTIN: Opposition Leader, we have a document that shows 'drinks' which could be Coke or Fanta or alcohol. Do you want figures specific to alcohol?

Ms CARNEY: Yes.

Ms MARTIN: Okay. So we will have to get back to you on that.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. The hospitality expenses, so that I am clear, that is taking people out for lunch, buying them breakfast, dinner. What else would be included in hospitality costs?

Ms MARTIN: It includes tickets for functions and events, working lunches and dinners, Cabinet meals. There is a variety of things under that hospitality.

Ms CARNEY: I note that the Office of Central Australia's bill was pretty high. I quickly wrote down some figures. Yours was about \$31 000; minister Henderson was about \$17 000; minister Vatskalis was about \$23 000; and the Office of Central Australia was \$13 000. Do I take it that the reason for that is when the ministers go to Alice Springs, all those functions are paid for by the allocation at that office as opposed to minister's office?

Ms MARTIN: I would have to get the details, the breakdown of that, and I do not know whether someone here can give that to me at this stage. I will just check so I am not misleading.

If events are arranged through the Office of Central Australia, then that is part of the Chief Minister's office in Alice Springs and, I suppose, sometimes a minister would go and have separate functions from that, but if they are organised through the Office of Chief Minister, that is where those sums are, but they are again for a variety of things reflected in the same expenditure in other parts of the Territory.

Ms CARNEY: How much did your ministerial office expend on advertising in 2006-07 and can you include the costs for television, radio, newspaper, magazine and other form of advertising, including the costs of the production and distribution of the material? Can you provide the same information for other ministers? If you have it in table form, I would be grateful.

Mr TYRRELL: The expenditure for marketing and communications for ministerial offices is \$207 465. There is a paper here that could be tabled which breaks it up by minister.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, thank you.

Ms MARTIN: Marketing and communications from my office, for example, is just under \$30 000; minister Burns is \$9000; and the Leader of the Opposition is \$65 000.

Ms CARNEY: The Leader of the Opposition probably does not have government departments, or indeed the policy, the communications and marketing inside the Department of the Chief Minister ...

Ms MARTIN: That is a whacking great sum, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: ... which receives a whopping \$11m, or in 2007-08, \$10m to spend in the way directed by you, Chief Minister.

Ms MARTIN: I never spent that as Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CARNEY: Let us get back to work. Just for the sake of completeness, are we tabling that document? Yes. How many staff do you have employed in your office, and how does that compare with the previous year? What are the levels?

Ms MARTIN: Overall, the number of staff in ministerial offices has been very flat over a few years. I am just looking at the exact numbers. The total number of staff – you said my office?

Ms CARNEY: Yes, yours. Then I will ask for the other ministers.

Ms MARTIN: The total number of staff in my office is eight. I can give you the other numbers in ministers. The Office of Central Australia is five, or Chief Minister's Office in Alice Springs, five. The Ministerial Support Unit

Ms CARNEY: I am sorry to interrupt. Are you happy to table that document?

Ms MARTIN: Yes. We table one of those. When I say flat, if we compare that with the same time at the end of June 2005, it was 95, so 88, 95, we have seen some reduction.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, 2005 was the election year so anyone would normally expect to see that. You referred in your answer before to marketing and advertising and so on from your office. You said it was about \$30 000 and mine was \$60 000 for ...

Ms MARTIN: \$65 000.

Ms CARNEY: I am going to ask you some questions about this very interesting entity called the Ministerial Support Unit to which I have no access because on page 110 of the 2005-06 departmental report, the last available one, it lists what everyone's budget is. Yours is, as you know, or it was then, \$2.258m; the Deputy Chief Minister was \$1.2m; minister Henderson \$1.1m and it goes down accordingly. Then we have the Office of the Central Australia at \$914 000 compared with the Leader of Opposition's budget of \$895 000 so you and your ministers have access and can have avail yourselves or use the budgetary allocation for the Office of Central Australia. Then we have the Ministerial Support Unit, which has a budget of \$1.3m. Can you tell us what the Ministerial Support Unit does?

Ms MARTIN: Yes. In previous budgets in Estimates, we have presented my office as having the Ministerial Support Unit as part of it. So if you compare the previous numbers for my staffing, it included, for example, the position that ran Corporate Services for the floor, the person doing reception for the 5th floor for ministerial offices. What we have done is say that my actual office is those eight staff I talked about and the Ministerial Support Unit is the support across the floor for all ministers.

Ms CARNEY: Well, what do they do for \$1.3m?

Ms MARTIN: Within that Ministerial Support Unit is the Chief of Staff, the Director of Communications, Corporate Services management, and areas like reception.

Ms CARNEY: Well, what else do they do for \$1.3m? Surely they do more than be a director and an admin person. What does it do?

Ms MARTIN: As you can imagine, when you have nine ministerial offices, there are support services that go right across there and that is what is identified. It is separate from the staff who work specifically with me, for example my PA or my media advisor. Our Director of Communications is Director of Communications not just for the Office of the Chief Minister, but for the ministerial offices across the 5th floor.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. So, it helps the ministers and it has a budgetary allocation. What else does it do?

Ms MARTIN: It is not an increase in the overall funds for the floor, and we have seen that pretty flat in terms of the expenditure on staff and across the fifth floor; it is just a separation of what was previously included in my office to indicate that there are people who work across the floor rather than work specifically for me.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so what you could do then, on the basis of what you have said, is distribute the \$1.3m as it was in 2005-06, it is presumably more now, and add chunks to that money and add it on to what the other ministers receive; that is another way of doing it.

Ms MARTIN: But you could also say that, overall, the staffing costs on the fifth floor are pretty flat and have not grown significantly.

Ms CARNEY: My question is not about whether it has grown or not. It is essentially about what the Ministerial Support Unit does because I see in your department's annual report, and I have seen it before, this thing called the Ministerial Support Unit. I also see other things, like considerable amounts of money allocated to ministers. Even your branch office in Alice Springs has a budget more than the Leader of the Opposition that services all of the Northern Territory. Then we have this Ministerial Support Unit for \$1.3m. What do Territorians get for it?

Ms MARTIN: The point has been made to me that for the Ministerial Support Unit, the actual expenditure for the year to date to the end of May, is \$849 000, so I am not quite sure, the difference between the \$1.3m you are quoting and the \$849 000. The year to date for the Office of Central Australia is \$628 000. Your office is \$909 000, so ...

Ms CARNEY: This is the most recently available annual report, so clearly I am relying on this information ...

Ms MARTIN: This is a full year, and I can give you those details.

Ms CARNEY: Can you table that document?

Ms MARTIN: Okay. As you can understand, you have to manage the people working across the fifth floor, there has to be a communications strategy across the fifth floor and, really, in essence, no different from what the previous government had. It is just in terms of saying what is the size of my office and those who work to me, and the people who used to be included in my office but who actually work across the floor.

Ms CARNEY: I am interested in your answer this year because last year when I asked you about the Ministerial Support Unit, you said that it involves 'working with our community broadly', and that there are 'a lot of activities'. You went on to say 'It is knowing what happens in those community groups, it is keeping those contacts alive and well'. Is that what ...

Ms MARTIN: Are you quoting from *Hansard*?

Ms CARNEY: Yes.

Ms MARTIN: I think you are talking about the Community Liaison Unit.

Ms CARNEY: I did have *Hansard* ...

Ms MARTIN: I think, Leader of the Opposition, that it was the Community Liaison Unit we were discussing last year. It has been clarified, the Ministerial Support Unit, in terms of break-ups of budgets, has only been for this financial year. Community Liaison is a different area, and there are five people who work there.

Ms CARNEY: In the?

Ms MARTIN: Community Liaison.

Ms CARNEY: And the Community Liaison Unit is part of the Ministerial Support Unit?

Ms MARTIN: It comes under the Ministerial Support Unit because it works across the floor.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, well, first in relation to that quote, it is unlikely I would have incorrectly included it in the question, but if you are saying no, well, I am happy to work with that.

Ms MARTIN: I am not arguing about it; I am just saying this is a clarification. That is all.

Ms CARNEY: So you have the Community Liaison Unit within the Ministerial Support Unit?

Ms MARTIN: Well, associated with. Sorry, it is the 12 of the Ministerial Support Unit. I will get it right soon; it has been a long day. The Ministerial Support Unit includes those who work across the floor, and that includes Community Liaison.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. How many in the Ministerial Support Unit?

Ms MARTIN: Twelve.

Ms CARNEY: Twelve. Within that, how many in the Community Liaison Unit?

Ms MARTIN: Five.

Ms CARNEY: Five. Are there any other units within the Ministerial Support Unit that we should know about?

Ms MARTIN: No, that is it.

Ms CARNEY: You reckon that is it?

Ms MARTIN: We have two out of two there.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Your Community Liaison Unit that has five people in it, they are the ones who work with our community broadly, who do lots of activities, and who know what happens in community groups?

Ms MARTIN: Who work with community groups, who communicate to community groups, who do that important liaison with our broader community.

Ms CARNEY: Do the people working in the Community Liaison Unit have expense accounts? Do they wine and dine members of our community; take them out for lunch and say: 'What is happening in the community?'

Ms MARTIN: I hope not.

Ms CARNEY: 'I am interested in your community group.'

Ms MARTIN: Let me check. My Chief of Staff has to approve any activity that involves taxpayers' funds and taking people out to lunch. That is done against guidelines of whether it is appropriate to their job, and it is very carefully done.

Ms CARNEY: Okay.

Ms MARTIN: That applies across the board.

Ms CARNEY: I am sure it does. Do people working in the Community Liaison Unit take people out to lunch and do they have expense accounts?

Ms MARTIN: My advice is very rarely, and that would have to be approved by the Chief of Staff.

Ms CARNEY: Are you able to provide information as to the expenses incurred, that is entertainment or hospitality expenses, by the Community Liaison Unit specifically?

Ms MARTIN: No, they are included in my non-Protocol hospitality expenses.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. will you take the question on notice to provide the information in relation to Community Liaison Unit? The reason I ask is that these are people that you say work with the community and, albeit very rarely, take people out for lunch. I think Territorians ...

Ms MARTIN: I am happy to provide that. I am confident that we are very careful about expenditure of taxpayers' dollars.

Ms CARNEY: I do not actually doubt it, but I would like to check.

Question on Notice 3.6

Mr CHAIRMAN: Leader of the Opposition, could you restate the question please?

Ms CARNEY: Can you provide details of entertainment and hospitality expenses incurred by the Community Liaison Unit for 2006-07?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Chief Minister, are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms MARTIN: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question number 3.6.

Ms CARNEY: Does the Ministerial Support Unit produce or design publications?

Ms MARTIN: My advice is probably as much as doing ads for the newspaper, with appropriate messages for whatever community activity it is.

Ms CARNEY: When you say 'doing ads for the newspapers', do you mean designing them or paying for them?

Ms MARTIN: No, the payment comes out of Marketing and Communications.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so it would not come out of anything from the Ministerial Support Unit's allocation? According to your annual report, it gets \$1.304m.

Ms MARTIN: It would be coming out of my Marketing and Communications if it was done for me. If it was done for another minister, it would be done in their budget, but it all ends up being across-the-floor budget. If I put an ad in supporting breast cancer awareness, that unit would design it. They are not ...

Ms CARNEY: Perhaps I will ask the question this way. I accept it may need to be on notice. Does the Ministerial Support Unit pay for the design or publication of advertisements for government?

Ms MARTIN: Anything like that comes out of the office's Communications and Marketing budget. It is not a separate allocation.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, so in other words the Ministerial Support Unit does not pay for ads?

Ms MARTIN: Well, no. They are not paying. It is my office that pays for it like your office pays for ...

Ms CARNEY: Yes, but I don't have nine ministers, an office in Alice, plus a Ministerial Support Unit, so I am a bit keen to know who does what because your life is so much more complicated.

Ms MARTIN: I know that you managed to get up \$65 000 so it didn't restrain you much.

Ms CARNEY: Our budget is piddling at \$895 000 according to that ...

Ms MARTIN: I just point out, Leader of the Opposition, if you go to the Marketing and Communications ministerial offices document that we tabled, you will see the Ministerial Support Unit has a zero next to it.

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, which document?

Ms MARTIN: The one that has your \$65 000 on it has the Ministerial Support Unit as zero.

Ms CARNEY: I am keen to know what it does, Chief Minister, because we have ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I will interrupt, Leader of the Opposition. We are actually out of time for this session.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, can I just finish? I was mid-sentence.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are over time. We were outside time before you started on this question. I allowed you to finish that and get the answer.

On behalf of the committee, Chief Minister, I would like to thank you and the officers who assisted you today in providing information to this committee.

Ms MARTIN: Mr Chairman, thank you and thank you to the Estimates Committee.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you all very much indeed.

The committee suspended
