

**In committee in continuation:**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Good morning, minister, we will start the Estimate Committee process. Could you please introduce the officials accompanying you and, if you have any opening remarks, would you care to make them.

**MINISTER McCARTHY'S PORTFOLIOS**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILIES**

**Ms McCARTHY:** Good morning to the committee. I wish to introduce Dr David Ashbridge, Chief Executive of Health and Families; Ms Jenny Scott, Executive Director of NT Families and Children; and Director, Michelle Brown, who are joining me at the moment and, later, Ms Jenny Cleary, Executive Director of Health and Wellbeing Services; and Dr Howard Bath, NT Children's Commissioner.

My colleague, the Minister for Health, has previously provided an overview of the department's financial performance and budget allocations for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 financial years. I remind the committee that 2008-09 has been the first full year of operation under the new operational and outputs structure within the department. The Henderson government has placed great emphasis on supporting Territory families, improving youth services, addressing domestic violence in our community, and on responding to the terrible problem of child abuse and neglect, in particular, the sexual abuse of children.

I will be taking questions in relation to the six new outputs for the NT Families and Children Division, as well as mental health, aged and disability and the support for senior Territorians and pensioner concessions. In 2008-09, the output budget for my portfolio increased from \$191.7m to \$221.9m, an increase of \$30.2m or 15.7%. This was largely due to increases in revenue from the Australian government, but also included some new funding from the Northern Territory government. In 2009-10, there is an increase in NT funding of \$25.2m to fund a range of new initiatives, CPI and wages. However, this increase has been offset by a reduction to Commonwealth-funded programs. Negotiations are under way to either extend or establish new agreements, and these will be included in the budget in the coming financial year.

Let me now turn to some achievements for the 2008-09 financial year. 2008-09 was the fifth and final year of the Caring for our Children Child Protection Reform package. This reform program commenced in 2002 and has resulted in a substantial increase in staffing across the department's child protection and out-of-home care services, new family support and children's care services established in the non-government sector, annual increases in the payment rate for our volunteer foster carers, a centralised 24-hour child abuse reporting and initial assessment service, and the creation of the Child Abuse Task Force.

We also committed to additional targeted investments under the *Closing the Gap* program. The majority of provisions within the new *Care and Protection of Children Act* commenced during 2008-09. Concerns have been raised about the way the mandatory reporting obligations are framed in the new act, and a working party has been formed to assist government to resolve these perceived difficulties.

In 2008-09, \$2.5m was provided to begin implementation of the new youth justice measures, including the family responsibility program and to fund new youth camp providers. So far, 47 young people have been considered by the inter-agency process in Darwin and Alice Springs, 119 young people have participated in a youth camp, five families have entered into formal family responsibility agreements, and a further three are being assessed for suitability under the program. The youth justice court considered one families circumstances to be determined for a family responsibility order, but the court decided that the family did not need to be placed on an order.

During 2008-09, the Henderson government introduced legislation to make it mandatory for all adults to report serious domestic assaults. These new provisions became law on 12 March 2009. As part of our \$15m package to expand domestic violence prevention and intervention services, an additional

\$2.5m has been allocated in 2009-10. In addition, \$3.3m has been allocated to enhance the NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme, and \$1.47m to continue the reform and service enhancement through the disability review.

As part of establishing a new secure care service system, \$4.5m of capital funding will be provided in 2009-10 to provide additional acute in-patient beds in both Alice Springs and Royal Darwin Hospitals. There will be further capital works in 2010-11 to construct community-based care facilities. In 2009-10, operational funding of \$3.26m has been provided to begin operating the new services to these clients, and will increase to \$11.4m as the facilities become fully operational.

I now invite questions from the committee.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister. Are there any questions to the opening statement? Member for Arafura?

**OUTPUT GROUP 1.0 – NT FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**  
**Output 1.0 – Family and Parent Support Services**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I now call for questions for Output Group 1.0, NT Families and Children, Output 1.1, Family and Parent Support Services.

**Ms CARNEY:** I do have questions but I will forgo them this time, on the basis of time.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I am not sure if this is the output, but I will try anyway. Minister, if you could inform me if the recent advertisement in the paper regarding the new regulations for Children's Services is under this output?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Is that the one you saw today?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Yes, I was just going to ask ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is under the Education portfolio, member for Arafura.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** As I understand the regulations, minister - all of that regulation has now gone to DEET? You are not monitoring it at all? I forgot, I transferred it.

**Ms CARNEY:** The next few hours are going to be very weird for all of us.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Do you have any more questions?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Under this output, \$2m to expand children in care, there is \$300 000 to expand the Child Abuse Task Force which was established in 2006 - it is on page 200 in the budget paper - with additional staff. What does the task force do? How many staff are in the task force, and where are they located? It appears there is no change since 2006 to recent events, which suggests it should have been an increase, given those increases.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Arafura, we are more than happy to take that on in the appropriate output which is 1.2.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Is it not under Output 1.1? I am sorry; do you want to leave it until 1.2?

**Ms McCARTHY:** In Child Protection, member for Arafura, we are happy to take it in that output.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** 1.2? Okay, we can move it to there.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Any other questions on Output 1.1? That concludes consideration of Output 1.1.

**Output 1.2 - Child Protection Services**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We move to Output 1.2, Child Protection Services. Any questions?

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you and good morning everyone. I am keen to get through as much as possible and we have some time constraints. My colleague also wants to get to some matters, so I would like us to get through this as quickly as possible. In estimates, some ministers tend to get stuck into puffery. I would prefer it, in the interests of the children of the Northern Territory, that we do not do this. I am regarding today's exercise as an exercise in getting information, and that is what I am after. Most of my questions will be very specific, and I am hopeful the answers will be equally specific.

First question: *Closing the Gap*. In August 2007, a commitment to *Closing the Gap* was given by the government of \$286m. \$79.3m of that was allocated for Child Protection. Yet, I note that in this year's budget paper an amount of \$77.2m has been allocated to Child Protection under *Closing the Gap*. Where has the \$2m gone?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, it is part of the government's commitment to protecting Territory children. Our *Closing the Gap* initiative provides a significant amount of money over five years for Aboriginal child protection and care services, and this sees the funding for the provision of remote Aboriginal community workers in 13 communities. *Closing the Gap* funding also goes towards funding of Aboriginal family support services. I hand over to the Chief Executive, David Ashbridge.

**Ms CARNEY:** I am sorry, minister, we are not going to have this. My question was: where has the \$2m gone? That is the question, and if someone could briefly answer it, I would be grateful.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I have just said I will hand over to the Chief Executive, David Ashbridge, to answer that question.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Dr David Ashbridge, Chief Executive Officer. The answer to your question is that the \$79m does not exist totally in this portfolio. There is allocation there to go to the Education department, for example, and Police, around this particular initiative. The difference between the output funding here and the total *Closing the Gap* funding is explained by the fact that the funding goes to a variety of organisations, and what you see here is the allocation that comes to the Department of Health and Families.

**Ms CARNEY:** Under an NT government publication, *Closing the Gap*, the generational plan of action - which was done in August 2007, I believe - it specifically says, '\$79.36m for child protection'. There is no reference to education. There are other references to education, but that had a separate allocation of \$78.68m. Is it your answer, minister, that there was never actually a \$79.36m allocation for child protection; it was, in fact, always \$77m for child protection?

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is not correct, member for Araluen. In the care and protection of children across the Northern Territory, we have expanded the Child Abuse Task Force, including an additional 23 FACS staff, 24 police, and specialist child interviewers, to investigate the most serious and complex cases of child abuse.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you, I will leave it there and simply refer you to a government publication, *Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage*, very specifically, \$79.36m for child protection. Again, there is another reference. This is not the only document. There were also media releases and other NT government publications. In any event, it would appear that there was never the allocation of \$79.3m specifically for this area.

Can you answer me this? In the budget papers, it appears that, in the 2008-09 allocation compared to the 2009-10 allocation, \$1m has gone missing. I was sick at the time of the budget, but I managed to

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ascertain that the government response was no, in fact, there was not a \$1m reduction or thereabouts. Can you explain to me why it is that in the budget paper there is a reduction between 2008-09 and 2009-10 for child protection services?

**Dr BURNS:** Is this on page 201, member for Araluen?

**Ms CARNEY:** Correct.

**Ms McCARTHY:** So you are looking at \$25.852m to \$25.366m?

**Ms CARNEY:** I am actually looking at the allocation from the 2008-09 budget for 2008-09, which was \$26.367m, and the allocation on page 201 of the 2009-10 budget, which was \$25.366m; thereby, a reduction.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I will hand you over to David Ashbridge, Chief Executive Officer.

**Ms CARNEY:** Can I ask why, minister? You are aware that this is an opportunity for us to ascertain the extent to which ministers have their heads around portfolios. Do you need help in explaining why your budget has gone \$1m short?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The minister can refer to the expert accompanying officials.

**Ms CARNEY:** All right. I am sure my colleagues will be keeping notes of how often you do this, minister. I am surprised you started so early but, anyway, there you go.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The member for Araluen is correct in terms of the published data. However, it is important to get into the detail which underpins those numbers to understand them. I will take you through exactly how those numbers are derived and what we believe the Budget 2009-10 will be.

There is additional funding in 2008-09 for this particular output group, including additional Australian funding of \$4.345m. There has also been \$14 000 carried forward from 2007-08. This is taking it to the \$25.852m, member for Araluen. There has also been 109 NT expanded programs, an additional \$17 000 for additional services on a fee for service, and a transfer of programs to other agencies. That has been offset by a carry forward of \$1.372m, and a reallocation of resources. Additional funding in 2009-10 has been \$901 000 for CPI and wages, \$1.051m in NT-funded initiatives or program expansions, and \$2.744m in programs carried forward from 2008-09. These have been offset by 2008-09 carryovers of \$126 000, a reduction in Australian government-funded programs of \$4.197m, and a reduction of services provided on a fee-for-service basis of \$14 000. The nett impact of this takes you to minus \$486 000.

However, the budget was framed in a point of time and, subsequent to that point of time, there have been resources, contracts and arrangements entered into with the Commonwealth government. I want to reassure you that every single NT cost centre has had a rise in NT government allocation.

**Ms CARNEY:** At last year's estimates, the former minister provided a table called 'Child Protection Staffing Numbers'. It showed the average staffing full-time equivalent for 2007-08. Do you have an up-to-date table - I feel certain Jenny Scott will - and would you be good enough to table it?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Would you like it read out or would you like it tabled?

**Ms CARNEY:** No, I would like it tabled for very obvious reasons, thank you. Will that also include a comparison of 2008-09 with 2007-08 and list the FTEs?

**Ms SCOTT:** Jenny Scott, Executive Director, NT Families and Children. I have the table for 2008-09

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but I do not have it with the comparatives that you just asked for.

**Ms CARNEY:** Okay, I am happy to have that one, thank you. I have last year's in any event, so that is good. In case there is any uncertainty, I will be asking for documents to be tabled. There are a couple of reasons for that. The main one is the time constraints. I have not seen that document, but in the document tabled last year it showed a 32% staff turnover in FACS. What is the staff turnover for 2008-09 to date?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand that to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** I need to find another version. I have handed my version ...

**Ms CARNEY:** We can let that one dangle and we can come back to it.

**Ms SCOTT:** That is fine, I do have it. I have to get it out of my bag.

**Ms CARNEY:** You are invariably prepared, Ms Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** I try to be. Sorry, could you repeat the question?

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, last year there was a 32% turnover in FACS; what is it for 2008-09?

**Ms SCOTT:** In 2008-09 there were 70 separations and, as a percentage, that is again 32%.

**Ms CARNEY:** 32%, okay. Last year - and this is likely to be on the document that you have in front of you that I will soon receive - the document you tabled showed 81 child protection workers plus 20 team leaders. We got to a total of 101 child protection workers for 2007-08, noting that there were various definitions - some are called community welfare workers but they are all child protection workers. So we got to 101 in 2007-08. What is the figure for 2008-09?

**Ms McCARTHY:** To Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** It is on the document you will receive. The number of community welfare workers this year is 87 and the number of team leaders is 22.

**Ms CARNEY:** Sorry, say that again.

**Ms SCOTT:** Community welfare workers, 87 and team leaders, 22.

**Ms CARNEY:** What is the percentage of child protection workers in FACS with less than two years' experience?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** That is a figure I do not have.

**Ms CARNEY:** Okay. Would you take that on notice? It is an interesting question and we know why. There is a concern that there are too many child protection workers who do not have years and years of experience which is always preferable in a child protection system? Take that one on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I believe Jenny Scott would like to answer that.

**Ms CARNEY:** You now know the answer?

**Ms SCOTT:** I do not know the number, but it is important to stress that child protection workers come to us from a range of backgrounds. Some of them have many years of experience in a broader family setting and not specific investigative child protection work. Others come to us as new graduates, as you are referring. It would be quite difficult for us, and it would be a manual task of the current workforce, to count their years of experience. That is not something we capture in our dataset, so we would have to do that at a point in time.

**Ms CARNEY:** I would still like you to take that question on notice, if you would. It is important. The government talks a lot about more allocations for child protection workers, and it is data I am surprised you do not already have. I am not surprised you did not necessarily bring it with you, but I would like you, minister, to take that question on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, I am.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you.

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**Question on Notice 7.1**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, do you mind repeating the question, member for Araluen?

**Ms CARNEY:** What is the percentage of child protection workers in FACS with less than two years child protection experience?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 7.1.

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**Ms CARNEY:** In last year's budget, \$1.7 m, according to the minister's budget reply speech, was allocated for 'additional child protection workers'. How many additional child protection workers were actually employed in 2008-09, or how many additional positions were created?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** You have the table in front of you which goes through the various positions and levels. Last year, we were referring to child protection workers as capturing a range of positions that have different titles. You will note in the table that there are 87 positions that we call community welfare workers; they are the positions that have a professional qualification and are, generally, referred to as child protection workers. We also have 35 Aboriginal community workers or senior Aboriginal workers. They also do a range of child protection and out-of-home care work. We have 21 family support and youth workers, and they are at a slightly different salary level and, generally, without a professional qualification. They are involved in various ways in the child protection service delivery system. I will not go through the rest, but a number of managers and team leaders. You will note that there are a range of positions.

**Ms CARNEY:** In this year's budget, \$500 000 is allocated for 'additional child protection workers across the Territory'. Is that over the next 12 months or is it over five years?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott

**Ms SCOTT:** Over the next 12 months.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many child protection workers will you get for that amount of money?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand you over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** It does depend on the level. Obviously, salary levels vary, but ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Ballpark?

**Ms SCOTT:** About six or seven.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. How many child protection full-time equivalent positions were there in the Alice Springs FACS office in 2008-09, to date? How does that compare to 2007-08? If you have it in a tabled form, can you table it please, particularly if it shows a breakdown of offices around the Territory?

**Ms SCOTT:** The table you have in front of you shows one column called Central Australia, so there is a regional breakdown on this table.

**Ms CARNEY:** What is the figure? How many child protection positions are in the Alice Springs FACS office?

**Ms SCOTT:** I would have to do a slight shuffle of papers to take out the Barkly office, which is quite small, but all of those positions on that table are located in Central Australia, in either the Alice Springs office or the office in Tennant Creek.

**Ms CARNEY:** We will just refer to Tennant Creek. Who has a calculator? Let us read out the figures, because it is relevant to some other questions. Who has a calculator? Or who is good at adding up?

**Dr BURNS:** Member for Sanderson.

**Ms CARNEY:** Is he? All right. We have 19 community welfare workers, eight team leaders - everyone is not looking enthusiastic about this task. Does that mean we are all great at maths? I will put the question a different way: how many child protection workers are there in Central Australia?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Ranging from the P4 senior manager, office manager, team leaders, community welfare workers, Aboriginal community workers, family support workers ...

**Ms CARNEY:** No, I am sorry. My question was how many child protection workers are employed in Central Australia?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** These are the numbers which occur under the output of ...

**Ms CARNEY:** That is fine, but that is not my question. My question is, and I will repeat it for you: how many child protection workers or positions exist in Central Australia? What is the answer to that question please, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Forty-one.

**Ms CARNEY:** Forty-one in 2008-09. Here is a curly one. How many child protection workers were employed in Central Australia in 2007-08? Does anyone know?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** I will have to shuffle back because I did not bring comparative data with me.

**Ms CARNEY:** Well, we will not play elevator music, but we will let that dangle and perhaps you can come back to that before the end of the session. It is relevant for all sorts of reasons. I am very keen to know, and I believe many other people are really keen to know, what improvements have been made in getting more child protection workers into this area, given the many pronouncements by the government - this government in particular - and the allocation of resources. That is why I am seeking this reasonably specific information.

Minister, how many extra child protection positions have been created in Central Australia in the last 12 months - extra positions that were not there in the preceding year?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Dr Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** It is important here that we inform the members opposite the challenges in getting people to work in ...

**Ms CARNEY:** No, I am sorry, that is not my question. My question is very specific. I know the challenges; I do not need to be told about them. How many extra child protection positions have been created in the last 12 months? It is as simple as that.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, the minister has the call.

**Ms CARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I would like the Chief Executive Officer to have the opportunity to express his answer.

**Ms CARNEY:** Well, answer the question, please.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The answer to that question is a context response and the context of that response is to understand the difficulties that we have and the challenges we have in recruiting people and the quality of staff we are able to recruit.

Some of the initiatives that we have undertaken, such as working in the UK and ...

**Ms CARNEY:** A point of order, Mr Chairman! I refer you, Mr Chairman, to the Terms of Reference for the Estimates Committee 2009-10; in particular clause 23, 24 and 25 thereof. I can refer to any three, but clause 25 is probably the most relevant: 'Questions and explanations should be brief, avoid irrelevance and tedious repetition'. Clearly, there is not tedious repetition, but avoiding irrelevance is a standing order of this committee. I ask, Mr Chairman, that you stop grinning, do the decent thing by the committee and, indeed, the children of the Northern Territory, and pull the minister up. I do not want puffery in this area. I am not interested in it, and you should not be either. You should not sanction your Chief Executive Officer deliberately not answering questions.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The call is with Dr Ashbridge through the minister, and context is allowed when providing an answer.

**Ms CARNEY:** Where does it say that in the document, Mr Chairman?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is what I am saying, and it is how the committee is run.

**Ms CARNEY:** Oh, we are just making up the rules as we go along? Okay.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We are not making up the rules as we go along. You have asked a question and Dr Ashbridge, through the minister, is allowed to provide an answer to that question.



**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Thank you very much. I was hoping to give a 30-second response before going to ...

**Ms CARNEY:** How many extra child protection positions were created in the last 12 months in Alice Springs, minister?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Dr Ashbridge has the call, member for Araluen.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will refer back quickly for a 30-second commentary about the challenges and the things which the Northern Territory government has done, and the department has done, in recruiting staff. It is important to understand that when talking about the numbers of staff in Alice Springs, and I will ask Jenny Scott now to give you the details around that situation.

**Ms SCOTT:** I will have to take some of that on notice. I have just had a look through my papers and I do not enough comparative information ...

**Ms CARNEY:** So the answer is: do not know. Thank you.

**Dr BURNS:** Hold on, are we taking that question on notice?

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**Question on Notice 7.2**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, member for Araluen, could you please repeat the question.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many extra child protection positions have been created in the last 12 months in Alice Springs?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 7.2.

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**Dr BURNS:** Is the minister taking that question on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am taking that question on notice.

**Ms CARNEY:** At estimates last year, the minister advised that in Alice Springs the Child Abuse Task Force team had two child protection workers and one team leader. Can you update me on the staffing of the Child Abuse Task Force in Alice Springs?

**Ms McCARTHY:** The Child Abuse Task Force in Alice Springs has five Northern Territory Police, and three child protection officers.

**Ms CARNEY:** So three child protection workers and a team leader. Or is it two plus the team leader who is also, obviously, a child protection worker?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand that over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** It is two plus the team leader.

**Ms CARNEY:** On 6 May 2008, the then minister asked a rhetorical question, and it was this: 'What does Budget 2008-09 deliver to the Child Abuse Task Force?' 'Twenty-three additional child protection workers', was her answer. I know that it was over five years, which was not included in media releases, but the allocation was over five years. How many extra child protection workers have been placed in the Child Abuse Task Force in Darwin or Alice Springs in the last 12 months? Clearly, none in Alice Springs. Let us say Darwin.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand that over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** There has been an increase this year in the intake area of the Child Abuse Task Force.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many extra child protection workers were put into CAT in Darwin in the last 12 months?

**Ms SCOTT:** There have been no additional child protection workers into the CAT part of the Child Abuse Task Force, the investigative part of that task force.

**Ms CARNEY:** This is very disturbing, minister. We have budgetary allocations and ministers making various pronouncements about an increase of child protection workers to the Child Abuse Task Force. You do not know how many extra child protection workers have been placed in Alice Springs in the last 12 months and, in terms of the Child Abuse Task Force in Alice Springs, you have exactly the same number as last year. My question is this: are you happy with this outcome and has there been any misleading of Territorians in the pronouncements made by your government?

**Ms McCARTHY:** First, member for Araluen, let me clarify we have agreed to take that question on notice, so you are incorrect in information regarding Alice Springs. We have to get that information back to you. Second, I have not misled the people of the Northern Territory in our government's commitment to the children of the Northern Territory.

**Ms CARNEY:** In Budget 2009-10, at page 200, under the heading Budget Highlights, it says that \$0.3m has been allocated to expand the Child Abuse Task Force. Is that \$0.3m for child protection workers or something else and, if so, what?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, Jenny Scott will answer that.

**Ms SCOTT:** The Child Abuse Task Force is a team made up of, essentially, three components from the NT side of the system, and the Police and the Australian Federal Police. The task force has an intake team, a child protection investigative component which works jointly with the police, and there is also an Aboriginal community resource team which does much of the follow-up in community engagement, both at the time of an investigation and afterwards. Often, the investigations that the task force conduct do not lead to immediate outcomes and immediate charges, so the team provides follow-up after those investigations. Often times, they recommence at an investigative phase. It is important that we understand that the task force has those range of components that work together.

In 2009-10, our intention is to complement that task force across that range of functions. At the present time, the demand is in the intake area, and we are managing to deal with the follow-up work. If, over the year, it looks like the need is greater in the investigative end, then we would look at how we need to shift across from intake to investigations.

**Ms CARNEY:** Child protection workers do the intake work? Correct?

**Ms SCOTT:** Professional child protection workers do intake, yes, and because they work as one unit with one manager, there is the capacity to slide positions around the system depending on where the demand is.

**Ms CARNEY:** Okay. Having listened to you answer, how many child protection workers do you think you will be getting, if any, for the \$0.3m allocated?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Through the minister.

**Ms SCOTT:** We would aim to have at least three additional positions in that team. When we have

given you the figures in the past for the task force, we have not included the intake team. You just referred to child protection workers doing intake, which is correct. When we have talked about the number that has generally been the investigative team.

**Ms CARNEY:** The reference in the budget paper, minister, \$0.3m to expand the Child Abuse Task Force, there are other allocations, but that was specifically in relation to the Child Abuse Task Force. Why in your media release on budget day did you refer to \$6.2m to 'expand the Child Abuse Task Force with additional staff, to increase investigative activities in remote communities'?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I may have to take that question, while I get a copy of the media release, member for Araluen.

**Ms CARNEY:** Happy to provide you with a copy. I am sure you are not leaving town - for the record neither am I. There you go.

**Dr BURNS:** Neither am I.

**Ms CARNEY:** Page 2 – oh, neither of us are going. We both plan on standing in 2012. You never believe everything you read, Dr Burns.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Sorry, which page?

**Ms CARNEY:** Next page, turn over to the tabbed page. We are all stayers, we can do this for years.

**Dr BURNS:** We have a club.

**Ms CARNEY:** It is very interesting that no one seems to know why there was such an extravagant reference in a media release on budget day. I have my own theories, obviously, but strange that no one on that table can answer this question so readily.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Sorry, what was that?

**Ms CARNEY:** I am doing the equivalent of elevator music while you are coming up with an answer.

**Ms McCARTHY:** That \$6.2m is a part of *Closing the Gap*, and with wanting to see the increase in support for the CAT North and CAT South. I cannot break down the specifics of \$6.2m.

**Ms CARNEY:** Do you accept, minister, that, it is somewhat misleading to have a budget paper that refers to a \$0.3m injection of funds for the Child Abuse Task Force and to have a figure of in excess of \$6m in a media release? Surely, that is misleading?

**Ms McCARTHY:** No, I do not accept that it is misleading.

**Ms CARNEY:** Okay. Next question. Last year we talked about notifications - and I am going to ask some specific questions on notifications before too long. Do you have, and if so, can you table, a regional breakdown of where notifications came from in 2008-09?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny.

**Ms SCOTT:** I do not have it in a table, or in a form that I can table for you, but I can read some. I just need to find it.

My apologies, I actually have the total notifications to the end of March for the Northern Territory which was 4415. I am sorry, the page I have with me is actually the number of investigations, not the

number of notifications regionally. I will have to get that for you.

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, can you ask that on notice?

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**Question on Notice 7.3**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, can you repeat that?

**Ms CARNEY:** Can you provide a table listing the regional breakdown of notifications received in 2008-09?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, you are happy to take that on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, I will take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 7.3.

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**Ms CARNEY:** I can informally indicate that we might make that one a regular feature. The reason I am asking is that, last year in estimates, the minister said there were the highest number of notifications from Central Australia. She said it was quite high, clearly indicating that it was the highest. I am wondering why then, in those circumstances, there have not been additional child protection workers employed in the Child Abuse Task Force, and why there has been only a marginal increase in the number of child protection workers at the Alice Springs office?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand this over to Dr Ashbridge, member for Araluen.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will pass on to Jenny Scott for more detail. I probably need to correct the issue about the greatest number. It was not. The reference was not to a number, but to a percentage. We can convert that to numbers, but it would be misleading to translate a percentage in Central Australia and convert that to a majority of numbers.

**Ms CARNEY:** No, the minister last year did not give a percentage. I do not know where you got that from.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will provide you with the facts of this year.

**Ms CARNEY:** I have the transcript. Would you like it?

**Ms SCOTT:** We have taken on notice the regional notification figures. While it is apparent that Alice Springs does have a high rate of notification, we also have a mobile team, which we also talked about last year. We deploy that team, essentially, where we need to. Throughout 2008-09, that team has spent a significant period of time in Central Australia. We move that team where the demand is occurring; at the present time that team is in Katherine. For short periods of time it has been in East Arnhem and in other places. That is our extra capacity that we move to meet demand.

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes. I was going to ask some questions about the mobile team in detail, but since you mentioned it, perhaps we can deal with it reasonably quickly. The answer last year was that the mobile team was, essentially, based in the Top End. Is that still the case?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** The team actually has an office - it is a pretty basic office - where they return to, but they work out of the office where they are deployed to. As I said, at the present time there are a number of mobile team members working out of Katherine, and they have been there for a couple of weeks.

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When they work out of Alice Springs, they go to the Alice Springs office. Whilst they have a physical base in Darwin ...

**Ms CARNEY:** They live in Darwin?

**Ms SCOTT:** They live wherever they are deployed.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many people are in the mobile unit? How many positions?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** At the present time, we have six experienced child protection workers, a manager and an administration officer.

**Ms CARNEY:** A manager and an administration officer; so this is for the mobile unit?

**Ms SCOTT:** This is the mobile child protection team. Our agreement with the Australian government initially was that we would aim to jointly fund a team of 10. As we spoke about last year, we have had difficulty recruiting to that number. There have been very short periods of time where we have managed to have that number of workers in the team. But, in the main, it has been a team that has operated more at the level of six, which is where it is now. We are currently having negotiations with the Australian government about the next three-year agreement for that team, and we are looking at whether we can aim to sustain it at six.

**Ms CARNEY:** Previous ministers have referred to 12 positions being in the mobile unit. Is that correct?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** That is the 10 workers - a manager and an administration officer making 12.

**Ms CARNEY:** Last year I was given to understand – I cannot quite find the reference here – that there were 10 child protection workers in the mobile unit. This year you are saying there are six – that is a reduction.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** As I said in the previous answer, there have been times when it has been 10 and then we have movement, as we have talked about with child protection workers, so we have had difficulty maintaining it continuously at the level of 10. At the present time there are six workers, a manager and an administration officer.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many times has the mobile unit worked from Alice Springs?

**Ms SCOTT:** I do not have the figure; I have the number of cases, Territory-wide, they have worked on. I do not have the number of weeks or days they have spent in Alice Springs.

**Ms CARNEY:** Would you take that on notice, please, minister?

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, I would.

### Question on Notice 7.4

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, would you please repeat the question?

**Ms CARNEY:** How many weeks in 2008-09 did the mobile unit work from Alice Springs?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** You are happy with that, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, I am happy to.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 7.4.

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**Ms CARNEY:** I would have to say, minister, it is looking grim. No new people in the Child Abuse Task ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** Sorry, member for Araluen, can we just have a clarification of the question? Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** I just want to clarify the question. There are times when the mobile team splits, if you like, not all the team work in the same place. So when we provide that we will talk about any member of the team working in Alice Springs.

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, and you will stipulate how many?

**Ms SCOTT:** Yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** Things are looking grim. Mobile team child protection workers have clearly reduced; no new people in the Child Abuse Task Force in Alice Springs in the last 12 months; no one seems to know if there are extra child protection workers in Central Australia in the last 12 months. I believe you have a lot of work to do, minister, and I am surprised.

Let us go now to caseloads. What is the average caseload at any given time of a child protection worker in the Territory, and do you have a regional breakdown and, if so, can you table it?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** Determining appropriate caseloads is not an exact science, because caseloads differ from the type of cases, the number of children in the family, for example, and also the skill level of the worker. It is not automatically a simple task of just dividing cases by workers because the allocation made by the team leader is often made based on those other factors and the complexity of cases - the remoteness, those types of things.

We are currently doing a project within our division to look at caseloads and to see whether we can use experience from other jurisdictions about implementing various caseload systems which will support our team leaders to make those decisions about how to allocate cases, so we are better able to support our staff, and also help us with the decision-making about where we place new positions based on demand and the number of cases we are continuing to carry. That is a long answer to a difficult question.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, since May 2006 there has been national and international attention on child abuse in the Northern Territory. Your government has had a great deal to say but, apparently, has done very little. I am surprised your government and you, as minister, do not have an answer or are unable to answer what the present caseload is for child protection workers in the Territory. I will ask you this specific question: are you aware of a report done by the New South Wales Department of Community Services in November last year which says in its introduction:

*Determining appropriate caseloads for Child and Family Services is an essential exercise helping child welfare agencies establish the optimal use and mix of resources required to strengthen families and protect children.*

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, you have asked a number of questions in that. If I can go back to the beginning, when we came into government, we had a tremendous road ahead of us in child protection and the area of children and families across the Northern Territory. We took the budget from \$7.8m to \$20m, and each budget since this time has increased by approximately 26% each year.

**Dr Burns:** Hear, hear!

**Ms CARNEY:** No need to barrack, Dr Burns.

**Ms McCARTHY:** To answer that, we have taken a significant amount ...

**Ms Carney** interjecting.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, the minister has the call.

**Ms McCARTHY:** If I may have the opportunity to respond, within the four questions or so that you have asked in that.

**Ms CARNEY:** Are you aware of the report?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, I have been quite lenient. You have had commentary between questions. The minister is answering the question in the commentary that you had prior to that.

**Ms CARNEY:** There is nothing in the standing orders or the terms of reference that precludes that, and in all of the circumstances, particularly given the subject area, it is not, as you would have some believe, irrelevant or unnecessary.

In any event, minister, if you could have a shot at answering the questions, that would be great.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, you have the call.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Which question would you like me to answer?

**Ms CARNEY:** Are you aware of the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services report in 2007, highlighting the importance of - I will read you the quote: '... ascertaining caseloads for child protection workers'?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am aware of the report. I am aware of the work of the New South Wales minister for in this area, Linda Burney. I will hand over to Dr David Ashbridge.

**Ms CARNEY:** You have read the report, have you? It is a requirement to tell the truth.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The answer to your question is, we are absolutely aware of the report, and it formed the basis of the previous answer provided by Jenny Scott regarding the work we are doing to assess caseloads in a very complex environment.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, why is it that since national and international attention has been on child abuse since 2006, no one has got to working out caseloads before now?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, may I remind you that we are right across the workloads. It is improper of you to assume that my department has no consideration whatsoever for caseloads, when that is clearly not the case. I ask that you take into consideration the response of my officer, Jenny Scott.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, if you had read the report from 2007, you will see that some jurisdictions actually have a recommended and actual caseload of cases at any given time. It is necessary for you to compare with other jurisdictions on how the Territory is going. That is why it is important. I will leave it at that. I see you nodding, I believe you get it. What I would like to see, and everyone in the Northern Territory would like to see, is a fast-track of the caseload stuff. Moving along.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, would you like a clarification because, clearly, we would like you to understand what our situation is within the department in the Northern Territory. I am concerned that you do not understand that.

**Ms CARNEY:** No, I understand it completely, I understand that ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, you have made a comment and it is important for the minister to provide clarification.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I would like for Jenny Scott to respond regarding our caseload, just to make sure that the member for Araluen is clear.

**Ms CARNEY:** Mr Chairman, the minister is asking someone to say something to assure me that I am clear. I am very clear, thank you. Let us move on.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, this is a response to a question that you have asked, and the minister is allowed to answer that question.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I would like for Jenny Scott to respond.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Ms Scott, you have the floor.

**Ms SCOTT:** You have been referring to the work around determining various caseloads and that other jurisdictions have set various benchmarks. That is the work we are looking at now. There are different levels in different places, internationally and nationally. We have done some initial work to look at what our current levels are at a point in time. We have done that based on workers who, if you were to pick one of those benchmarks as a benchmark, is a working group internally looking at whether, for the Territory, we can determine a benchmark taking into account those national and international ones - whether they factor in the right factors for the Territory context.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you, there was no need to clarify that. I get it. My hearing up close it is not too bad at all. My comment, right back at you, minister, is: it has been several years since we have had national and international attention on this area, and I am surprised that it has taken so long.

Notifications: before I get on to some details of notifications and substantiated reports, I have read the most recently available annual report, the Health Department 2007-08, and it says - and I believe it probably always says this; it says it year in, year out:

*Staff assess all child protection notifications and a risk assessment is completed for every child on the basis of that assessment, and investigation response category is assigned and a formal investigation is conducted.*

Minister, I am advised that the formal process of assessing reports and notifications of child abuse is a tick-a-box assessment and that a consultant from South Australia is currently looking at a structured



decision-making process. When will the consultant's report be given to you and will it be publicly available?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I will hand to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** The assessment that is conducted at that notification point - you are referring to a tool that is used to help determine the priority rating for the action. However, the assessment actually involves more than ticking boxes. There are often phone calls to other agencies which may be involved. We look at information in our own department, now that we have the intake system co-located into the Child Abuse Task Force. There is also consultation with the police about previous actions. The initial assessment is informed by a range of activities, gathering information from a range of places including, in some cases, returning to the notifier for further information and, then, that response categorisation is delivered.

In reference to the consultant, that is internal work we are doing with an experienced person from the South Australia system whom we have asked to review our intake system. It has now been a couple of years with that new approach and we are having a look at what changes we may need to make considering that the demand is continuing to increase in notifications, asking the same types of questions you have just been asking - whether we have the right resources, whether we are using the right tools, or whether there have been developments in other jurisdictions. Structured decision-making is a tool that a number of jurisdictions have now instituted or commenced using. It is connected to a research body in the United States. We have commenced discussions with that United States research group and they are looking at whether the tools would need to be modified for Northern Territory use. We are working and talking closely with the other Australian jurisdictions who are looking at structured decision-making.

**Ms CARNEY:** When will the consultant's report be available for the minister, and will it be made public?

**Ms SCOTT:** The consultant's report was to be delivered to my Director of Child Protection this week. We are, obviously, preparing for the estimates, but we will look at that report over the coming few days and weeks and take into account what changes we may need to make to our intake system. It is actually a review of intake; it is not a review of structured decision-making.

**Ms CARNEY:** I guess it follows it will not be made public?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** This is an internal document for the operation of the agency.

**Ms CARNEY:** I want to ask you some more questions, but my colleague has given me an inspired question, getting back to caseloads. You know the current number of child protection workers in the Territory. What is the current number of active cases in the Territory? He reckons if you divide one by another you would be able to get an average caseload. Can you answer that question?

**Ms McCARTHY:** You would like to know specifically the number of active caseloads? Is that your question?

**Ms CARNEY:** Well, it is an indicative. Are you able to divide the number of child protection workers in the Territory by the number of current cases?

**Ms McCARTHY:** No, no. The first question was how many active caseloads; is that correct?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** We would be able to provide that information, but the previous responses have highlighted that caseload allocation is not just a simple division. It is a reflection of the complexity of the cases that are involved, the geography of them, the family, and the number of children in the family. If we were to adopt a simple analysis like that, even though that is very easy to do, it does not reflect the way that we would need to distribute our workforce or allocate our resources ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, would you take it on notice, on the basis that it is an indicator only and that is understood? Would you be able to take on notice the question as follows: as an indicator only, would you be able to provide details of the numbers of child protection workers in the Territory divided by the number of active cases for 2008-09?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I believe Dr Ashbridge was trying to answer that question before you rudely interrupted him.

**Ms CARNEY:** I believe he was saying no. I am asking you because you are the minister.

**Ms McCARTHY:** What I am saying, member for Araluen, is that as this Chief Executive has said it is not so simple as to just divide child protection workers into caseloads. Therefore, we will not take that question on notice.

**Ms CARNEY:** Filing systems: the inquest, which has not concluded - so I am not going into details other than to say I know the woman involved and had previous involvement with some of her children. Some of the child protection workers, according to media reports, gave evidence that there were two different computer systems a couple of years ago in FACS that were unable to talk to each other - I believe that was the terminology used by them or media - and that there was duplication and gaps in recordkeeping, because the two systems could not talk to each other and some information needed to be transferred manually. You know the details of the problem. My question is: have they been fixed?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Can I seek clarification before I hand over to Jenny Scott, member for Araluen? Are you talking about a particular case that is still before the courts or ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, hence my comments. The computer system, the recordkeeping system, has that been fixed, because that was some years ago?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** I need to clarify some of what you have stated. The reference to two systems is that one was a system that was replaced by the second one. They are not two concurrent systems and the replacement was many years ago, in about 2000 or so. In this case, and in others, what we have been talking about and what workers were giving evidence about, was the way they have to input case work activity across a number of children. It is one system but each child has a separate case. What they were referring to was the ability to be able to look across a case - a case being a whole family, as opposed to each child. You can see that child and you can see all of the other children. They were talking about the activities on how they enter data and the time it takes to look at data.

**Ms CARNEY:** Has that been fixed now; the difficulties identified?

**Ms SCOTT:** We are working on that with our IT people.

**Ms CARNEY:** Notifications: the estimate of the number of notifications in last year's budget paper, for 2008-09, was 3950. The revised estimate in the 2009-10 Budget Papers for 2008-09 shows a significant increase in the estimated number of notifications to 5100, which is significant. I have some questions in relation to that but, before I get to them, what is the actual number of notifications for 2008-09 to date?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, it is 4415.

**Ms CARNEY:** Are you concerned that you, the department, or the government, was out by about 1100 in the estimate of notifications for 2008-09? That is a significant difference.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I will hand you over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** Estimating the number of notifications that are going to come in the forward year is difficult. We do that based on looking at trends and trying to predict. A range of issues can occur throughout the year that make notifications go up or down and, this year, the numbers have gone higher than we anticipated. The more activity we are doing to raise awareness about child protection such as the new act coming in, and a range of things, will bring people's attention to child protection and so people will notify. Also, in big numbers, it is hard to see; however, it is still relevant for the Territory if a family of six is notified, we do those six children a number of times, which does inflate the figures. We do some estimating but, clearly, the numbers and notifications are going up.

**Ms CARNEY:** I accept that they are indicative, but I cannot remember a jump of this magnitude looking at past budget papers. Minister, are you concerned that, given the increase is statistically significant - if you look through budget papers over the years - there has not been a commensurate increase in the number of child protection workers in the Territory?

**Ms McCARTHY:** To go to your first question of the issue and the significance of the increase. I believe, as I am sure you do, the more information provided within our communities - particularly in Aboriginal communities with language - and expectations placed on families will, in fact, see this number of notifications increase even more. We recognise that, in having the information out there - not just within family groups but across the general media - asking people to recognise this as an important area, notifications are going to rise.

To go to the second part of that question in regard to an increase in child protection workers, I have to say I always like to see an increase in child protection workers. That is something I will always be, no doubt, battling with my colleagues when we come to budget time to fight for that money. Yes, I want to see and increase in child protection workers, always.

**Ms CARNEY:** That is great, I am very happy to hear that. In comparing 2007-08 to 2008-09, the information I received this morning was there has only been eight additional child protection workers employed in the Territory, compared to 101 last year; there have been no more in the Child Abuse Task Force in Alice Springs. So, they are very grim figures, indeed, particularly noting the number of notifications. Notwithstanding what has gone on in the past, and all the declarations about what an important area this is and how committed the government is, it would be wonderful, minister, if you could go in there and deliver some results, because I am hard pressed to see any.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I would not be aggrieved by any of the figures, in fact, please be encouraged. We have done a tremendous amount of work, as I am sure you have seen over the years, especially in Central Australia. We continue to have that commitment. I hand over to David Ashbridge, because there are a few other things we would like to say in regard to this area.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I believe the response to child protection notification is a broader investment strategy than just in child protection workers. Even though you do not want to have an in-depth response, if we look at the investment we have made in remote workers, in communities, and the intensive support to the non-government organisations, we need to consider the response to the rise in child protection notifications in the broad, and not in the narrow.

**Ms CARNEY:** Whatever that means, thank you. Minister, we talk about this every year and there are some very serious concerns about the timeliness of investigations. I will get to that, but I want to clarify something. The annual report, page 83 - that is the most recent one, 2007-08 - estimates for 2008-09 there would be 3950 notifications, which is the same figure in the 2008-09 Budget Papers. In the last few minutes, you have told me that the actuals were 4415 for that period. The annual report confidently asserts that all of the notifications received will have a child risk assessment. My question is: in 2008-09 to date, of the 4415 notifications, did they all receive a risk assessment? Yes or no?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am advised, that is yes, member for Araluen.

**Ms CARNEY:** Of those that proceeded to investigation of that 4415, were all investigations finalised?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Mr SCOTT:** We have given you the current notifications to the end of March. The process of finalising investigations can sometimes take a number of days, weeks and, sometimes months. I would have to check if they have all been finalised, but I would be pretty confident in saying that there would be a number of those that are not finalised at this point.

**Ms CARNEY:** Clearly, the information is important. It is important to Territorians, the department, and to me as the shadow, because I want to know if, indeed, all of the investigations were finalised. It is very easy for governments to say, 'Oh yes, we have done it all', but the information, the data, is really important. Thanks for your indication, minister. Would you be good enough to take that question on notice, and perhaps I will reword it as follows ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** Just a moment, member for Araluen. I have just been advised that the data will be available in the September report of the AIHW ...

**Ms CARNEY:** The AIHW? Refresh my memory.

**Ms McCARTHY:** ... with the verification of that.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** It is the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Every year in September, there is verified data for the previous year.

**Ms CARNEY:** All right, thank you. I am going to ask questions about the timeliness of investigations, but I will quickly go through the categories that are listed at Budget Paper No 3, at page 203. I want to add the accepted definition because, in the budget paper, it has Category 1, 2 and 3, but it does not actually say to anyone who is not in this area what a Category 1, 2, or 3 is. I will go through them quickly. Category 1, Child in Danger, and the aim, as stated in the budget paper, is to investigate within one day of notification; Category 2, Child at Risk, and the aim is to investigate within three days of notification; and Category 3, Child of Concern, and the aim is to investigate within five days. Yes?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, that is right.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, for some years now, FACS has not met its benchmarks in dealing with Categories 1, 2 and 3 reports of abuse or neglect. Are you aware that, in the most recent available Health Department Annual Report, which is 2007-08, the facts show that, for Category 1, Child in Danger, while the estimate was to commence an investigation within one day of notification, it only happens 73% of the time? Does that concern you?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Before I hand over to David Ashbridge ...

**Ms CARNEY:** The question is: does it concern you? Why do you need to hand over ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, the minister has the call.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, if you would allow me to answer your question. I will, obviously, allow and give you time to ask your question. Any minister who has to care for children across the Northern Territory will always be concerned, in terms of notifications, where that particular child is, and the process for that particular child or children. It would be irresponsible of me not to say that I have concerns. Of course I have concerns, and I want to see that we are always working to the best of our ability.

I must add that our government is very committed to this area, in particular, with the incredible amounts of money we are putting towards the care and protection of children across the Northern

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Territory. I will now hand over to David Ashbridge.

**Ms CARNEY:** A point of order, Mr Chairman! Hear me out, please.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Mr Chairman, hear me out. The terms of reference refer to 'explanations may be assisted where necessary'. Mr Chairman, if you are going to do your job seriously, I ask you to listen.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I am listening, member for Araluen.

**Ms CARNEY:** The terms of reference are really quite specific. I refer in particular to clause 23. It refers to 'explanations may be assisted where necessary'. Given that my question was 'are you concerned' and the minister has answered that question, I do not think it is necessary to hear from someone else as to whether the minister was concerned.

**Dr BURNS:** A point of order, Mr Chairman! Standing Order 51, No interruptions. There is also another one – no, basically Standing Order 51. The estimates process is a very, almost conversational process, and we all accept that. I respect the member for Araluen's passion and commitment in this area, but there have been a number of instances where the minister has been interrupted and, when she has asked an officer to speak at the table, there has been an interruption there also. I understand that standing orders do not cover officers at the table, but I thought, by corollary, that when the minister has asked an officer to speak it is really part of the minister's response ...

**Ms CARNEY:** But it has to be in relation to the question.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Araluen, the member for Johnston is speaking.

**Dr BURNS:** These are important issues and I accept that, but I believe the member for Araluen needs to give the minister and the officers sitting at the table more of a go.

**Ms CARNEY:** I have given the minister a go. Mr Chairman, make a ruling and let us move on.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** There are a couple of things here. First I will read Standing Order 51 for the benefit of members who do not know it:

*No member may converse aloud or make any noise or disturbance which in the opinion of the Speaker or the Chairman is designed to interrupt or has the effect of interrupting a member speaking.*

Member for Araluen, the minister has addressed part of the preamble to your question and she has handed to Dr Ashbridge. Dr Ashbridge has the call.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Thank you very much. I take the opportunity to reflect on the commitment that the agency has to improving the timeliness and the quality of its services provided. The member for Araluen is correct in quoting the numbers from the most recent annual report. I take the opportunity to inform the member for Araluen and others that in the year to date, the Category 1 assessment is now 82%, Category 2, the three days of assessment, is now 45%, and Category 3 is now 18%. There have been substantial improvements in both Category 1 and Category 2 in the recent year to date, reflecting the commitment and the resourcing.

**Ms CARNEY:** Only 73% of the time investigations, in relation to a child in danger, were completed within one day of the stated time frame. How many children did not have matters investigated within that one-day period?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will go to Jenny Scott, but I want to make the point which has already been made; that every single referral has an assessment on the day that the referral is made, and that is a 100% figure which we achieve. For further information on that I will ask Jenny Scott to develop the further response.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many kids?

**Ms SCOTT:** We have given you a percentage figure which is 82%. I do not have the actual number of cases. It is 82% of the notifications.

**Ms CARNEY:** I am not going to go to the 82% because they are not published figures that I can match up directly with the information in the budget papers, both this year and the preceding year. The 73% - that is 73% of the 4415 children we are talking about? Is that correct?

**Ms SCOTT:** No, that is not correct. The 73% is of the total notifications in 2007-08, which was 3678 at the top of that table in the annual report.

**Ms CARNEY:** Three thousand ...

**Ms SCOTT:** It is at the top of the table that I think you are referring to.

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** On page 83.

**Ms SCOTT:** 3678 notifications and the number of investigations were 1841.

**Ms CARNEY:** For Category 1?

**Ms SCOTT:** If you were referring to the table that is on page 83 of the annual report, the table takes you through the process of child protection, from notification to determining whether to investigate and, then, the response categorisation of those investigations.

**Ms CARNEY:** Let me see if I have this right. Notifications of harm, we are looking at 2007-08 actuals of 3678. Correct?

**Ms SCOTT:** Yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** Then, following that column all the way down, we have timeliness Category 1, 73%, Category 2, 38%, Category 3, 14%. Correct?

**Ms SCOTT:** Yes, of investigations.

**Ms CARNEY:** Of investigations. How many investigations were undertaken in relation to the notifications received that year?

**Ms SCOTT:** If you go to the third line on that table, where it says child protection assessments and investigated.

**Ms CARNEY:** I see, right. We are talking about 1841 matters to which Categories 1, 2 and 3 investigations apply. Correct?

**Ms SCOTT:** That is correct.

**Ms CARNEY:** Do you have a breakdown of the numbers of kids involved in Categories 1, 2 and 3 investigations? If you have that in tabled form, would you be willing to table it, please?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott, member for Araluen.

**Ms SCOTT:** Sorry, could you repeat the question? I was handed something at the same time so I want to make sure I am clear.

**Ms CARNEY:** Do you have information and if you have it in a tabled document, can you table it, as to how many children were Category 1, Category 2 and Category 3 investigations?

**Ms SCOTT:** No, I do not have that, but we will be able to get that for you.

**Ms CARNEY:** Will you take that on notice, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, I will.

**Ms SCOTT:** Is that the 2007-08 year you are talking about?

**Ms CARNEY:** We will ask for 2008-09, we will get the comparisons.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Sorry, for *Hansard* can you repeat the question?

**Ms CARNEY:** Can you provide in tabled form a breakdown of the number of children who are involved in Category 1, 2 and 3 investigations for the years 2007-08 and 2008-09 to date?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 7.5. Minister, you are obviously happy to take that?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, in discussions with my staff, when I said to you in the previous answer that the information would come out in September with the AIHW, it also includes this specific data that you are now requesting.

**Ms CARNEY:** I want the data. I am not really fussed how I get it, or who I get it from, as long as I get it.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** It is not a question on notice. Ignore that, *Hansard*.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, we met the benchmark set for Category 1 investigations, 73% of the time. Category 2, Children at Risk investigations, was only met 38% of the time, which is dreadful. I note that it has increased recently, but on the figures available, 38% of the time is appalling. For Category 3, Child of Concern, the estimate for an investigation to commence was within five days and that only happened 14% of the time. How can that be, after your government claims repeatedly that you have injected additional resources and child protection workers into the child protection system of the Northern Territory?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, David Ashbridge.

**Ms CARNEY:** You do not know the answer? Oh, how surprising!

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** A point of clarification first, member for Araluen. You mentioned that Category 1

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assessments are completed on day one, when they are actually commenced on day one. That is an important point of clarification to make.

In our aspirational goals - and we are doing our best all the time to reach the targets, as has been pointed out in the last response - we are increasing substantially over time. The information which you are not privy to - the number of cases which need to be done within 72 hours, but are done the next day or the day after; and the day 5 ones, which are done on day 6 and day 7 - is a reflection of the triage process which occurs in the system and a priority taken to the neediest and the most at risk being seen first. Our objective is to ensure we direct our resources to the highest risk clients first while, at the same time, improving timeliness.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, on the basis of previous answers, it is clear there is no specific information on the caseloads carried by child protection workers, there have been amazingly few additional child protection workers' positions employed in the last 12 months and, fundamental benchmarks, as published year after year in budget papers, have not been met in the investigation process. Minister ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is a sweeping statement, and I reject that.

**Ms CARNEY:** Which part of it is sweeping, minister? I reject that absolutely.

**Ms McCARTHY:** We have taken on notice ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Which part of the question was sweeping? Do you or do you not have this information on caseloads?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I said we will take this question on notice, the caseloads.

**Ms CARNEY:** There has been an increase of eight child protection workers in the Northern Territory based on figures last year; you have not given any more child protection workers to the Child Abuse Task Force in Alice Springs; and you fail to meet benchmarks. What part of those comments are sweeping statements?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I have said it is a sweeping statement in regard to caseloads; we have taken that question on notice.

**Ms CARNEY:** Any government worth its salt in all of the circumstances would have got this about right by now. I am genuinely amazed, and very disappointed, that it has not. Anyway, we will move on.

In the benchmarks for timeliness of investigations, are you aware, minister, in the published information two out of the three categories had worse response times in 2007-08 than they did in 2006-07? They seem to be going backwards. Can you say to the committee with any confidence, when we are here in 12 months time, those benchmarks will have improved?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I believe what we need to be really clear on here is the work with children across the Northern Territory does not solely focus on child protection workers; we also have to do the work within our communities, with the Aboriginal family workers who, in order to change any direction in regard to the care and protection of children in the Northern Territory, must also work with the local people on the ground. That is an area, along with the mobile child protection team, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre team, that we have out on the ground.

Clearly, you have not been able to understand the significant improvement that this department has made in regard to an overall attempt to influence and help change the direction for children in our communities, and I am surprised at your response.



**Ms CARNEY:** You be as surprised as you like. I am asking quite specific questions about child protection. I am comparing it with pronouncements made both in and out of parliament by governments about not only their apparent heartfelt commitment, but the financial commitments by media release, public pronouncements and the budget papers. The purpose of the estimates process, as you know, is to get some details. The reality - whether you like it or not, and however you colleagues on the fifth floor of this building want to spin it – is you have fallen astoundingly short when it comes to child protection and child protection workers. You and I might have disagree on that. Minister, in the same way you have invited me to understand something, I similarly invite you to understand where I am coming from.

Next question ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** We agree to disagree then, member for Araluen.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, do you agree with this quote which is an extract from a research and evaluation report done by the always impressive Crime and Misconduct Commission in Queensland, and published in the National Council of Institute of Public Administration in 2008? It is very interesting in the child protection area. Do you agree with this: 'Children who have been abused or neglected are highly reliant upon a well functioning child protection system'?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I am trying to understand what that has to do with this question in regard to the budget. If we are looking at people's expectations of improving the system, of course, any child in the Northern Territory and in Australia would need to know and have confidence within their family structure and within any system that caters for them. If you are asking me whether I think a system should be there to support the children and families of the Northern Territory, I say, as minister for this area, yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** Just on your comment in relation to 'you do not understand what it has to do with the budget', it has everything to do with the budget. Your media releases and government propaganda and so on tell Territorians you are doing really well in the child protection system, you are injecting this money that you are promising and getting these workers; whereas, in fact, as measured by the number of child protection workers and those in the Child Abuse Task Force, that is not happening. It is highly relevant that we do have, in the Northern Territory, a well-functioning child protection system, because children who are abused or neglected are highly reliant on a well-functioning child protection system. I am not sure that adults of the Territory can say to the children of the Territory that our child protection system is as well functioning as it should be.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I do not disagree with you in any respects about a system that is there to protect and care for our children. I do not think any person in this room, or indeed, government or the parliament, would disagree with that. If there is one thing we do agree on, it is that, of course, any system has to be there to care and protect our children.

**Ms CARNEY:** Substantiations. Let us turn to substantiations, and I am very conscious of the member for Arafura having some questions, I will cull some questions.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** You are just about going through all of mine, so I will just sit here and listen to you.

**Ms CARNEY:** We are like minded, member for Arafura.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I do have a couple, when you are finished.

**Ms CARNEY:** All right. Equally, I am reminded by my colleague here. I will cut though a few, but I am on the downhill run. Substantiations: how many of the notifications in 2008-09 were substantiated?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, can I just refer back to the response in regard to the data for September. This is data that still has to be finalised.

**Ms CARNEY:** All right, so that is for 2008-09?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** Perhaps this one you will have, I am sure, how many notifications were substantiated in 2007-08?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** The substantiation is actually of an investigation. As we went through before, notification, investigation - substantiations relate to investigations. The proportion of investigations that were substantiated was 41%.

**Ms CARNEY:** How does that compare with other jurisdictions?

**Ms SCOTT:** It does vary across jurisdictions. Generally, there is somewhere in the order of 45% to 50% but, because jurisdictions have slightly different child protection systems, what is counted as an investigation in some jurisdictions is different to others. How you substantiate can sometimes be different across jurisdictions, so whilst it is broadly comparable, it is not exactly comparable.

**Ms CARNEY:** Of those substantiated, and I believe we got to this last year, how many orders were made in the family matters court for a child to be taken into care in 2007-08 and 2008-09, and if you have it in tabled form, could you table it?

**Ms SCOTT:** I do have it in a form that I am reading from, but not available to table.

**Ms CARNEY:** Perhaps if you could read it out? That would be great.

**Ms SCOTT:** The number of children who were placed on an order in - did you say 2007-08?

**Ms CARNEY:** Let us to 2007-08 to start with, yes.

**Ms SCOTT:** It was 520.

**Ms CARNEY:** And 2008-09 to date?

**Ms SCOTT:** The number of children in out-of-home care is actually in the next output, but the number of children in out-of-home care at the end of March was 449.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many of those substantiated cases did not result in an order made in the family matters court in 2007-08 and 2008-09?

**Ms SCOTT:** The process of substantiation to an order is, again, not an automatic process. Not all substantiations result in a child being taken into care, and not all children taken into care come into care through the investigation substantiation process. So, it is not comparing apples with apples.

**Ms CARNEY:** I could have asked the question better. How many orders were made in the family matters court in 2007-08 and 2008-09 in respect of children? Is something like that possible?

**Ms SCOTT:** We have explained that the 2008-09 figures have yet to be verified for this financial year, but that will happen in September. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare collate a report

called Child Protection Australia each year, the one the minister referred to earlier. It has a number of tables that take people through jurisdiction by jurisdiction, but also takes people through the types of orders, such as care and protection orders and out-of-home care placements.

Not all children who enter care have a court order. Sometimes, there is a temporary, voluntary order that is a voluntary agreement that is entered into by the family. In that sense, when you refer to orders in the family matters court, some of the children who are in care may have entered, or be in, care at a particular point in time because their parents have signed a voluntary agreement to place them in that care, which is not ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Okay, I get it. Do you have any figures on how many matters went to the family matters court where the magistrate declined to make an order? The reason I am after that information is that I want to know what your success rate is in terms of court. You know I used to practice in this area and, back then, the success rate was amazingly high. What is it these days?

**Ms McCARTHY:** We do not collect that data.

**Ms CARNEY:** You do not collect that data? Okay, I will forgo a couple more questions. Regarding the emergency response; last year you tabled a document - and if you have an updated one I would be grateful - *NT Emergency Response Child Health Check Initiative*. Do you have an updated one?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I am advised that was in yesterday's output with the Health portfolio.

**Ms CARNEY:** Okay, let me ask it this way: how many referrals came from the NTER to FACS in 2008-09?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I do not want to expand for too long on the process. The Northern Territory Emergency Response has moved to Phase 3 of the emergency response and, in that sense, the child health checks component is completed. We have now moved into what would be better framed as going into more routine planned service delivery in an ongoing way. The episodic nature of Phase 2 or the child health checks is not relevant to this financial year.

**Ms CARNEY:** In 2008-09 to date, how many referrals were made as a result of or by people working on the NTER in Indigenous communities around the Northern Territory?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** We are able to get that information; we do not have it with us.

**Ms CARNEY:** On notice.

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**Question on Notice 7.5**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, do you mind repeating the question, member for Araluen?

**Ms CARNEY:** In 2008-09 to date, how many referrals to FACS were made from NTER workers in Indigenous communities around the Northern Territory?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, are you happy to take that question on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, I am.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 7.5.

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**Ms CARNEY:** Last year, the document tabled showed that there had been about 770 referrals from the NTER. It is relevant to the area of child protection, and for budgetary purposes, given the pronouncements by the government of how much it is spending in Indigenous communities around the Northern Territory. That type of information is very important for the department, as well as for anyone else with more than a passing interest in this area.

I am coming to the end, minister. You remember that we had a briefing in September last year, because we only had about 50 minutes to do this last year. At the briefing, Ms Scott, you provided me with a table showing the number of children in care in the Territory. It was a regional breakdown and it was a breakdown of Indigenous and non-Indigenous kids. I am assuming - because I know you reasonably well - that you will have an updated table. If so, would you be good enough to table it?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, we are more than happy to deal with that. I understand it does come in the next output though.

**Ms CARNEY:** I believe that is a 50:50 proposition. Would you be good enough to table it now so we can move on?

**Ms McCARTHY:** If you would like to, yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, Ms Scott will seek a clarification from you on those figures.

**Ms SCOTT:** I want to know which was the table that you were asking me to update?

**Ms CARNEY:** The table you gave me at the briefing in September 2008. It showed then – and this may help you – 804 children in care, with 541 Indigenous, 263 non-Indigenous, and I believe there was a regional breakdown as well.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is that something you would take on notice or do you have that on you?

**Ms CARNEY:** Jenny, this is the - to refresh your memory ...

**Ms SCOTT:** I have had a look and, unfortunately, I do not have it in that form. I am more than happy to collate what I do have into that form and provide it to you, so that you can compare exactly, otherwise we may be reading something and then it does not ...

**Ms CARNEY:** I know this is unusual, but I do not think it needs to be a question on notice. Can I have an undertaking from you, minister, that you will formally ask Ms Scott to provide the information?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Absolutely.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. It is a little presumptuous, I know, but everyone has been working on estimates and I know you will have the information and it is not going to take you long. Can I ask for it to be provided within 14 days? Thank you. Over to you, member for Arafura.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Minister, in the budget papers there was listed \$0.5m to develop and fund culturally secure Aboriginal child protection and family support services in regional centres that support vulnerable families to better care for their children. What is this and what regions are they located in?

**Ms McCARTHY:** We have a number of Aboriginal workers in the following communities: in Nguu we

have one staff member; in Borroloola, two part-time staff; in Galiwinku, one staff; Gunbalanya, one staff; Daly River, one staff; Elliott, one staff; Ti Tree, one staff; Ntaria, one staff; Yuendumu, two part-time staff; in Papunya the position is yet to be filled; and the positions at Beswick, Numbulwar and Mutitjulu are vacant, and it is intended that these positions will be changed to Kalkarindji, Docker River, and Santa Teresa.

Member for Arafura, the key objective of the remote area Aboriginal family workers is to employ Aboriginal workers to provide services to children and young people and their families to establish a culturally safe, local and accessible child protection service in remote communities, and to support Aboriginal people in remote communities to report child abuse and to ensure children are protected. Also, of course, member for Arafura, reducing the fear of Aboriginal families of the department and what the department is about so they can come forward and talk about these issues in a culturally appropriate and sensitive way, and know this is about the overall concern for all children across the Northern Territory.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Thank you, minister. In relation to those centres and those workers, could I get a copy of those regions and where the positions are?

Following on with those child protection family support services, what statutory functions within those support services are conducted by FACS or with Aboriginal child protection workers on the ground? What is the statutory component within those units, or are they just support services where people talk? Is it going to have a statutory function?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** The remote Aboriginal family and community workers play a number of roles. They are not authorised officers under the act, so they do not conduct their own child protection investigations. They may actually facilitate and assist the child protection workers from the regional centres in either locating a family, or they may participate in family meetings as part of investigations. They could undertake casework tasks related to cases which have been investigated and where, perhaps, we are having an ongoing case management role. For example, they may assist the family to ensure the child is going to the health centre for their health checks, or working through some issues in a culturally counselling sense - a range of those sorts of functions - but they do not do statutory child protection investigations, in that sense.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** There is nothing culturally sensitive or safe about any child being abused in the community. Minister, with those support services and the statutory functions - and I was listening when the member for Araluen was asking questions on Categories 1, 2 and 3, and it was something that concerned me when I had this portfolio. When you have those categories there is a concern of the timeliness and the response time within those three categories. What is that response time in our remote regions?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** You are absolutely right, member for Arafura. Obviously, if you receive a call in a remote area you have to assess it, then make a flight out there. It is often difficult to achieve that, and part of the reason for the timeliness is not only the quantum but also the location of where they are coming from. It is practically difficult.

I feel I need to make a clarification: earlier on these were referred to as benchmarks. They are, in fact, targets, and people need to appreciate the difference between a benchmark and a target. We are striving to get to 100%, but there are practical reasons as you just described, such as getting out to Numbulwar or wherever at short notice, where it is just not possible to do that in 24 hours. I can guarantee all of those are investigated and as much as can possibly be done, is done, through the initial assessment phase.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Minister, there has been a number of coronials going back a couple of years with FACS, there was quite an extensive review into Family and Children's Services and there were a number of recommendations from that review. Are you able to provide or table an up-to-date report as

to the implementation of those recommendations from that review, because that goes to the heart of the matter? I was listening to the member for Araluen asking the department about caseloads, case management - those areas with child protection workers. That was actually part of the recommendation of the Bath review. Can I obtain an up-to-date report through a briefing, or do you have an update of where the department is in the implementation of those recommendations?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Arafura, we are more than happy to provide you with that. I am pleased to say that we have established an Office of the Children's Commissioner and we have certainly restructured the Child Protection Division to establish Northern Territory Families and Children. This work now sees five dedicated directors to oversee the work in the areas of family support and parent services, child protection services, out-of-home care services, youth services, and family violence and sexual assault services. That has made a tremendous difference in being able to have clear direction within the department. We have, as we have discussed today, seen the expansion over the years of the Child Abuse Task Force, and the rolling out of safe houses in remote communities across the Northern Territory - which we will, no doubt, talk about later on in its appropriate output – and, as I have just mentioned, the Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Worker Program. I am more than happy to provide further details on each of those areas to you in a briefing.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** That would be good, minister, because part of those recommendations was the quality improvement and to look at that internal process, so I would love to have a briefing.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.2. Before we move on to consideration of Output 1.3, we are going to take a five minute break.

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The committee suspended.

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### **Output 1.3 – Out of Home Care Services**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We will resume the Estimates Committee process at Output 1.3, Out of Home Care Services. Member for Araluen.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. I do have some questions, but I will forgo them in the interest of time.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Arafura, do you have questions on Out of Home Care Services?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Yes, I do. Minister, how many children are in the care of the minister? Where are they? How many are from our remote Aboriginal communities? If it is in the same community, does it mean they are safe because they are not in their home?

**Ms McCARTHY:** The number of children in care, as of the 30 June 2008, is 398 in out-of-home care in the Northern Territory. This represents an increase of one young person, compared to the 30 June 2007 figures. As of the 30 April 2009, there were 449 children in out-of-home care placements. Indigenous children in care, was that the question you had?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Yes.

**Ms McCARTHY:** As of 30 June 2008, 281 Indigenous children were in out-of-home care, which makes up 70% of all children in care. This represents an increase of 13 children compared with 30 June 2007. At 30 April 2009, there were 308 Indigenous children in out-of-home care.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Sorry, what was that, minister? The last figure.

**Ms McCARTHY:** At 30 April 2009, there were 308 Indigenous children in out-of-home care, making up 68.5% of the number of children in care. Indigenous children, member for Arafura, have consistently represented two-thirds of the Northern Territory's out-of-home care population since 2001, which I am sure you are more than aware of.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Following on from that question - and, thank you minister, for those figures - can you break that down in staffing and how many staff are put or dedicated to remote Aboriginal communities within the child protection area to deal with the number - you have given quite a high percentage of 68.5% - of those children who are in care, minister. How many staff is actually allocated to deal with those children?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Member for Arafura, we can do that. I will pass it on to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** The case management of children who are in care occurs from our regional child protection offices, so there are out-of-home care teams in each of those offices who case manage the children. The staffing figures we were talking about in the last output incorporate case managers who are doing that work. As I said briefly in the question relating to some of the Aboriginal community workers, some of the remote workers we have perform tasks about children who might be in care, supporting their carer, for example, if they are living with a relative carer in the community.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Minister, if the Chair and the member for Araluen will just indulge me for a minute. Where you have the different regions, let us look at Nhulunbuy. I know we spent some time looking at Central Australia, and I remember the last estimates process where we went to Central Australia. However, if you look at Nhulunbuy - and you touched on the Katherine region before with the CAT force or the child protection task force - and given the complexity of the case management of those children in the care of the minister, what are the staffing levels across those agencies to deal with the complexity of those cases of children in care? If you do not have that information, can I be provided with that information, please?

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**Question on Notice 7.6**

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Arafura, we will take that question on notice. Just to clarify, you mentioned CAT, and I would like to make it clear the Child Abuse Task Force is in Darwin and Alice Springs. You made reference to CAT; they are the two locations for CAT, even though they do cover the whole of the Northern Territory. I am happy to take on notice ...

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I was just picking up on ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** You can seek clarification if you want, but I was going to say, at some stage we should actually repeat the question.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** The reason I asking this, minister, is that Ms Scott had said that the team was presently in Katherine doing some investigations and work. I know they are Alice Springs and Darwin based, but the time they spend in Katherine and Nhulunbuy and in some of those other regions?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I suspect the question relates to the mobile team which we have already agreed we would table the location of the mobile team across the Northern Territory. That team has spent some time in Central Australia, they are in Katherine at the moment, and they are also in Gove. Our commitment was to answer that question around the Northern Territory by jurisdiction, so we are happy to provide that information. But it relates to the mobile team.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Sorry, to clarify. Does that mean we are not taking the question on notice, or we are taking the question on notice?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** We are going to take the question on notice. I think the minister agreed in getting further information and clarification as to those regions and for children in care and what the staffing levels are within those teams when we look at those regions for children in the care of the minister - which is a completely different thing from Child Protection Services when we talk about children in the care of the minister.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 7.6. If I am not interrupting the question flow, I need to make a point of clarification ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** Sorry, Mr Chairman, just in the wording of that question, children are actually now, under the new *Care and Protection of Children Act*, they are actually in the care of the CE so, in the wording of that question on notice ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** In the care of the CE; I am sure *Hansard* got that.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Yes, they are in the care, I realise that, but if you look at the act, it is the minister's delegation that goes to the CEO to enact that part of the legislation. So, whilst they are technically under the legislation, in the care of the CEO, they are still in the care of minister.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 7.6.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If it is not interrupting question flow, member for Arafura, just a point of clarification. Minister, the member for Araluen and I were just talking. We have one tabled paper from the last session on the output. There was some back and forth at different times around tables and the September reporting. There was a commitment a few times to go back and put some things in table form, however ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Over and above those things, we believe we only have one document and we should have more. In particular, there was the one that could have been tabled in this output group, and you agreed, because it was a bit of a line ball call to table it, and that was about how many kids ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** That was going to be within 14 days.

**Ms CARNEY:** Was it? All right. Is it your understanding that you have only tabled one document?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** All right, thank you for clarifying that.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.3.

#### **Output 1.4 – Youth Services**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are there any questions on Output 1.4, Youth Services? Member for Araluen.

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, in February 2008, you will remember that your government announced various measures under the Youth Justice (Family Responsibility) Amendment Bill. You will remember it because there was a blaze of publicity including, I believe, the dissemination of glossies. How many family responsibility agreements have been entered into in the Northern Territory since the act came into existence?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, the youth justice strategy is a NT government framework for working with young people who are involved in antisocial behaviour, criminal or disruptive behaviour, and their families. The strategy recognises that there are a number of services for young people at risk. The Interagency Collaboration Panels in Darwin and Alice Springs have considered approximately 70 families since their inception. Approximately 22 of those families are no longer being actively reviewed by the Interagency Collaboration Panels for a variety of reasons, such as the young people been taken into full-time care of the Chief Executive of DHF, or the family leaving the geographical area mandated to be covered by the family. The Alice Springs ICP did not formally commence until January this year, but has considered approximately 12 families since that time.



**Ms CARNEY:** Sorry, what is the ICP?

**Ms McCARTHY:** The Interagency Collaboration Panel. Darwin has 38 current families, and Alice Springs 10 current families. While the recruitment of practitioners has slowed engagement with families, with the recent commencement of new managers for the Darwin and Alice Springs Family Support Centres, and practitioners for the Darwin centre, the numbers of case-managed families will increase. To date, six family responsibility agreements have been entered into by Police or the Family Support Centre, and a further three families are currently working with centre staff towards an agreement and associated case plan.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. That is six family responsibility agreements have been entered into? Is that Territory-wide?

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is correct.

**Ms CARNEY:** So that I am clear, there are six family responsibility agreements. These were the ones that, when the Attorney-General did his media release in February last year, said: 'The family responsibility agreements will hold parents accountable for their child's antisocial behaviour or criminal activity'? Six in the Northern Territory in 18 months or thereabouts, which is not very many, is it?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Six family responsibility agreements as we currently sit here, member for Araluen, but 38 families in Darwin and 10 in Alice Springs, who are also being considered.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. How many families have attended counselling or guidance programs since the act came into existence?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I will hand over to Jenny Scott, for your questions on the guidance and counselling programs.

**Ms SCOTT:** Families who are participating in the program - the numbers that the minister has referred to - many of those the lead case management would sit with a range of the authorised agent officers from the agencies specified. That could be the Education department, our Child Protection Service, Community Corrections, or the police through the Juvenile Diversion program, for example. Many of those families that we have talked about - the 70 that have been considered - would be participating in a range of programs in which would be counselling. For the families that are on family responsibility agreements, those agreements specify what it is that the family and or the young person are required to do.

**Ms CARNEY:** Do we need a break or something? I am sure the member for Arafura is just expressing surprise that only six family responsibility agreements have been entered into. Do I take it from your answer that you cannot actually provide a figure because it is a little difficult to define how many parents are attending counselling or guidance programs?

**Ms SCOTT:** The range of programs is varied so you would need to have a look at the families that have been case-managed through a range of agencies: what the exact programs those families are currently working with and agencies they are working with; whether in fact counselling is one of those components; or whether the families are involved in other activities. It is a more complex question that you are asking.

**Ms CARNEY:** It is more complex. Minister, having heard Ms Scott's answer, how do explain the former Attorney-General's media release dated 13 February last year in which he said *inter alia*: 'The contractual agreements will require parents to better monitor their children and may require parents to attend counselling or guidance programs'.

The government cannot measure it; you have no idea. Why did the minister say that, do you think?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, we have 70 families who are currently in the system in regard to the Interagency Collaboration Panels. Clearly, the case for each of those families is very different to the next case; therefore, they require specific focus as to what each of those families need with regard to the particular children in those families. It is important to recognise that our government has made a concerted effort to focus on the youth of the Northern Territory. Let us keep in mind that this is a program that is only in its infancy, coming up to one year, and we are working in a number of other areas with regard to youth in trying to tackle these concerns for the young people of the Northern Territory.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. How many of the paltry six family responsibility agreements have been entered into in Alice Springs?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, there were no family responsibility agreements in Alice Springs.

**Ms CARNEY:** None in Alice Springs. Okay. Minister, the former Attorney-General said in his media release on 13 February 2008 that family responsibility agreements would 'hold parents accountable for their child's antisocial behaviour or criminal activity'. Are you disappointed that there are only six in 15 months?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I recognise we have 70 families on the books across the Northern Territory, and I also recognise that with each of those families there are different situations for them. I am not unhappy with six family responsibility agreements because I know that there is a tremendous amount of work being done with 70 families across the Northern Territory.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many family responsibility agreements have been breached or broken?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, David Ashbridge will respond to that.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** There is one that has been terminated and none which have been breached.

**Ms CARNEY:** Was it a mutual termination?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Yes.

**Ms CARNEY:** Was that because the outcome was successful?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Without going into the personalities and the confidentiality, it is suffice to say that the family's circumstances changed.

**Ms CARNEY:** How many parental responsibility orders have been issued since the passing of the legislation?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, the Youth Justice Court considered one family's circumstances to determine whether a family responsibility order was warranted, but the court decided that the family did not need to be placed on an order, so there are no family responsibility orders at present.

**Ms CARNEY:** There are six family responsibility agreements and no parental responsibility orders entered into. Do you accept that your youth strategy in this area is a complete and utter failure?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I do not accept that we have failed in regard to youth across the Northern Territory. We are in discussion with 70 families across the Northern Territory who want to see a difference for their young people. It does not necessarily mean that these young people have to progress on to an order, but it is about ensuring that this department and my staff are working with the families across

the Northern Territory with the young people who need the support to find a better road ahead.

**Ms CARNEY:** You would be aware, minister, that the government spin, or publicity, at the time, was very focused on this and what a difference it would make to Territorians. The minister at the time, in and out of the parliament, and other members of the government said things like: 'Territorians are sick of parents who refuse to accept their fundamental responsibility to raise their children with respect for the community, for the police and the law, and that this is a comprehensive plan that will ensure parents are accountable for their children's behaviour'. In 15 months or thereabouts, you have six family responsibility agreements and no family responsibility orders. Would you make a report to the parliament in August, giving an update on these matters and apologising to Territorians for all the misleading publicity undertaken by the government?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, we have not misled the people of the Northern Territory. In fact, we are working with 70 families across the Northern Territory, with their young children, in wanting to ensure that they have a clear direction as to how to work out the problems. Of those families, there are currently 38 families in Darwin and 10 in Alice Springs, to name a few. I want you to understand that we are working with the families in a comprehensive way.

**Ms CARNEY:** The government also said that police may seek a family responsibility order where a youth has been charged with an offence or breached a bail condition. There was good publicity, no doubt a few good headlines. How many youths have been charged with an offence or breached bail conditions, where police have then sought a family responsibility order?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I will hand you over to David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The single case that the minister referred to was initiated by police. That is the sole case.

**Ms CARNEY:** It may be the same answer, but I would like an answer. How many times have police made an application for a family responsibility order?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I recognise the importance of that question, but I will point out that it is a question for the Police minister.

**Ms CARNEY:** I asked some questions of the Attorney-General the other day, and she said, no, no, no, questions about family responsibility orders and family responsibility agreements are questions for you. This is about family responsibility orders. Surely, you know this information?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I have given you the response in regards to how many orders we do have, which is zero.

**Ms CARNEY:** I am asking about how many applications have been sought. You will appreciate the difference, because you do not want to have a situation where 50 applications have been made, and all of them failed. I suspect that is not the case. I suspect no applications have been made. I feel certain that you would know the answer, particularly, with the piece of paper your offsider has just passed to you.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I have just received information from my staff, and the answer is one.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. Police have made one application, and was that the application that we were talking about earlier the one family responsibility order, or was that a separate and unsuccessful application?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No, it is the same.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. Nearly finished. You will remember at the time that the Criminal Lawyers Association had much to say. The government was again well served by helpful headlines, and good kicks in the media for - notwithstanding some criticism – talking about taking the plasma TVs from parents who were not doing the right thing with their problematic children. How many TVs have been seized, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge, member for Araluen.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The answer is zero.

**Ms CARNEY:** Have any other assets been seized?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No.

**Ms CARNEY:** It is not looking like a good strategy, minister, all of this youth justice thing. We look forward to some better results. Would you agree that the results do not in any way, shape, or form match the spin undertaken by your government at the outset? In other words, what the government said this would achieve, has not materialised.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I completely disagree with your version of how this looks. I have said at the outset that 70 families across the Northern Territory are a part of this process. One of the important things for this committee to remember and to recognise, with what our department is doing, is to work with all the families across the Northern Territory who need this support for the young people. That is exactly what we are doing.

**Ms CARNEY:** The government said - and I think the minister may have said this in parliament - that the Youth Justice Family Responsibility Bill would prevent juvenile offenders being referred to diversion programs more than twice. Do you know how many juveniles have been diverted twice, not more than twice, but twice in the last 12 months?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge, member for Araluen.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The answer is that is activity managed by the police.

**Ms CARNEY:** Again, there is part of the Youth Justice Strategy that the Attorney-General said 'no' that she cannot answer that you can, and now you are saying ask the police. I understand this is meant to be a whole-of-government strategy. Why is it, minister, there are some really important parts to this apparently important Youth Justice Strategy that you do not know about?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, we are more than happy to answer those questions, which are appropriately positioned for us to answer. It is not an indication of our fault that you have not put those questions to the appropriate minister.

**Ms CARNEY:** The Attorney-General, the Deputy Chief Minister, was at pains the other day to talk about the change in the Administrative Arrangements that makes this your stuff, minister. I am astounded that you do not know, that you are refusing to answer this part, under the guise that it should be asked somewhere else. I just make that point; I will not press it any further. I would like to think that next time around, you will have your head sufficiently around this part of the Youth Justice Strategy. I am very disappointed.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Clearly, again we disagree, member for Araluen. I know that we do have the responses that are appropriate for this output and for this department, and we are more than happy to respond as we have.

**Ms CARNEY:** I do have more questions, but I will leave it at that in the interests of time. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mr STYLES:** The mandatory reporting of under-age sexual activity forces adults to report to authorities anyone under the age of 16 having sex. My understanding is that there have been a number of approaches to you in relation to this particular legislation. Can you enlighten the committee as to where we are at with that?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Only last week, the working group was formed between the Northern Territory Police and members of the medical fraternity in order to progress what is a concern in the *Care and Protection of Children Act*. One of the things that I would like to alert to the committee is that the *Care And Protection Of Children Act* was a significant act which required incredible consultation in the lead-up to that act coming into parliament and, with that, obviously at the time, complete bipartisan support with the member for Araluen and the then Minister for Children and Families, the member for Arafura.

We want to ensure that the overall intent of the act is to protect and care for our children across the Northern Territory, highlighting the fact that, within our regions, there is a tremendous amount of sexual activity that goes on, with the abuse of children under the age of 16 by perpetrators much older than 16.

One of the things that has come to light since this act was implemented is that the Northern Territory Police have been able to identify certain concerns within the community as a result of this act; the fact that there has been mandatory reporting. What I have asked both the police and the medical profession to do is to work together to see that, if we are going to make any amendments to this act, I want to ensure that it is amendment that all sides are aware of and we have not undermined or watered down in any way the intent of the overall act.

**Mr STYLES:** I note you say you have spoken to police and people in the medical profession. Has there been any representation from social workers, parents, health workers or school nurses by any chance?

**Ms McCARTHY:** There have been numerous letters from the medical profession *per se* - the AMA, different GPs who have expressed their concerns, and AMSANT has also expressed concerns. From memory - and I need to check on this - I have not had a direct letter from a nurse, but I have had a discussion with one school nurse in regard to questions surrounding it. Overall, the issues are largely from the medical fraternity.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, the Territory is currently facing an unprecedented housing crisis with people being turned away from the Territory even though they have secured employment, because they are unable to find accommodation. Can you enlighten us as to what steps the government may have taken to identify the potential increase in availability of both public and private housing through the rapid development of a range of affordable and suitable accommodation options?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I would be more than happy to talk to you about that. Unfortunately, we have already gone through that output, which was the first output and covered homelessness and supported accommodation; but I am more than happy outside of estimates to talk to you directly on that.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you, minister. Given there is a global financial crisis occurring at the moment, and the fact that many young Territorians do not have motor vehicles, have you instigated any inquiries and reviews into the transport needs of young Territorians?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Sanderson, there are issues for youth, and if you are looking at transport *per se* may I suggest you put that question to the Minister for Transport.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, I would like to draw your attention to Budget Paper No 3, on page 204. I note you are starting to refer me to other output groups and other ministers, but under the heading Youth Services, middle of page 204, it says:

*Monitor and coordinate government services and programs for young Territorians, develop and deliver initiatives that improve the wellbeing of youth and facilitate their contribution to government decision-making.*

That part of it in relation to improvement of wellbeing of youth; when you look at the output groups here, I note that the portfolio responsibilities - this is on page 14 of the actual estimates schedule - you are down as the Minister for Young Territorians. We are in Youth Services, but this is the only opportunity I can see in here where we can actually talk about a lot of the things that affect young Territorians. So, in relation to some of the transport needs, I am sure other ministers look after the buses and things like that, but all I am after is: has your department specifically done anything in relation to looking after the needs and the transport needs of young Territorians?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Can I just clarify - just one minute second, minister, before you answer, and obviously you are welcome to answer - we are here to scrutinise the budget which is why we go by output and we are at Output 1.4, Youth Services. Minister, you have the call.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I beg you pardon, I did not hear that, Mr Chairman.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I was just clarifying that we are going through a scrutiny of budget processes which is why we go by output. We are at Output 1.4, Youth Services. I was clarifying where we are at and why we are at that spot.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Sanderson, I certainly appreciate your interest in this area, and by no means am I throwing that off. I am aware the issues of transport are something you should specifically ask the Minister for Transport, but what I can say in regards to page 204, the monitoring and coordination of government services and programs, as you have alluded to in your question, is our government has done a tremendous amount of work regarding National Youth Week. We have a terrific number of services in regard to non-government organisations and youth services. We have the youth camps; the youth grants, and the Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians which are able to provide directly to me the concerns that affect our youth across the Northern Territory. What I can do in order to look at some of these areas of interest to you, is I have Debra Zupp, who is responsible for the area of youth, with me.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you. Minister, I have heard from the Police - although the time with the commissioner was cut fairly short, so there are a number of Police things, generally, were not dealt with. My interest is in the youth issues here and the improvement and wellbeing of youth, the safety on buses of youth, and the safety of young Territorians at bus exchanges. These are some of the initiatives that I hope, perhaps through the Youth Round Table, you could enlighten me as to what they have come up with, and is there any scheduling of programs to be rolled out under this current budget?

**Ms McCARTHY:** You are obviously referring to some of the incidents we have seen regarding bus travel. The Northern Territory government would be concerned about any Territorian travelling on buses or any transport to feel that they are safe and there are no issues of violence. This is something that our government is absolutely committed to ensuring and jumps on straightaway in regard to the kind of problems we have; that anyone travelling on any transport is be able to travel safely. I will hand over to Debra Zupp in regard to youth initiatives.

**Ms ZUPP:** Debra Zupp, Director, Youth Services. Safety on buses and transport is an issue that has been raised with us by young people across the Territory through the Youth Minister's Round Table and other consultative mechanisms. It is definitely an issue that government is responding to through the Transport department with the safety officers on buses. Another issue which has been raised, not only to the Minister for Young Territorians, but also to the Transport minister, is not only safety issues,

but also accessibility to transport, particularly in the rural regions. You may recall the Youth Round Table last year and the year before raised that and actually undertook it as a community-based project and passed the advice on to the Minister for Transport. That was responded to by increasing transport routes in rural areas.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Can I confirm that on Friday morning we have minister Gerry McCarthy and two of the outputs to which he will be speaking are Output 3.3, Transport Safety and Output 3.4, Public Transport.

**Mr STYLES:** Chairman, is that for everyone, or is it specifically for youth?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** You could ask your youth questions out of it.

**Mr STYLES:** I am seeking clarification ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I was not ruling your question out, and you did hone your question down to the Youth Round Table. I was pointing out there will be Output 3.3 for Transport Safety, and Output 3.4 for Public Transport on Friday morning, which will cover youth as well as other people who catch buses.

**Mr STYLES:** I seek clarification because the issues I am trying to ascertain here deal with youth and programs specifically designed to assist youth, as opposed to ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I believe we are working through that. Your last question was to policy and the Youth Round Table, and that is fine. I was clarifying for the purpose of everyone here, so you can continue the line of questioning. I am saying, as we worked through that answer it was pointed out by Ms Zupp that there were some aspects she could answer, and other aspects she pointed you to the Transport Minister.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Mr Chairman, I would like to let the member for Sanderson know I am more than happy to take issues on youth, and also alert you to the fact, if you want more details in regard to transport, that is obviously minister Gerry McCarthy.

**Mr STYLES:** I appreciate that.

**Ms CARNEY:** He might say flick it to Youth, but that is the risk you run.

**Mr STYLES:** True. I am aware of that Mr Chairman, thank you. Minister, these are issues which have been raised with me by youth, and I have committed to these youth that I will put their issues to the minister in estimates. I will run through these and we can determine whether you will answer them or flick them off to another minister.

Bus timetables, in relation to young people who do not have transport getting to and from Palmerston to Royal Darwin Hospital. There are a number of people who have approached me about this and say they spend half their day, and sometimes all day, simply travelling to the hospital for an outpatient appointment and, then, having to wait for the buses to come back, because they do not link up. I understand the Minister for Transport will probably, and can, address a particular timetabling issue, but are there any strategies in place to get the youth, who do not have access to motor cars, to and from Royal Darwin Hospital?

**Ms McCARTHY:** As minister for Seniors, it is a question I also have from seniors in the area with regard to Royal Darwin Hospital. I cannot give you the answer in regard to bus timetables; it is an area that comes under the Minister for Transport. I am more than happy to work with you on this because it is a common request I also get from my constituents in the ministerial portfolios I have in Seniors and Youth.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you, minister. I can probably cross that question off the seniors list as well, because it is the same question there.

Moving on, minister. A large number of youth and parents have approached me in relation to driving licences, which comes under Motor Vehicle Registry, but there is an issue with youth being delayed sometimes for months, which prevents them getting employment. I am wondering whether this has come up at the Youth Round Table as an issue youth are facing, where they cannot get jobs because they cannot get their driver's licences due to there being insufficient people. Have you made any representations to Cabinet to perhaps increase staff to help alleviate this problem?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Sanderson, can I just get clarification on when you say they do not get their licences? Are you saying it is taking six, 12 months - a long period of time?

**Mr STYLES:** It has taken at times weeks, if not months, to get another appointment if you fail. The problem young people express to me is they go – perhaps I can just explain the problem so it makes the question a bit easier. A young person goes to the Motor Vehicle Registry, they sit for their test, they are told by the examiner that they have to do this and have to do that, so they fail. They make an appointment, and because there are insufficient examiners, they have to go back weeks later. Then, because they do the things the examiner told them to do on the first occasion, the second examiner fails them for the very things the first examiner told them to do. I have two cases which have come to my office of that occurring, and I have had anecdotal evidence from others that it is occurring.

We have young people who are trying to get jobs, and they are bitterly disappointed in the system because the system has let them down due to inconsistencies and, it would appear, there are not enough people to actually get through the process in a timely manner.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Just before you answer, minister - and obviously you are welcome to answer - on Friday morning when Mr Gerry McCarthy comes before the committee. Output 3.1, Road Transport, deals with providing drivers licences and vehicle registration services. But, minister, you have the call.

**Ms McCARTHY:** If I can respond to the member for Sanderson. I am not sure if he is listening to me or listening to the member for Araluen.

**Mr STYLES:** Sorry, minister.

**Ms CARNEY:** He is very clever; he can actually do two things at once.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I do appreciate you raising this issue. I am alarmed if there are young people who are not able to take on jobs because they are not getting their licences. I believe that is a real cause for concern. I would be happy to take that on notice and pursue it with the Transport Minister.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you very much, minister, I would appreciate it if you would do that.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is that a question on notice ?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am taking it on notice. My staff has recognised that, and we will pursue it.

**Mr STYLES:** Can we get that on notice, please?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Excuse me, sorry, I am saying I have taken it on board. It is something I will look into.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you, minister. Youth facilities – bored youth are a target for drug peddlers, antisocial behaviour and criminal activities; in some cases that can lead to juvenile prostitution. Can you tell us what youth facilities are budgeted for in the greater Darwin area in the current budget?



**Ms McCARTHY:** We do want to ensure there are events and activities in place for young people across the Northern Territory. For the Darwin area, we have a number of services available. Through our non-government organisation we have youth services such as Anglicare, the Australian Red Cross Society, Manjimup and Mission Australia. I will be able to get more details for you from Debra Zupp.

**Ms ZUPP:** The Office of Youth Affairs also manages a Youth Grants Program which is an annual program targeted at recreational and youth development and leadership opportunities for young people. It is divided into three grant rounds a year to coincide with the school holidays and National Youth Week. There are a range of activities provided to youth organisations and directly to young people through that program.

This financial year we have undertaken or funded nearly 100 youth activities, and it is one of the few programs which young people can access directly. If a group of young people get together and want to plan an activity in their area they can apply to us directly for funding; they do not have to be auspiced, so that is a point of difference with other grant programs. Evaluation of that program, which has been running for many years, indicates a really high level of success.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, when you say there are 100 youth activities, can you just give us a couple of examples of that particular list? Do you have that list available? It would be great if can have a look at that.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Would you like me to read through those 100 activities?

**Mr STYLES:** No, could you table it please, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I can certainly give you a few examples if you like, member for Sanderson.

**Mr STYLES:** If you actually have the list, can you table it?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, is it in a form that can be tabled? Does it have personal notes on it?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, it is in a form that can be tabled.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you, that will be fabulous.

Minister, I went to - I think you were there also - the AGM of Dawn House late last year. They discussed numbers of families who they could not accommodate. My recollection is it was somewhere around 352 families, involving about 608 women and children. In relation to those young people who were turned away from the emergency accommodation, do we actually have any programs to support them?

**Ms McCARTHY:** In supported accommodation?

**Mr STYLES:** No, because the supported accommodation was not there, is there anything else in relation to how we can support those youth? Perhaps if I explain. These youth have gone, in some instances, back to the families they actually came away from. Are there any particular youth programs we can involve these youth in - one, to give them somewhere positive to go and, second, to assist in the education of these young people with strategies as to how they might survive these things, perhaps in relation to domestic violence, physical and social abuse, things like that?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am happy to talk about it. I recognise most of your questions come in Output 1.5, when we are talking about domestic and family violence and you raised Dawn House AGM; so we can scrutinise it in more detail there.

**Mr STYLES:** If you choose to do it in that output, I am happy.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, happy to do that.

**Mr STYLES:** As part of the ALP Youth Platform 2008, there is a commitment to fund public education programs in relation to health, sexuality and lifestyle. Minister, what programs are currently in place, and do we have any financial amounts spent on these programs?

**Ms McCARTHY:** We do. I will have one of my staff respond to your question. Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** In the sense you are talking about, youth policy is across government, so we are talking about things which might be happening in other portfolio areas. In relation to our output area, we fund a specific youth health service at Anglicare in Darwin. Many of the youth programs we fund operate a range of youth community education, or youth initiative type services; for example, they might deliver the Mooditj training or other young parenting programs, those types of things. There is a range of strategies that are employed within the services we fund, and some of the sexual health areas in the Health department do specific community education or youth education activities; similarly through the Education department, there maybe a range of youth-focused activities.

**Mr STYLES:** Does that mean that you guys have input into Education and Health in relation to those programs? Do you actually get input into them? Can you contribute to what goes into those particular programs across other agencies? Do they consult you?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am trying to understand the question. You are talking about our whole-of-government approach with youth in regard to Education and Health. Naturally, depending on the organisation - in this particular case Jenny Scott mentioned Anglicare - if the funding has come from us there would be requirements within that. I will hand over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** Yes, we do when it is a service we fund; we have specific requirements there. But in relation to our consultation across other agencies, the Office of Youth Affairs is invited at different times to participate, and our officers are regularly involved in other youth-focused events or forums or policy development processes. In that sense it is a two-way exchange.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I can also add from the Health perspective, the Sexual Health Unit works closely with the Education department in developing curriculum in this area as well.

**Mr STYLES:** The health programs for youth, are there any programs and delivery of responsible use of technology that incurs cost, specifically in relation to mobile phones and credit facilities? Is there a program that youth can access? The reasoning behind the question is so many of them run up enormous mobile phone and credit card bills.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Do you mean like an education program for how young people should be careful of going into contracts with mobile companies?

**Mr STYLES:** Yes, apart from their parents trying to tell them, are there any other programs?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand over to Debra Zupp.

**Ms ZUPP:** The Office of Consumer Affairs runs some financial management programs specifically targeted towards young people. They include use of mobile phones, pitfalls to watch out for when signing contracts for mobile phones, and other related documentation.

**Mr STYLES:** Does that go across through to Education, in schools and things like that?

**Ms ZUPP:** I understand it does, yes.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Mr Chairman, if I can ask some questions on youth, please. Minister, one of the questions was the list of programs under Youth Services including those only available in one region. The family responsibility agreement and the parental responsibility orders are multifaceted in agencies and the responsibility of agencies such as FACS, police, and the Attorney-General's Department. I understand, there are also non-government agencies involved in that service mix. How do the agencies and the non-government agencies communicate in dealing with youth issues and, specifically, to the outputs of juvenile diversion and the problems with youth under the budget paper?

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is correct in terms of our inter-agency panel. We also have Education, which you did not mention, in that inter-agency panel. I will hand over to David Ashbridge in regards to the outside services.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I am pleased to get an opportunity to return to this question because the outcomes of the youth strategy reflect a strategy, just not a specific outcome of family responsibility agreements. There are a range of different outcomes which people should be aware of. The strategy of convening a panel to assess youth brings together a variety of government agencies that sit down and coordinate information and, as a consequence of that sharing of information and coordination, there has been a substantial improvement and increased access to a range of services across the whole spectrum of youth. That includes the non-government organisations that you are referring to, member for Arafura.

It also relates to the substantial increase in numbers of people being referred to, or using, youth camps and a whole range of initiatives which have shown substantial increase in access and utilisation across the whole spectrum of youth services. Part of that spectrum is the non-government sector. To assess a strategy solely on the basis of the number of family responsibility agreements does not reflect assessment of the strategy.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Following on from that, minister, which is the lead agency amongst all of these players - I heard you say, minister, you work with 70 families on the books – that case manages those families through that system?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge will respond to that but, before I pass over to him, I can say what we need the committee here to keep in mind with the Interagency Collaboration Panel is, it is about every single agency involved with the care and protection of children being responsible. If a child is at school and needs to be looked at by the Interagency Collaboration Panel, then it comes under the Education department to take the lead for that particular child. I will hand over to David Ashbridge for further detail.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The minister is correct. When a case comes to the cross-government panel there is a family support position and they analyse the case and a decision is made as to who the appropriate lead agency is to take that forward, given the circumstances of an individual child. Should it not be possible to work out the best lead agency, then the default position is the NT Families and Children which will take on that role. There are circumstances where it is appropriate for Education to take the lead, and there are circumstances where it is appropriate for Police etcetera, depending. But there have been additional resources put in and greater coordination, and the lead agency is determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Ms McCARTHY:** To add to that, member for Arafura, there is one thing I want to see, as minister for this area, that all agencies are responsible, that we are making sure it is about the child first, and it is not always a case about the system having the lead on it. It is about everyone being aware of the needs of a particular child in their area.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I have no doubt as the minister you would want that. However, the ideal and the reality, if we look at a situation in a school, for instance - and the CEO was saying DEET would take that responsibility. We are constantly seeing youth falling between the cracks. What I am trying to

gauge from this questioning - anyone can have an inter-governmental committee and agency – is what and who is the lead agency to pick that up and to ensure that we are not seeing these kids falling through the gaps? Surely, it is not the amount of money being spent. We are talking about a lot of money in appropriation in the budget to deal with this, yet, we are still seeing youth falling through the gaps.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The agency which brings the youth to the panel is not necessarily the agency which will lead the panel as the lead agency. A discussion is held between the various agencies, and one of the things we have found is a number of these youth are known to a number of agencies prior to coming to the panel. The first thing that happens is a coordination exercise of existing activity, which is a good thing. Then, there is an outcome as a result of that as to which is the most appropriate agency to take the lead. In terms of falling through the cracks, that will not happen, because if it is clear that a case, or a youth, needs coordination then the Northern Territory Families and Children will take up that role.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** A last question, minister. How is your department involved in the development of the program in Alice Springs which is implementing dormitory-style accommodation for children as young as eight who are repeatedly found on the streets in the early hours of the morning? If you are not, why not?

**Ms McCARTHY:** You are referring to the Alice Springs Youth Action Plan, member for Arafura?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** There is an appropriation under the budget paper on page 200, where you say:

*Additional funding of \$0.54m in 2008-09 and \$1.12m ongoing from 2009-10 to expand emergency accommodation for young people at risk in Alice Springs.*

**Ms McCARTHY:** Thank you, member for Arafura, I will hand you over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** As part of the Alice Springs Youth Action Plan there are two components that relate to accommodation. One is the dormitory-style that relates predominantly around school, and Education is the lead on that, but we are participating in that progress. Then there is the expansion of the additional safe accommodation for younger children which, I believe, is what you are asking. Our agency has the lead responsibility for that. We are expanding the capacity of two existing services we fund to provide that type of care in Alice Springs; so those two services will each have expanded capacity as a result of the increased investment.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** What is the involvement of the non-government sector with those services?

**Ms McCARTHY:** This has been a comprehensive plan we put together in the beginning, as you may be aware, with both government and opposition members in Alice Springs. It is the non-government sector we have encouraged to be a part of this. I will hand you over to Jenny Scott for the details of the NGOs.

**Ms SCOTT:** The expanded emergency accommodation is with two existing NGO providers, so one ...

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Who?

**Ms SCOTT:** The contracts are still under negotiation.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Okay, that is fine. But there are two NGO providers?

**Ms SCOTT:** And they are both NGOs, yes.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Minister, you can answer this or not, as a general question in terms of youth.

Given the Northern Territory Emergency Response in our remote Aboriginal communities and the issue of welfare quarantining and problems with youth in many of our urban centres, would you, as the minister for Community Services, as part of dealing with the issues of youth, when you talk about family responsibility agreements and parental orders, look at whether that would become part of the equation of parental responsibility orders?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Sorry, you have connected the NTER, member for Arafura, so I am just trying to work out what the connection is. Sorry, I do not understand.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Given the emergency response in our remote Aboriginal communities and the issue of welfare quarantining - which is part of the special measures that came from the emergency response so children and youth would benefit from that funding - and given the problems we see in our urban centres, would that mechanism come in as part of the family responsibility agreements or parental responsibility orders? Have there been discussions between the Northern Territory government agencies involved, and the Commonwealth government in relation to this issue?

**Ms McCARTHY:** What I am understanding from your question, member for Arafura, is that you are looking at an expansion of the NTER into Darwin ...

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Not NTER, specifically the welfare quarantining?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Which, I understand, is a part of the NTER.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** It is a measure under that.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes. I would have to take the question on notice.

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**Question on Notice 7.7**

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I will try and frame this. Minister, one of the special measures under the Northern Territory Emergency Response was the issue of welfare quarantining for the benefit of youth and children in our remote Aboriginal communities. Given some of the problems we have in our urban centres, would you, as the minister, or the agency, in the work between the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth, consider bringing in that special measure as part of dealing with youth problems in our urban centres?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are you are happy to take that on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will take the question on notice. I do see it as a question about the expansion of the NTER, so I may need to discuss it a bit more in detail with the member for Arafura.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I do not want the whole intervention put in. My personal view is that maybe it could happen in Darwin. I believe there are probably areas in Darwin where you could intervene. I am talking about one small component of that, which is the special measure in relation to welfare quarantining.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will take it, Mr Chairman.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 7.7.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The member for Araluen had a few more questions on Output 1.4, Youth Services.

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes. Thank you.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Before you start, the member for Nhulunbuy will be Chairing.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. I want to return to an issue in relation to family responsibility agreements. I refer you, minister, to exactly what your colleague, the Attorney-General, said a day or so ago in estimates when I asked her about family responsibility agreements. She said:

*The member for Araluen should direct these questions to the Minister for Children and Families, because the Youth Justice and family responsibility agreements come under her purview.*

I also refer you to page 204 of the 2009-10 budget papers. At the bottom there is a footnote, which says, 'Juvenile justice function is planned to move from the Department of Justice to the Department of Health and Families in 2009-10'.

That has happened, so I am going to ask you again, minister - and I suggest to you that there is no other interpretation imaginable with this; I would like some information - how many juveniles have been diverted twice - not more than twice, but twice - in the last 12 months? How many juveniles were diverted once in the Northern Territory in the last 12 months? And, finally, are there any juveniles in the Territory who have been diverted more than twice in the last 12 months?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Araluen, I am not trying to avoid your question. I said in my previous answer this does come under the data with police. I am happy to pursue that so we can provide you with the information.

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### Question on Notice 7.8

**Ms CARNEY:** Two things: I will make it a formal question on notice, because with that I will at least have, arguably, a snowflake's chance in hell of actually getting the answer. Second, I make the comment - and I will not push it more than this - that I am surprised and disappointed that you do not have this information. Perhaps you could make a note of it for next year, because it is in your area. My question on notice is as follows.

Minister, how many juveniles have been diverted twice - not more than twice, but twice - in the last 12 months? How many juveniles were diverted once in the Northern Territory in the last 12 months? Are there any other juveniles who have been diverted more than twice in the last 12 months?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, that is question No 7.8.

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**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, I would like to go back to the area my colleague, the member for Sanderson, raised before in relation to the reporting of sexual activity of people under age. You would remember, not only did I write to you on 29 May with a couple of suggested ways of fixing the problem, but I also spoke in parliament last week about the need to fix this problem, and how it was an unintended consequence of the changes to the *Care And Protection Of Children Act* that the member for Arafura and I worked on very closely about 18 months ago. Indeed, you have since given me a letter this morning answering my letter of 29 May, and in that letter you advised a working group has been formed.

My question is: by setting up a working group to provide recommendations on this issue, it suggests there is more than one view. Is it the case, minister, that government will consider retaining the requirement to report under-aged sexual activity?

**Ms McCARTHY:** We are concerned about the responses which have been brought forward to us from the medical fraternity, as I outlined in my response to the member for Sanderson. It is my view that we need to ensure there is a comprehensive understanding of what any amendment would mean in regard to this change. The overall intent, as you and the member for Arafura know, is the protection

of our children right across the Northern Territory but, in particular, in our regions where we know tremendous sexual cases go on, and we are concerned that these children are protected.

I am not going to be rushed into any decision to amend an act which I know has taken a considerable amount of time between the previous minister and yourself during the debate in parliament. I am not going to rush through an amendment without clearly hearing from those who want to have a say in it; and the Northern Territory Police are one of those groups.

**Ms CARNEY:** Thank you. Nothing else on that one.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.4.

### **Output 1.5 – Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I now call for questions on Output 1.5, Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services. Are there any questions?

**Ms CARNEY:** Minister, I am saying this to you and your staff as well; I have an enormous number of questions on this and I am greatly interested in it. However, time constraints are such that I just cannot, and I am so sorry since you have been sitting here for such a long time. Perhaps I can attend a briefing after estimates and get the information to these questions.

We have one hour and 10 minutes left; can I just make a point very clearly. I have an enormous number of questions in this area and all members of the Assembly know how important it is to me, but I also have responsibilities to my colleagues and need to honour certain promises and undertakings I have made to them.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Not just one question?

**Ms CARNEY:** I have hundreds of questions, minister.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I agree with the member for Araluen, if we can get briefings and go through this, because it would be good to get the programs and the details of that break-up.

**Ms CARNEY:** Can I ask you this question so that you can put it on the record: would you be willing to provide both the member for Arafura and me with a detailed briefing so we can ask the questions we obviously both wanted to ask? Would you be able to provide that briefing, say, in the next eight weeks?

**Ms McCARTHY:** What I will do is commit to a briefing for any member in the area of family violence and sexual assault. I will not give you when; we need to work out just when it is possible.

**Ms CARNEY:** In a timely ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** As soon as possible. If there are any particular questions, member for Araluen, you would like to provide now, as we did in the last briefing, so we can have a comprehensive briefing.

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, I think my colleague ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** There was a question from the member for Sanderson ...

**Ms CARNEY:** Yes, he did have one in particular, but he has others as well. He has Output Groups 3.3 and 3.4 and he is keen to get to them, but I believe he has one question in this output area. Is that correct?

**Mr STYLES:** Yes. Minister, I would just like to go back to the question in relation to Dawn House and the families that, unfortunately, had to be turned away and the young people who have to go back into those situations. Is there any strategy from your department to fix that issue?

**Ms McCARTHY:** This is an important area, a big area that the whole parliament has been supportive of in terms of domestic violence and family violence across the Northern Territory. With the \$15m we will provide over the next three years to supporting and resource shelters across the Northern Territory, there will be scope to look specifically at that – and I will hand over to Jenny Scott for that.

In the meantime, we can provide, along with the briefing for the member for Araluen, a more detailed breakdown of this area for you.

**Ms SCOTT:** All the specific women's crisis services have a focused children's worker. They are called a children's worker, but work with the young people that might be in that type of facility. They do a range of programs, and there has been some really fantastic work that Dawn House, in particular, has done for the young people, using music, art, and a range of other mediums to engage young people. Those workers also have the capacity and, as the minister said, we are hoping to expand that to be able to work in an outreach capacity with young people, not just for the time they are actually in the shelter. Then there are specific activities happening through other non-government agencies which are focused on the effects of family violence on young people.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, out of that \$15m, if my memory serves me correctly about 352 families were, unfortunately, turned away from Dawn House. Are there any figures as to whether those families were accommodated anywhere else? The figures I was given show there were over 600 people involved in that so, obviously, women and children had gone to Dawn House - that is nearly one per day they, unfortunately, had to turn away.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Before I hand over to Jenny Scott, I am aware of the issues where people have been turned away. I have visited most women's shelters across the Northern Territory and I spent time, especially, at the women's shelter in Alice Springs. We have provided extra support to the shelters to cope with this. I will hand you over to Jenny Scott.

**Ms SCOTT:** The turn away data is kept at each service and it is collated into a survey, in a snapshot sense, twice a year. We use that to help inform how each service is travelling. We have also been using that, along with other demand information, to inform an investment plan which is with the minister, for how the new funding should be allocated and, in addition, how we might need to inform the allocation of the new homeless funding which has come under the national partnership agreement with the Australian government.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.5.

### **Output 1.6 – Children's Commissioner**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I will now call for questions on Output 1.6, Children's Commissioner. Are there any questions?

**Ms CARNEY:** There are questions however, because of time constraints, I will not be asking them today.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.6.

### **Output 3.2 – Mental Health Services**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I now call for questions on Output 3.2, Mental Health Services.



**Ms CARNEY:** Before we do, this completes my questions this morning. I am now passing to my colleagues and I thank people from the department who always put in an amazing amount of work and effort for estimates. I am sorry we cannot always get to everything.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I reiterate those thanks to officers of the Department of Health and Families.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Madam Chair, I welcome to the table Jenny Cleary and Bronwyn Hendry from the department.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** We now call for questions on Output 3.2, Mental Health Services. Are there any questions?

**Mr CONLAN:** Minister, confirming from yesterday; we spoke to the Health Minister regarding beds dedicated to treating mental health patients in each of the Territory's hospitals. It was 694 - is that right? Sorry, 694 beds across the Territory and 35 of those beds are dedicated to mental health patients in Territory hospitals?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Grotorex, the figures I have in front me here: mental health inpatient beds 34 in the Northern Territory, 26 in Darwin, eight in Alice Springs; and we made our major announcement of the secured care facilities which will see an increase of six extra beds in Alice Springs, and five in Darwin.

**Mr CONLAN:** Would I be able to get a copy of those figures?

**Ms McCARTHY:** They are just my notes; they are not a structured set of figures.

**Mr CONLAN:** So, eight in Alice Springs, 26 in Darwin and an extra six on the way?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Correct; and an extra six for Alice Springs.

**Mr CONLAN:** What is the time frame for those?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand you over to the department, I am not sure exactly. I would like it as soon as possible, but I will see where we are in operational terms. David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** There is a construction program aligned to this, which we are hopeful will be completed in the financial year 2009-10. There are operational dollars attached to those services. Meanwhile, the operational dollars are able to be implemented ahead of the beds being deployed, but we are hoping to have the beds ready as a result of construction program during the course of 2009-10.

**Mr CONLAN:** Can you tell us the occupancy rates of those beds, minister?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Across the whole of the Northern Territory in 2008-09, approximately 97%.

**Mr CONLAN:** 97%?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Approximately.

**Mr CONLAN:** In that case, how many beds in other medical wards, minister, are regularly required to cope with the overflow of health patients?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I need to clarify this question. A mental health condition may not be the primary

reason people enter hospital. A person with a mental health condition, but not acutely unwell through mental health, may break a leg and go into an orthopaedic ward. So, it is not the number of patients we know of with mental health issues, it is specifically those who have an acute mental health problem. My understanding is that scenario happens on occasions in Alice Springs, but I will ask Bronwyn Hendry to explore it.

**Ms HENDRY:** Bronwyn Hendry, Director of Mental Health. We do have the capacity to increase the number of people above the official bed capacity in our inpatient units. We try not to do that in Alice Springs because it is quite a small unit. Sometimes, we do have people in general hospital beds with a mental health nurse specialist and with treatment provided by the mental health team. Often, the decision about where someone is best treated is made according to other co-morbidities they might be experiencing, such as physical health problems or the need for medical treatment, medical tests for particular conditions, or their age. There are various considerations in terms of where they are best housed. In Darwin, we tend to go over the numbers rather than have people in medical beds because we do have a greater capacity in that unit.

**Mr CONLAN:** So the question was: how many beds? Do we have a figure on that?

**Ms HENDRY:** It is not possible to get those figures from the current hospital statistics due to the way people's diagnoses are coded. In a general hospital there can be more than one diagnosis. Also, you might come to hospital, for instance, for self-harm which results in a broken leg, but you might be coded as a person with a broken leg requiring orthopaedic care. So, it is too difficult to actually tease out those figures from the general hospital statistics.

**Mr CONLAN:** So is there no capacity at all to get those figures?

**Ms HENDRY:** If you went through every file and did a manual audit on every person who had been admitted and might have in their range of diagnoses a mental health condition, then you could, but it would be very time-consuming.

**Mr CONLAN:** Minister, can you tell us, in that case, if some patients are being moved into some of the other medical wards, perhaps as a result of self-harm or whatever it might be, how many security staff are there per staff member in each of the mental health wards?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Just some clarification. Are you referring to security services through the whole hospital, or in the mental health aspect of the campus?

**Mr CONLAN:** I will say, how many security staff are there per staff member in each mental health ward? So, we are talking specifically.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** So the issue being, if we have security for the whole of an institution, are you suggesting that we divide the total number of patients, both general and mental health, into the number of security staff?

**Mr CONLAN:** I am not suggesting anything; I am just asking what the number is.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The security for the hospital campus is for the whole of the campus, both mental health and general patient clients, so there is not a security number which is dedicated to the mental health services.

**Mr CONLAN:** In that case, the other question is: how many security staff are there, per patient, in each mental health ward? Would it be the same answer?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Absolutely, the same answer.

**Mr CONLAN:** So currently there is no security staff specifically for mental health wards across the Northern Territory? Considering the nature of these illnesses ...

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I have given an answer in the broad sense about security services and the general security of a campus, and how their workload is proportioned on the basis of need at any given point in time so they can move to areas. It is worth pointing out that, in the Joan Ridley Ward in the Cowdy Building, there is a secure facility there which is capable of looking after upwards of six clients. I stand corrected, eight clients.

There is general security, but there is also a secure aspect of Cowdy Ward, called the Joan Ridley Ward, which looks after eight dedicated people who require high levels of security.

**Mr CONLAN:** By secure aspects, you mean, secure premises?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Correct.

**Mr CONLAN:** Security access is required?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Correct.

**Mr CONLAN:** This feeds back to the other one about security for staff. What provisions are there for protection of staff and mental health workers at Territory hospitals?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will move on from my earlier discussions about security, and I will refer this to Jenny Cleary and Bronwyn Hendry.

**Ms CLEARY:** Jenny Cleary, Executive Director, Health Services. The key element of security for staff in mental health facilities is the excellence of their training, their professional development. There is significant work put into that aspect of developing staff in the units that Bronwyn's people run, so that is a key aspect.

**Ms MCCARTHY:** Is there anything you would like to add, Bronwyn?

**Ms HENDRY:** Generally, we do not have security in our inpatient units. However, on occasion, if there is a critical situation which might require additional management, we can call security to come from the hospital. It really is on an as-needs basis, as opposed to someone posted there. That is certainly our preferred option. People are there because they are sick; they may be behaving in ways that do require careful management, but they are nonetheless patients in the hospital. Generally speaking, a mentally ill person who is engaged in treatment is no more likely to be violent than any other member of the community.

Obviously, there are incidents of aggression in inpatient units as there are in other areas of the hospital, but the staff are trained to try to minimise and deescalate those situations without the need for physical restraint wherever possible. We have strategies to try to eliminate the use of those techniques wherever we can and to increase the training of our staff and their ability to manage without physical restraint or that type of intervention.

**Mr CONLAN:** I appreciate that, minister. I appreciate the quality of our mental health staff; they are not security guards and they are not there to act as security guards. So, essentially, what you are saying is if a situation takes place they rely on their skills. If it has to be taken up a notch, then they rely on what security guards are nearby at the time. Is that right?

**Ms MCCARTHY:** Member for Grotorex, it is an important area that you are looking into and, yes, to further respond to Bronwyn Hendry, clearly it is a case of how people admit themselves requiring support in the area of mental health. Yes, you are correct in that it is about the staff and what

Bronwyn was saying in regard to their training for that area.

**Mr CONLAN:** And, indeed, other patients as well. So, is the department confident that other patients are provided the best care from episodes of some of our mental health patients? Even other patients in the ward?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I just feel the urge to reiterate the comment that the Director of Mental Health made that mental health patients are no more likely to be violent than any other patient within the hospital environment. If you start thinking about security from that dimension then you approach it from what are the general measures around security and what are the clinical dimensions around care. We prefer to put our emphasis on appropriate care and support for mental health patients. The issue of security is, in fact, a level playing field between the general wards as well as the mental health wards.

**Mr CONLAN:** Can I ask where that information comes from? I am not a clinician, as you know, and representing, you might say, some average people out there in the street. They might see that someone who is in a coma, as opposed to someone who may have psychotic episodes, is more likely to have a violent outburst than the other person, so where are you getting that information?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I believe it is important that we take this opportunity to correct the myth and, so, I will ask Bronwyn Hendry to take you through that.

**Ms HENDRY:** We could provide various studies. I do not have them now. You are right; I was talking about people engaged in treatment. When people have, perhaps, fallen out of treatment or when they have first been diagnosed and their condition has not had the opportunity to be stabilised then, yes, they may respond in aggressive ways. Quite often, that is because they are fearful, not necessarily because they are deliberately trying to be aggressive to someone. It is really about reassuring people, recognising the early signs of aggression, managing that, giving appropriate pharmacological or medication and treatment so that people do not feel fearful, and they are not so agitated. That is about training the staff to recognise those early warning signs.

Where security or, on very rare occasions police, are required, they are called, but really it is about managing that in a clinical, therapeutic way as opposed to a law enforcement or other kinds of security.

**Mr CONLAN:** Is it plausible to suggest that someone with mental health issues is more conducive to violent outbursts than those who do not have mental health issues?

**Ms MCCARTHY:** Bronwyn Hendry.

**Ms HENDRY:** People who are disorientated, confused, psychotic, or intoxicated, for example, may not be able to make the same rational choices that the rest of us may be able to make, and can be prone to aggression. However, that is across a whole range of conditions including people with mental illness. It could be people who are head injured or under the influence of drugs and alcohol, elderly people who are experiencing delirium or who may be demented. There are a range of people who may exhibit aggressive behaviour due to their medical or mental health condition. People with an untreated mental illness, who are psychotic, may be prone to behave in that way as well.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The answer is that when people have come in to a mental health facility, they have moved into a treatment environment and the level of risk in a treatment environment is nowhere near the same risk as in an environment which is untreated. When people have moved into our facilities, they have moved into an environment where they are receiving therapy and treatment. The question before related to the security of people who were in the mental health facility which, by definition, they have moved into a level of treatment. The security risk or aggression risk is largely in the province of the untreated dimension as opposed to the inpatient dimension.

**Mr CONLAN:** If there is a higher risk for aggressive behaviour within the mental health sector of

patients across the NT, then it would be reasonable to assume that there might be more security in place as a result of that higher risk?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No, I do not believe that follows. I do not follow the logic.

**Mr CONLAN:** You would accept it to a degree because you have secure facilities, so you, obviously, accept that there is some sort of higher risk, because you have told us about the swipe cards or whatever is required to enter and exit these secure facilities. There is something there, obviously.

**Ms HENDRY:** The secure facilities are for people who are considered to be at higher risk than other people, otherwise the preferred option is treatment in a less restrictive environment, which is an open facility or in the community. Having said that, people are not in the secure unit purely because they might be exhibiting aggressive behaviour, they may not recognise the need for treatment, so are not willing to stay in an inpatient unit. However, it has been mandated that they require the opportunity for treatment. Just because someone is in the secure facility does not mean that they are aggressive.

The other aspect is that we increase the staffing on the inpatient unit according to the acuity of the patient. For instance, if we have some patients who had quite challenging and difficult to manage behaviours, then we would increase the staffing in the secure area, but that would be with clinical staffing. We would rarely bring in security staff to care for people who had a mental illness, because we believe the care should be, in the vast majority of cases, provided by people with the skills and the ability to do that.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I add to that, member for Greateorex, I am a little concerned that the committee may be targeting mental health patients as completely aggressive, when that is not always the case. What is being pointed out is that each client who comes in is assessed and there is no sense of that. It is important that we do not have that kind of stigma in the community ...

**Mr CONLAN:** I am not trying to put any stigma, although there is, obviously, an element of mental health patients who are violent. These questions go to the heart of that; that is all. How often has security been called to Territory hospitals in response to a violent episode?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The answer is around mental health, I presume, and we do not keep that information.

**Mr CONLAN:** You do not keep that information. Is there a hospital-based constable at these hospitals?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I am trying to clarify whether we are talking about mental health or acute care at the moment.

**Mr CONLAN:** We are talking about mental health; of course.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** So you are asking ...

**Mr CONLAN:** ... output group, Dr Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Is the question: is there a constable attached to the mental health unit?

**Mr CONLAN:** To the hospital. How many times has the hospital-based constable been called to the mental health unit as a result of some sort of ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** I believe that is where the clarification needs to be, member for Greateorex.

**Mr CONLAN:** We can play semantics, but ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** Sorry. You had the opportunity with the Health output yesterday to talk about police at hospitals. We are trying to clarify if you are asking how many times are police coming to the mental health unit, or are you asking whether there is a specific police-based person at the mental health unit? That is all. I need that clarification.

**Mr CONLAN:** I asked how often security has been called to the hospital. You do not have those figures. Is that right?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** The question you asked was how often has security been called to the mental health service.

**Mr CONLAN:** Yes, that is right. For interest, if I say hospital, I mean the mental health ward, because this is the specific output group. How often has security been called to the mental health ward? You said you do not have, or do not keep those figures.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** We do not keep that data on a regular basis. To find out whether that is possible, we would need to talk to the security and glean what the call-out arrangements are and what has happened over the previous 12 months. We do not have that information.

**Mr CONLAN:** Security do incident reports, is that right?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes.

**Mr CONLAN:** And does the department look at those incident reports?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Those reports would be looked at by the General Manager of Royal Darwin Hospital, or the appropriate hospital manager.

**Mr CONLAN:** And then what happens to that information? Is it up to the discretion of the hospital manager to decide what happens to that information?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** It is the delegation of the general manager of the hospital to do that.

**Mr CONLAN:** To do?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** To look at the appropriate response to the security within the campus environment.

**Mr CONLAN:** If there is an incident where security has been called, then it is quite possible that you or the minister may not ever know about this, or learn about this?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** It is true ...

**Mr CONLAN:** If it is up to the discretion of the general manager?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I believe discretion is not quite the right word. There is a delegated authority within the act regarding what the roles and responsibilities of general managers of hospitals are. It is quite clear under the act that they have wide-ranging authority to make decisions about security of all aspects. If there was a major breach of security I would expect to be informed of that. But, on a day-to-day basis, security might be called out to five or 10 events. Do I know about those? No, I do not.

**Mr CONLAN:** With respect, there was a major breach of security with the sexual assault of a five-month-old baby girl and, yet, the department was unaware of that because it was not reported.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Can I just take you back to the output group we are talking about?

**Mr CONLAN:** That is right, exactly. It is nice and convenient to be able to do that, is it not, Dr Ashbridge? My point is that you said if there was a major breach of security you would be made aware of that. We had an incident where there was a major breach of security which resulted in the sexual assault of a five-month-old girl. Yet, the minister at the time, and the department head – you - did not know about that. Obviously, things do fall through the cracks.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Greateorex, I believe, as Dr Ashbridge has pointed out ...

**Mr CONLAN:** Yes, that is okay, I made my point. Thank you.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** My point was that I do not believe I was the Chief Executive at the time ...

**Mr CONLAN:** No, you were not.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** ... but you did personally accuse me of not being aware. I want a personal ...

**Mr CONLAN:** You do not weigh in on other things when it suits you ...

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No, I do not like being named, when it was not me.

**Mr CONLAN:** You also were not the CEO at the time when that report I tabled yesterday was commissioned, yet you had a very strong opinion on that.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Greateorex, this output has passed. Do you have a further question?

**Mr CONLAN:** Yes I do, thank you, Madam Deputy Chair.

Let us go back to the Coroner's conclusion in the report into the death of Paul James Guarini. The Coroner noted that the department had accepted the recommendations by the Myhill report. Can you tell me if the 11 recommendations have been implemented?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Greateorex, I will refer you to Jenny Cleary.

**Ms CLEARY:** Ms Hendry.

**Ms HENDRY:** Yes, basically, all the recommendations have been implemented.

**Mr CONLAN:** Sorry, can I confirm that you said 'basically they have been'? I believe we need to be more specific. They have all been implemented, or some have been, or ...

**Ms HENDRY:** There have been some improvements in practice, and our inpatient unit is actually engaged in a continuous quality improvement process. Some things are always ongoing, and some of the recommendations refer to things that are more of that nature. But the Coroner found that there were not any specific recommendations, other than the improvements we had already undertaken in relation to the very tragic death of that individual, and that it was, unfortunately, unavoidable. But, as normal practice, when such a tragic event occurs, we do a thorough investigation and we identify any areas that we believe could be improved so we can try to avoid something like that happening again.

**Mr CONLAN:** Okay. My question was: can you confirm that all 11 recommendations in that report have been implemented? I am not sure if that was a yes or no. Yes, all 11 recommendations have been implemented? The department has said that they accepted the recommendations, but accepted is different to implemented.

**Ms McCARTHY:** We are confirming again?

**Mr CONLAN:** Yes.

**Ms McCARTHY:** There were actually 13 recommendations, member for Grotter. Is that what you have?

**Mr CONLAN:** I have 11.

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** In terms of the details of all the recommendations, we can take you through them line by line. The issue is, as in all those cases, we do an internal review and make recommendations. We provide that review to the Coroner. In the process of doing our review, we also identify areas of improvement. In this case, the Coroner agreed, by and large, with the approach the department was taking. His recommendation was to continue the implementation of the recommendations, and so we are continuing on that journey. We started them before the Coroner made his recommendations, and he suggested they were the right approaches and we have continued to implement them. We can give you detail of the stage of implementation of all of those, but the point being was that we accepted them, we are already implementing them, and we are continuing to implement them.

**Mr CONLAN:** And you will implement all the recommendations?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** That is correct.

**Mr CONLAN:** All right, and if you would not mind, perhaps you can table that in the interests of time, rather than reading them out line by line?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No, I do not have that for tabling with me. We could find it for you.

**Mr CONLAN:** That would be terrific. I have a couple more. How many unplanned re-admissions have there been in the mental health wards in the Territory within 28 days?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Bronwyn Hendry.

**Ms HENDRY:** Sorry, could you repeat the question again?

**Mr CONLAN:** In 2008, how many unplanned re-admissions were there in mental health wards in the Territory within 28 days?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** We will just be a minute.

**Ms HENDRY:** There were 13% of people who were unplanned re-admissions within 28 days.

**Mr CONLAN:** Is that in 2008?

**Ms HENDRY:** Yes.



**Mr CONLAN:** What was the total number of re-admissions in 2008? Do you have that figure?

**Ms HENDRY:** No, but I can give you total separations, which is total admissions for a financial year. However, that indicator was reported under COAG, which is a calendar year. We can give you – there are just over 1000 admissions per year.

**Mr CONLAN:** What about those who were re-admitted, those people who were admitted, discharged and then re-admitted in the course of that year?

**Ms HENDRY:** The indicator is within 28 days and that was the percentage of those ...

**Mr CONLAN:** You do not take any of that data in the course of 12 months? You only put it on if it is only within 28 days ...

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** You have been advised that there is in excess - I do not remember the number – of over 1000 separations, and 13% of those resulted in ...

**Mr CONLAN:** That is not a re-admission.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No, 13% ...

**Mr CONLAN:** Within 28 days. I want the number of people who have been admitted to a mental health facility in the Northern Territory, been discharged and, in the course of the next 12 months, has been re-admitted.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** But a separation is an admission.

**Mr CONLAN:** Yes, but it is not a re-admission.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Re-admission is 13% of the separation, and 13% of 1000 about 130.

**Mr CONLAN:** But that is in a 28-day period.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** Correct, and that is a definition of ...

**Mr CONLAN:** I am asking for a 365-day period. Do you have that information?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** It is not classified as a re-admission under the criteria of data analysis.

**Mr CONLAN:** Okay. So, you do not - that is a standard reporting feature in other jurisdictions such as Tasmania and the ACT but, that ...

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** No, that is not correct. I want to take exception - that is not correct.

**Mr CONLAN:** What is not correct?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** That it is a standard reporting mechanism.

**Mr CONLAN:** I can tell you it is. It is a standard reporting feature in the annual reports in the ACT and Tasmania. Okay? Can you tell me the number of mental health patients seen within seven days of discharge?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Through the minister.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Jenny Cleary.

**Ms HENDRY:** It is also reported as a percentage nationally, and that is 20% of people. The reason it is slightly lower than the national average for seven-day follow-up is because many of our patients are discharged to remote communities, and they are followed up by the local health service. Those statistics are not counted in the seven-day follow-up stats by Mental Health Services. The aim of our remote specialist visiting teams is to support those local primary health services to deliver the day-to-day care.

The other large component that is missing from follow-up stats for us is when, in the urban area, people are followed up by an Aboriginal medical service such as Danila Dilba or Congress. Again, they are not counted in our statistics - neither for other private practitioners like GPs. That is a similar situation for other jurisdictions. We have those added complexities regarding remote and Aboriginal medical service follow-ups.

**Mr CONLAN:** On those figures, the 28-day re-admissions and the seven days, do you have a breakdown of that by hospital?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Ms Hendry.

**Ms HENDRY:** No, I do not.

**Mr CONLAN:** Are we able to get that information? Does the department keep that information?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** We can take that question on notice.

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#### Question on Notice 7.9

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Grotorex, can you repeat that for the purposes of *Hansard*?

**Mr CONLAN:** In 2008, how many unplanned re-admissions within 28 days by hospital, and the number of mental health patients seen within seven days of discharge by hospital?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Are you happy to take that on notice?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am happy to take that on notice.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 7.9

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**Mr ELFERINK:** Are you done?

**Mr CONLAN:** Yes.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I have two very quick questions. I am aware of – the member for Arafura is not here? Okay.

**Dr BURNS:** She probably gave up.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** This is still Output 3.2.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I am very interested in the - and I will roll it all into one, so I can hopefully get an explanation as to the mechanics of this - period of admission. I have heard today that the time of admission is the time of greatest instability in a mental health patient. It is before the treatment actually commences, there is a psychiatric assessment of the patient. I do not know what you use, the DSM4, or something, but what actually mechanically happens? I am concerned that there is - I remember something in the Lingard Report, if I am correct - about a two-hour lag time between patient arrival and assessment, by the time someone assesses them. Are they held in a secure environment? If they are not held in a secure environment during this most sensitive period, what is done to protect the security of both the patient and the staff of the hospital? Do we have any way of tracking that - either incident reports filed by security guards, or the hospital-based constable called down do deal with these issues, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** There are quite a number of questions within that, member for Port Darwin. We will go to Bronwyn Hendry first, in terms of the actual mechanics, and what you are asking about when a client comes in.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Do you understand where I am coming from, in terms of the security of the patient at the arrival stage or psychiatric assessment stage?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, I understand that there is interest around the security of staff and the clients we service.

**Mr ELFERINK:** These people can be ...

**Ms McCARTHY:** I understand it, and if Bronwyn Hendry can respond to the clinical side of it. I must stress, as I did with the member for Greentree, caution that we are not stigmatising mental health patients across the Northern Territory, as patients who are a great risk to the community. I caution the committee in your line of questioning in that regard. Bronwyn Hendry.

**Ms HENDRY:** People who present to the hospital with a suspected mental illness, or mental health condition, are triaged in the same way that other people are triaged. Their individual presentation determines how quickly they are seen. That is the same thing for anyone who presents to the Emergency Department with any condition.

**Mr ELFERINK:** They present to the Emergency Department, they do not go directly to the ward, to Cowdy or the other one, Wrigley?

**Ms HENDRY:** They occasionally come straight to the inpatient unit, if they have already been seen by a doctor or a psychiatrist in the community ...

**Mr ELFERINK:** Or if they see a general practitioner in the community?

**Ms HENDRY:** It is unusual for someone to come straight to the ward, even if sent by a general practitioner, unless they are well known to the service, and then arrangements might be made. People who are exhibiting what might be symptoms of mental illness sometimes have underlying physical conditions causing that and they do not have a mental illness at all.

It is very important that they receive a very thorough physical examination, prior to a determination being made about whether they require admission.

**Mr ELFERINK:** With the mechanics of this, I assume that some of these people come in by ambulance, some come in with a police officer attached to them, many present under their own steam, and some will be brought in by family. When any of those situations occur, how many go directly to the ward, how many go directly to the Emergency Department?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Bronwyn Hendry.

**Ms HENDRY:** Each individual is assessed on how they present when they arrive, or how they present when someone has assessed them in the community. It is a decision made on an individuals' presentation, as opposed to the mode of them coming to the hospital.

**Mr ELFERINK:** That assessment physically takes place somewhere?

**Ms HENDRY:** It may take place initially in the community and, then, there may be further assessment warranted in the Emergency Department, or they may come to the inpatient unit.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Which leads me back to my original question: how long does it take for the assessment to occur when somebody is identified as a potential patient arriving anywhere? I am not entirely clear that I have an answer yet on that last question. When a person is identified as a potential psychiatric patient, to the point where someone actually comes along and says, 'Yes, this person needs psychiatric help', what is that lag time between those two points?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Before I hand over to Bronwyn, member for Port Darwin, we need to better understand the intent of your questioning. If you are focusing on a specific incident or case, then that needs to be identified. Bronwyn Hendry has already said is that each of the clients who come to use this service, come in at different levels. Some are referred from the community, some end up walking into Royal Darwin Hospital into the Emergency Department where they are assessed. That has already been answered, Madam Deputy Chair.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Yes. The issue I am pursuing is: how long does it take the assessment to occur? I appreciate the triage, and I understand how triage works, but there is still a lag time. Through the triage process they might be identified as someone who needs psychiatric assistance. What is the time lag between that assessment and a doctor being called?

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is a very different question to your previous one. You are talking about a time lag while they are already in Royal Darwin Hospital. I will hand over to Bronwyn Hendry.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** If I can clarify the question. People come in to the Emergency Department and they are triaged by the triage nurse, and there is an assessment made on their clinical dimension. That takes between 10 minutes and half-an-hour; that is a clinical decision which will vary from case to case. The answer to the question depends on the clinical presentation, their triage assessment, and the time frames around that are determined by the triage assessment, which are made by the Emergency Department staff.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Emergency Department staff look at a person and determine that 'this person might need psychiatric evaluation' as a result of their triage process. Then you are telling me that some of these might be urgent, in which case it happens immediately; some might not be so urgent, therefore, it does not happen immediately. There are other pressures in the Emergency Department, that sort of thing. Is there a scale by which that is determined? Do psychiatrists or doctors respond to that scale? What is the average amount of time that person waits from triage assessment to when they receive a psychiatric assessment?

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** This is the nub of the question. When people are in the Emergency Department doing triages, they are there to make that assessment about the nature of the illness, the urgency of it. For the question about what is the time from making that assessment to making a formal psychiatric assessment, I will ask Bronwyn Hendry to follow up.

**Ms HENDRY:** The initial triage time is for the initial assessment by a medical officer in the Emergency Department, and then the Emergency Department doctor decides whether they need a psychiatric assessment. They may refer them for an involuntary or voluntary psychiatric assessment and they will

also give an indication of how urgent that assessment is. How quickly they are seen then will depend on how acute their presentation is, such as the assessed urgency and the other competing - say if there is multiple mental health presentations at any one time, then the most urgent is seen as soon as possible, etcetera.

It works like any other health condition presenting to the Emergency Department. When we were participating in the National Institute of Clinical Studies, Mental Health presentations in the Emergency Department - there was a national project on that - and we were one of the participating sites. One of the key performance indicators in that study was how many people left the Emergency Department in what they call disposition, or when a decision was made about whether they should be admitted or discharged to the community, or admitted to a medical bed for some other reason. We performed better than the national average in that study in how quickly people were processed through the Emergency Department. Our relative performance was considered to be above the national average in that area.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Thank you. I know other people have other questions, so I will move on.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 3.2.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Thank you very much folks, we appreciate the effort you put in to prepare yourselves for this.

**Output 3.3 – Community Support Services for Frail Aged People and People with a Disability**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I now call for questions on Output 3.3, Community Support Services for Frail Aged People and People with a Disability. Are there any questions?

**Mr STYLES:** Yes. Minister, my first question relates to page 201 of Budget 2009-10, where I note that, if you go back to Budget 2008-09, there was an amount budgeted of \$60m for Community Support Services for Frail Aged People and People with a Disability. The actual estimate jumped up to \$72m, which is about \$12.4m greater than what was budgeted for. I note that it has dropped back to \$66m. There was, obviously, a need in 2008-09 for an extra \$12m, and now we are going backwards to the tune of 9.12%. Minister, can you explain why there has been such a huge fluctuation?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Yes, member for Sanderson, happy to respond. In fact, we have provided considerable amount of funding in the areas of disability services across the Northern Territory. The ongoing discussions with the Commonwealth, in regard to funding that is still to come, are not reflected on page 201. I will hand you over to David Ashbridge to provide the details.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** If you look at the original Budget in 2008-09, it was \$60.434m, and the final budget was \$72.807m. To provide an explanation for that movement, there was additional Australian government funding of \$9.095m. There were also programs carried forward from 2007-08 of \$3.557m, and there was \$290 000 on NT-funded initiatives on core program expansions, plus there were additional services of \$43 000 based on a fee-for-service, and there was a transfer of \$6000 from other agencies.

With the balance of offsets, that takes you to an increase of \$12.373m, giving you a total revised budget of \$72.807m. The explanation for the final budget of \$72.807m, to this year's allocation of \$66.17m is that there has been substantial increases by the NTG, which is CPI and wages indexation of \$2.144m, and also growth in the NT-funded initiatives of \$2.341m. However, you need to understand the offset of the Australian government-funded programs which have been cancelled, to the tune of \$7.218m, and there has also been some carryovers of \$3.557m. The nett effect of all that is minus-\$6.644m. However, what is important to note is that the budget was put out at a point in time, two or three months ago, and as is usual practice, there are ongoing contracts in the process of being signed which will substantially increase the budget for 2009-10, which we were unable to put into the budgetary figure for 2009-10 because the contracts were not signed at the time the budgets papers were delivered.

I will make a clear point that there has been no reduction of NTG funding in any program areas across the whole of the portfolio. Examples would include the HACC program - \$350 000; ACAP program - up to \$200 000; and CDEP program of approximately \$6.2m. Even though I am unable to give you a final figure, it will be substantially more than the \$66.167m which is currently published.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you. Minister, I have many questions, but I am going to cut this down as we only have 12 minutes left. Is there a disabled services officer or office in any of the Northern Territory hospitals?

**Ms McCARTHY:** There is an Office of Disability in Alice Springs. We are opening one in Darwin, but I will hand you over to Jenny Cleary to provide some more details on that.

**Ms CLEARY:** In strict response to your question, we do not have specific offices of disability in our hospitals, but in community-based facilities we have the Alice Springs office that the minister referred to. At this point in time, we are seeking suitable premises for a Darwin-based office of disability.

**Mr STYLES:** Does that mean for disabled people going up to the hospital there are people trained in assisting?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will throw this to give you the detail but, in essence, it is important to understand that hospitals look after disabled people. It is often under the rehabilitation banner. In the acute care sector or a hospital sector, you will find that many of the severely disabled clients are managed under the rehabilitation banner for the acute episode. Yes, there are facilities within hospitals about acute care and, often, about longer-term rehabilitation. When people move outside the hospital environment, it is more commonly referred to as long-term care and disability services. Yes, we do. Understanding the connection between rehabilitation and disability is at the core of your question. Jenny?

**Ms CLEARY:** I was going to suggest that there are formal connections made for disability clients who end up in hospital for an acute admission of whatever reason. I would like Ms Penny Fielding, the Program Director of Aged and Disability, to give you some information about that.

**Ms FIELDING:** Penny Fielding, Director, Aged and Disability Program. Our client information system allows the hospital to notify us if one of our clients has been admitted to hospital. That allows us to support, through our Disability Coordination Team, the client's stay within the hospital setting and, also to support the hospital and the client to plan for their discharge.

**Mr STYLES:** Excellent, thank you. Minister, is there a Northern Territory-funded disability services officer in the Darwin City Council or any other councils within the Territory?

**Ms McCARTHY:** David Ashbridge.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** I will pass that on, I do not know.

**Mr STYLES:** At this stage, minister, I would be very happy with brief answers.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Okay. Jenny Cleary.

**Ms CLEARY:** Thank you. We are consulting our non-government grants to have a look at whether that was included.

**Dr ASHBRIDGE:** We will try to give you a yes/no, answer. We want to make it the right one.

**Ms FIELDING:** One-off grants are provided to Darwin City Council, on occasion, for a variety of specific one-off activities. The funding provided for disability advocacy in Darwin goes to the Darwin Community Legal Services Inc.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, is there any future provision in the current budget, or any ideas on providing a disability services officer to Darwin City Council, to provide a range of services that council may offer, or are you going to put that into the Office of Disability Services.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am very keen to see improved access to information for people with disabilities across the Northern Territory. That may come down to more services within shires or councils. My priority at this stage is the Office of Disability for both Alice Springs and Darwin. We have the national disability service and office that was opened. I understand you were at that opening just recently. That is my first priority: to ensure we set up these two offices which can impact on improving the lives of people with disabilities in the Territory.

**Mr STYLES:** Thanks, minister. My information is that the Red Cross will be taking over some of the disability services that are contracted out. In one case, one particular client will not be able to access assistance after 7 pm in the evening. Are you aware of any particular situations like this?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I take it you have a specific client case that you are concerned about, and I am happy to pursue that. Generally, at no stage, would I want any individual with a disability across the Northern Territory to feel that they cannot access anything in the Northern Territory. They clearly can. The offices I am speaking of, in the Office of Disability for Alice and Darwin, will, no doubt, work office hours, however, we do have the hospital system, and we will pick up those concerns for people with disabilities outside hours, if that is the question.

**Mr STYLES:** I will be a little more specific. It concerns carers attending at premises to put this particular person to bed, and that is the problem; they cannot come after 7 pm. This person said that they were told, and has contacted a number of others, that they are going to have to be put to bed before 7 pm. What is your feeling on that? If you are not quite aware that is the case, and this will clarify whether the government supports that idea.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I take it this is one client with a case that has been raised with you. As minister for people with a disability, I would not want to hear that people do not have access or support at any time, and if there is a particular case you are concerned about, as a local member, by all means, follow that up with me. I will hand over to Penny Fielding, who can give an overview of what we do with support for these organisations.

**Mr STYLES:** That would be greatly appreciated.

**Ms FIELDING:** We provide and fund a range of HACC services, which do not necessarily provide services after 7 pm, for example, the Red Cross service. But no client who requires care after that period of time is locked into the HACC service alone. A number of clients have individual arrangements, where we might fund another organisation which can meet the need after that period of time.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 3.3.

#### **Output 3.4 – Support for Senior Territorians and Pensioner Concessions**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I will now call for questions on Output 3.4, Support for Senior Territorians and Pensioner Concessions. Are there any questions, member for Sanderson?

**Mr STYLES:** Yes, pages of them, Madam Deputy Chair, thank you. Minister, does the government intend to review the benefits available under the NT Pensioner Concession Scheme to ensure the scheme is equitable, fair, and indexed to maintain the value of benefits into the future?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Sanderson, our government is committed to providing senior Territorians with incentives to remain in the Northern Territory, and always to improve the lives of all senior Territorians. I am particularly proud of the NT Pensioner Carer and Concession Scheme, which is one of the most generous schemes of its type in Australia, when we consider the combination of its benefits. I would definitely like to see this as an ongoing support for pensioners across the Territory. If you have any particular issues you have concerns with, then by all means, let me know. I point out to the committee that from 1 July we will introduce the renewal of driver's licences at no cost to NTPCCS members, they will be free, and motor vehicle registration concessions will increase from \$104 to \$154 per year. The government also introduced free bus travel for all seniors, pensioners, and carers, from 1 January this year. I am very committed to ensuring senior Territorians enjoy life in the Territory.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, can you advise when the pensioner concession scheme benefit for local government rates was last reviewed?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will hand over to Penny Fielding, member for Sanderson.

**Ms FIELDING:** The council rate concession was last reviewed in 1986 - excuse me - was last changed in 1986, it was last reviewed in 2004.

**Mr STYLES:** Minister, how does the government plan to ensure that pensioners are insulated from increases in power, water, and sewerage costs, and what will be the cost of that program to the taxpayer?

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Sanderson, I am aware of this issue, and it has been asked on a number of occasions. The government has committed to supporting senior Territorians by ensuring that those rates do not increase for those people who are on seniors and pensioner care concession card. I am happy to hand over to Jenny Cleary for further details.

**Ms CLEARY:** I have a long list of methodologies by which we have calculated the additional top-ups to each of the components of the concession which would need to be made to members of the scheme in order to maintain the value of their benefit, and that is conducive with Cabinet's decision to ensure that people in the scheme were not disadvantaged by the rate increases. However, it might take longer than you want to spend on it and ...

**Mr STYLES:** I will be happy with that answer.

**Ms CLEARY:** Okay. An additional \$2m has been provided to the various departments involved in order to afford that coverage.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Last question.

**Mr STYLES:** A supplementary question to that, minister. In relation to local council property rates, the rate is 62.5% of the annual general rates charged up to a maximum of \$200 a year on one rate. There are several aspects to this last question. One, when was the last time the \$200 was reviewed, and is there any intention to increase that to reflect current day rates?

**Ms McCARTHY:** I am happy to hand this over to Jenny Cleary or Penny Fielding because, as I have said in my previous answers, I do not want to see pensioners, seniors and carers disadvantaged in any way; so over to them.



## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS – 18 JUNE 2009

**Mr STYLES:** Makes two of us then.

**Ms CLEARY:** I am not sure exactly what the question was, but the review of rates concession was last undertaken in 2004.

**Mr STYLES:** There were two parts to the question. One, when was it last reviewed, and is the government looking at increasing the \$200 maximum to reflect current rates? The situation is that since the \$200 was introduced rates have quadrupled; some pensioners have to pay up to \$800 to \$1000 in rates. This scheme says whichever is the lesser. To make it easier on pensioners, we need to increase the \$200 considerably.

**Ms McCARTHY:** I will clarify, member for Sanderson, that rate is brought on by the Darwin City Council. My responsibility, as minister for Seniors, is that I and this government is committed to ensuring that any of those concerns with power and water and the rates increase in that area have been frozen. I cannot be more specific. If the councils choose to do differently, then the onus is back on the council, and I suggest you put that to them.

**Mr STYLES:** I understand, minister, but that is not quite ...

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Sanderson, the minister is endeavouring to answer your question, because we are out of time. Do you want to complete that answer, minister?

**Ms McCARTHY:** That is it.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** It is 1 pm and we do need to conclude.

**Ms McCARTHY:** Member for Sanderson, I am happy to find out some more information for you outside estimates.

**Mr STYLES:** Thank you.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. That concludes consideration of Outputs 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 and the Non-Output Specific Budget Related Questions.

On behalf of the committee I thank the officers from the Department of Health and Families who have provided advice to the minister today. I thank the minister for her attendance. The committee will reconvene at 1.30 pm.

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The committee suspended.

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### MINISTER ANDERSON'S PORTFOLIOS

#### DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT, the ARTS and SPORT

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Welcome, minister, as we start the Estimates Committee. Could you please introduce the officials accompanying you and, if you have an opening statement, would you like to make it?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman and members of the committee, by way of opening remarks. I first thank all the staff of NRETAS for the tremendous job they do all year round and, in particular, the fantastic effort they put into the preparation for estimates.

Today, the committee will be assisted by the Chief Executive of NRETAS, Jim Grant; Executive Director, Natural Resources, Diana Leeder; Executive Director, Parks and Wildlife, Graham Phelps; Executive Director, Finance and Governance, Susan Kirkman; Executive Director, Environment,

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Heritage and Arts, Lyn Allen; Executive Director, Collections, Biodiversity and Biological Parks, Gae Mackay; and Director of Museums and Galleries, Anna Malgorzewicz.

Mr Chairman, there is much being achieved across my portfolio of NRETAS, too much to outline properly in my opening remarks, so I will just touch on some of the highlights.

I am please to advise more than \$8m in additional funding has been provided for infrastructure in our parks over the next four years. On top of this, we will be making additional infrastructure commitments to Litchfield, West MacDonnells and Nitmiluk. The government has also committed \$1.8m over the next three years towards establishing Stage 1 of the Eco-Links initiative. I will pay special attention to the additional \$1.09m this government will invest over two years for a strategic weed management program. I also draw your attention to this government's commitment of \$500 000 to deliver on water allocation planning; and \$700 000 to establish and support the ongoing running of an air quality program for Darwin.

I am pleased to advise that our 2008 election commitment to provide \$160 000 in funding to the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory and the Arid Lands Environment Centre will be met this financial year.

I am also very pleased to introduce the Northern Territory Library into my portfolio this year. The Northern Territory Library has a budget of \$10.5m in 2009-10. This government is absolutely committed to placing arts and culture at the heart of Territory life and that is why we are allocating \$10.1m for arts. This year we will be undertaking a major review of how our funding is allocated to ensure we are meeting our priorities.

I want to address up-front the apparent reduction in NRETAS's budget as it appears in Budget Paper No 3, particularly in the Natural Resources output group. In fact, excluding Sports and Recreation, which is the responsibility of minister Hampton, the Northern Territory government funding for NRETAS will increase from an estimated \$112m in 2008-09 to a budget on \$117m in 2009-10. The apparent reduction in the total budget is mainly caused by a lag in confirmation of external funding, the majority of which comes from the Commonwealth government.

To explain, every year NRETAS, like environment departments in every state and territory jurisdiction, receives a significant portion of its funding from the Australian government. However, we did not include much of this money in the budget figures released in May because we had not finalised funding agreements with the Commonwealth at that time. If we look at the Natural Resource Output Group, on paper, it appears it will receive \$7.7m less in 2009-10. In fact, this is fully accounted for in the \$6.6m external funding received either as a one-off, or carried forward in 2008-09 and a one-off funding boost to Bushfires NT of \$1.25m in 2008-09.

Mr Chairman, we are very confident of attracting substantial external funding once again this year. If you look at the Natural Resources Output Group in the 2008 Budget Paper No 3, we have budgeted for \$46.06m when, in fact, the 2008-09 estimate is \$51.49m - an additional \$5.4m, largely due to our success in gaining additional external funding in the course of the financial year. I am sure NRETAS officials will be able to explain in more detail if required.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister. Are there any questions to the opening statement?

**Mr CHANDLER:** No, not at this stage. If any of the questions we have here are based on funding that has changed due to the additional funding you have given, you will correct me at the time? Is that okay?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** On staff, that is all.

**Agency Specific (Whole-of-Government Related Questions) Budget and Fiscal Strategies**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I will get to that in a second. Are there any Agency Specific (Whole-of-Government Related Questions) Budget and Fiscal Strategies?

**Mr CHANDLER:** These are the generic questions and, with the indulgence of the minister, I hope she will do as the Chief Minister did on Monday night during Education, where we were able to read out each question for *Hansard* and the department take them on notice so we can get the information later; if the minister is happy with that.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, you have a choice. The opposition is going to ask a series of questions they have asked other ministers; you are welcome to answer them now or, if you prefer, you can take them on notice. I understand *Hansard* has a copy of those questions so we can do it as a bulk number or, as other ministers did, had them asked and answered them. It is up to you.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can I have a clarification on that. Are we talking about the generic questions?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Unless, of course, you want to hand me that whole folder and we can call it an afternoon.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we can table all the documents; we are able to table the documents.

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**Question on Notice No 8.1**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Because all questions in Estimates Committee have to be asked, if you could ask the questions first and we will take them on notice at the end.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Happy to.

Carbon Emissions: How much is the department producing now, in kilowatt hours or tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>; and agency's' individual strategies to reduce emissions, and the time frame for these reductions?

Utilities Increases: The effect on the bottom line of individual agencies for the forward year for water, sewerage and electricity?

Staffing: The number of graduates or apprentices started with the department in 2007, 2008, 2009? How many of those graduates or apprentices are still with their original department? How many are still with NT government?

Discipline: The number of reports of improper use of computers? How many reports resulted in disciplinary action? How many credit cards have been issued to departmental staff? How many transactions for personal items or services are outstanding? What disciplinary action has been taken for each outstanding incident?

Public Events: List the public events, conferences, public forums sponsored by this department for the 2008-09 financial year; and what are projected for the 2009-10 financial year.

Advertising: How do you define 'advertising'? What is the department's budget for advertising? What is your advertising budget for the 2008-09 reporting year? Please breakdown each area of advertising, for example, newspaper - specify colour or black and white - radio, TV, community newsletters, consultants, and printing? How much is year-to-date expenditure? Please breakdown as above? What advertising campaigns have been undertaken by the department in 2008-09? Specify if

there are any region-specific campaigns. How many of these campaigns have been translated into a local dialect? For each campaign, who was contracted to write the material for print, visual, and audio platforms? For each campaign, who was contracted to do the artwork for print, visual, and audio platforms? Who has the printing contract? What plans are in place for TV advertising? Is the advertising material approved by the minister, the minister's office or the Chief Executive? If none of these, who is authorised to release advertising or promotional material?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, are you happy to take those on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Certainly, Mr Chair. We have covered all the areas the member for Brennan has mentioned, and we can table the documents.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Okay, so we do not need to take them on notice. I will allocate that Question No 8.1; but the minister has indicated it has been tabled.

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**Ms PURICK:** Minister, in regard to your Communications Unit in the department, how many staff is in that unit? How many of them are operational versus how many are personnel? Can you please breakdown the staff by their position or levels?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I will refer that question to my CEO, Mr Jim Grant.

**Mr GRANT:** Jim Grant, CEO. The agency's communications and media unit provides support for its core divisions in projecting messages and programs relating to its activities. This is achieved through issuing media releases and responding to media inquiries; marketing the agency's services, and community consultation campaigns. The unit is also responsible for the maintenance of the agency's Internet; and the unit also provides support to the agency's internal communications activities including maintenance of the staff Intranet.

The staff consists of nine people: one EO1 Director; one AO7 Media Manager; one AO4 Media Manager; one AO6 Web Manager; one AO4 Web Administrator; one AO6 Senior Communications Consultant; one AO5 Communications Consultant; one AO4 Communications Officer; and an AO5 Graphic Designer. The personnel budget is \$773 000.

**Ms PURICK:** Mr Chairman, can I ask if that document could be tabled?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That document can be tabled?

**Mr GRANT:** Yes.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Was there an operational budget as well?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I will refer to Susan Kirkman.

**Ms KIRKMAN:** Susan Kirkman, Executive Director, Finance and Governance. The operational budget is \$330 000.

**Mr ELFERINK:** That is on the document?

**Ms KIRKMAN:** No.

**Ms PURICK:** Can that be tabled too, please?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** A follow-on question from that. It is noted under the heading 2009-10 Staffing – 806. I presume some of those are in Sport and Recreation. Is it possible to break up who those people work for?

**Mr GRANT:** That unit is a whole unit for NRETAS, there is one person in Sports and Recreation who does Sports and Recreation separately.

**Mr WOOD:** is it possible to get a breakdown of where those 806 staff work?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will have to take that on notice?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, member for Nelson, if you could repeat that?

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, would you give us details of where the 806 staff mentioned in the 2009-10 Budget Paper on page 253, actually work; and some idea of the budget allocation for those staff?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** You are happy to take that question on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chair, the CEO would like to speak.

**Mr GRANT:** We can provide the number of people in Parks and Reserves, Arts and Museum, Biological Parks etcetera, if that is what you are asking.

**Mr WOOD:** That would do. Are you able to provide a breakdown of who works where, can you break that down any further?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** You can read it out if it is not a form you can table.

**Mr GRANT:** Parks and Reserves we have 171.7 staff.

**Mr WOOD:** Are you able to break that down? For instance, there is x number of parks can you give us details of how many each park employs?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I refer to Mr Graham Phelps.

**Mr PHELPS:** Graham Phelps, Executive Director of Parks. I am able to provide details of park ranger staff by district. The administration staff are regionally based, so do not apply to our district bases; but I can provide the figures of staff per district.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, I basically wanted to know if we can get overall detail of all the staff employed, not names, but at what levels they are employed and, if it can be shown where they are employed, that would be good.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take that question on notice, Mr Chairman.

**Mr WOOD:** Same as the original question, just needs more detail, that's all.

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**Question on Notice No 8.2**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We might get it clarified for *Hansard*, if you can do it again.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, can you give us details of the 806 staff who are working under your department,

including the different levels and where these people work?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 8.2. Do you accept the question on notice, minister?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

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**Mr WOOD:** Minister, your department looks after Natural Resources and Environment, and we just had questions from the opposition in relation to carbon emissions; and I raised this question before. There are two parts to the question I would like to ask today. I am presuming you are going to say you save carbon emissions by reducing the number of six cylinder cars to four cylinder cars. I ask what proof have you that changing from a six cylinder car to a four cylinder car, in light of modern technology, has actually made any difference?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, just a quick comment. NRETAS is the lead agency on environment, we do take this very seriously and I believe my department has taken all the necessary steps in order to correct environmental issues in the way it operates. I will pass the question to my Chief Executive.

**Mr GRANT:** I might pass it on to Lyn Allen from Environment and Heritage, who knows this stuff inside out. We use a well recognised green rating, which takes all of those things into account, and Lyn will be able to explain more about the green rating, where it comes from and how it works.

**Ms ALLEN:** Lyn Allen, Executive Director, Environment, Heritage and the Arts. As the Chief Executive has mentioned, we use NRETAS' fleet efficiency policy, and we use the Australian government's green star rating, which has two elements to it: the efficiency greenhouse rating and also the air pollutant emissions rating. All new NRETAS' vehicles, or replacement vehicles, have to demonstrate that they have a 6.5 rating - sorry, I will have to take that bit on notice - that they actually have a better rating than a six cylinder. So we have abandoned six cylinder vehicles and said they have to be four but, within four, we are still applying they have to reach a certain green criteria.

**Mr WOOD:** In other words, there is no guarantee a four cylinder car is actually better than a six cylinder car, unless it has been tested for your star rating.

**Ms ALLEN:** It is applied through the national system.

**Mr WOOD:** But there tends to be a sort of belief that just because it is four, it is not going burn up as much fuel as a six.

**Ms ALLEN:** We do use less fuel.

**Mr WOOD:** All right. The other question is: you have ways of reducing energy consumption in your offices, turning off air conditioners and photocopiers. What proof, besides not using as much energy, have you that you actually reduce carbon emissions in the Darwin region? What is the relevance between turning the power off and using less power to actually, physically, reducing carbon emissions in the Darwin region?

**Mr GRANT:** We are using a couple of measuring systems for that; at the moment we are playing with both, but the systems we are introducing actually take into account. One of them is called Carbon Metrics which, I believe, calculates the carbon impact of behaviours; we do not just assume because we are doing it, it is going to happen, so those systems rely on looking at our electricity bills, but they calculate them through to actual greenhouse gas changes.

**Mr WOOD:** What I am getting at, you say we have reduced our energy consumption by this much, but at Channel Island and Weddell can you match that difference to a reduction in carbon emissions by some physical reduction in the use of diesel or gas, because that is where carbon emissions come

from? Can someone prove to me this is not just a nice feeling but it actually does change something in reality?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I believe this question would be better asked of the Power and Water Corporation rather than in this output. The carbon footprint emissions reduction is dependent on all of us - not just the department - every single one of us; if we are doing it at home and in our daily lives, we can all reduce it.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, minister. However, you are the department of Environment and you are pushing climate change. I am not against what you are doing, but the public would like to know that if they make changes your department recommends to reduce greenhouse gases, that greenhouse gases and emissions are actually being reduced. I am happy to ask Power and Water, but I thought perhaps someone from your department may have looked at how much reduction in the use of energy in the Darwin region it takes to physically reduce carbon emission at our powerhouses; because that is where we get our power from. I am happy to either put it on notice or to take it to Power and Water.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we can take the question on notice.

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### Question on Notice No 8.3

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Power and Water will be here on Friday. For *Hansard*, member for Nelson, please restate the question.

**Mr WOOD:** I will try not to make it too complicated. Minister, in relation to targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, how can one connect the reduction in energy consumption in your department, with a real, physical carbon reduction at the Channel Island and Weddell power stations?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** You are happy to take that on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes, we will take it on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.3

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**Mr WOOD:** That is my global question - very global.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes questions ...

**Mr CHANDLER:** May I ask one question before we go on? I have just noted under Discipline, the number of reports for improper use of computers was three. Can you detail what the improper use was?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I will pass that question on to the CEO.

**Mr GRANT:** Yes, we had three improper uses. None of them were hardcore pornography or anything like that. One was a picture of a topless woman being circulated in by e-mail; another was of a poor taste racial joke nature; and the other one was someone accessing pornography at the library - a member of the public. You will see we have introduced filters on the library since then.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Agency Specific (Whole-of-Government Related Questions).

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We now move onto Output Group 1.0 Parks and Reserves, Output 1.1 Parks Joint Management Programs. Are there any questions?

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, with employee expenses reduced by over \$3.3m across NRETAS, and given the Treasurer went to great pains to explain this record spending budget was all about jobs, I have equated that to approximately 40 to 45 staff. Can the minister advise whether this involves sackings or transferring staff out of NRETAS?

**Mr GRANT:** I am sorry, Mr Chandler, can you repeat that question?

**Mr CHANDLER:** The overall budget has been reduced by \$3.3m in staff expenses. I equate that to about 40 to 45 staff, depending on the level. Can you explain whether that involved sackings or transferring staff out of NRETAS?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Just before you answer, a small thing with process. I am not going to block the question but, technically, that is where we were, in agency specific questions. I am allowing the question, but technically it is in the previous area.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Can I say that the following questions are all in the same area, then – agency specific.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** All right, we will take the questions. This is a misunderstanding about where we were at before.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Okay.

**Mr GRANT:** I would like to refer all the financial detailed ones to Susan Kirkman from Finance.

**Ms KIRKMAN:** The decrease in employee expenses relates to a decrease in external funding; there is a decrease of \$3.1m in 2009-10 which impacts on that figure reported. There is also a decrease in the amount of money carried forward from 2007-08 into 2009-10 for external funding, so the decrease is predominantly relating to external funding.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Yes, I appreciate that. I prefer to know how NRETAS is going to manage that situation.

**Mr GRANT:** In terms of Parks and Wildlife specifically, or whole-of-agency? What will happen as the year passes with the decrease in external funding, as it does every year, that funding will arrive. We have applied for many millions of dollars of funding through *Caring for Our Country* and though we cannot put it in the books, we are always confident that money comes every year; it is about the same amount every year, and we are confident this year we will have the same success.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I reiterate that in my opening statement I mentioned the variations of figures through national partnerships we have with the Commonwealth that the money is arriving, and was highlighted in the opening statement.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr GRANT:** I can add that the funding is generally operational. We cannot rely on it to employ staff. What it does is provide money for extra projects. For example, we have asked for extra money for Eco-Links which might be spent on fencing and things like that. It is generally not related to staff. It is related to operations - icing on the cake, if you like.

**Mr CHANDLER:** And this funding is guaranteed?



**Mr GRANT:** It is highly likely. Of course, it is never guaranteed, but it has arrived every year.

**Ms KIRKMAN:** Often external funding directed to employees is for a set of period of time. Employees will be based on a contract, so they may not be permanent; they will know up-front they are not permanently employed.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, can you advise the cost of the snake removal program for the Darwin and rural areas, including Wild Care or Wildlife Rescue?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** To clarify, we are now moving into Output 1.1.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I have it down as Parks and Reserves.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We are now moving on from the Agency Specific Questions to Output 1.1.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can I just clarify that. Snake call-outs is under 3.1.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I will take your advice on where that fits. So, that is actually 3.1, is it?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Natural Resource Management.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Okay, we will come back to that. Minister, in regard to the Palmerston Water Park, can you advise if the land has been secured at this stage?

**Mr GRANT:** The Palmerston Water Park is with Sport and Recreation, I believe.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Sport and Recreation, is it?

**Ms ANDERSON:** It is with minister Hampton, after this, member for Brennan.

**Mr CHANDLER:** It is not under Parks and Reserves?

**Mr GRANT:** No.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, recently there was a great deal of media surrounding a tragic death from a crocodile. Shortly thereafter, government announced its plans to manage crocodiles in the Northern Territory. Can the minister advise how the department is going to manage the crocodile exclusion zone, given it has not been provided any additional funding for this area?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Thank you, member for Brennan. Mr Chairman, that also comes under 3.1.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** 3.1 Natural Resource Management. So we will address the question shortly.

**Ms PURICK:** Point of clarification, Mr Chairman. Minister, you are saying that everything to do with crocodile management, snakes, management of bats, reptiles, will come under Natural Resource?

**Ms ANDERSON:** If you look at the output groups which have been distributed to every department and member of the Legislative Assembly, it comes under Natural Resources. 1.1 is Parks and Reserves, and we have some delightful stories to tell on parks and joint management, great initiatives and the work we are doing in our parks.

**Ms PURICK:** Can I confirm then, also under Natural Resource Management will be items on biodiversity, bush fires, weeds, native vegetation, land capability, and support for groups?

**Mr WOOD:** The easiest way is to pull out that last report; it is broken up very clearly.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I am assuming, then, that questions on donkeys and camels are going to be in the same again, 3.3?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** 3.1. 3.3 is Water Resources.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Then I am happy to move on to 1.3

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson, do you have questions to 1.1?

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. Minister, in relation to Aboriginal rangers employed under the new parks joint management schemes, what qualifications are required for a person to be a ranger? Are you making a distinction between Indigenous rangers and the normal process for employing rangers?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, before I pass the question on to Graham Phelps can I say these are great initiatives the Northern Territory has taken in implementing this joint partnership in parks in the Northern Territory; it is an iconic suggestion by this government not just for tourists in Australia, but internationally, to say come and have a look at our parks and our Indigenous people.

**Mr PHELPS:** We do offer apprenticeships for Aboriginal people who wish to become rangers. The rangers are employed in the technical stream of the Public Service Award and it is generally a trade certificate type of training which is required for those positions. We do not offer apprenticeships, at this stage, for non-Indigenous people for those positions, but we do offer apprenticeships for people to undertake trade centre training, and when they move into the T1 level that gives them level position and there is no distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

**Mr WOOD:** What I am trying to get at, whilst I agree there should be Aboriginal rangers, is there any process which the department has in place to help people into higher qualifications leading them up to be rangers in the management levels of our parks?

**Mr PHELPS:** We focus particularly on the stepping stone and entry level, the apprenticeships, and flexible employment program which are ways of really introducing people to the concept of working on parks generally. We do have a number of Indigenous staff who, over the years, have moved through to the senior park management levels in the organisation.

We do recognise the need to work further on that and, as part of the joint management agreement which was developed around the framework for parks, one of the commitments was to undertake an Indigenous employment and training strategy to identify what we need to improve our successes and issues around progression to higher levels and employment of women, in particular, are areas which will be addressed under that strategy. We have engaged a consultant who has been working on that strategy for a couple of months now, and we are expecting the results of that quite soon, which will help guide our efforts in future years. The issue of supporting people to move up through the ranks more effectively is one that is clearly identified to be addressed through that strategy.

**Mr WOOD:** One of the benefits of the park joint management programs was to increase the amount of employment, especially for people living in the area. Are you actually creating more jobs, or are you basically giving those people an opportunity to fill vacancies that occur as time goes on?

**Mr PHELPS:** The specific funding for joint management, which is what we are looking at in this output, has created 12 additional Indigenous ranger positions which did not exist before that budget

came into being.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, member for Nelson, through my recent trips to Keep River and Gregory National Park and Timber Creek, the personal responsibility our park rangers take to mentor Indigenous people, whom they know have problems at home, is absolutely wonderful. I take this opportunity to give credit to our park rangers on the ground because they go far and beyond their duty in working with their own Indigenous colleagues. If they know these people have problems at home, personal problems, they really do take the initiative and have the drive to ensure they become real partners. They really help these people become work-ready; they understand the problems people have and make sure they bring them into the loop of working properly.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, minister. I am hoping to go to Keep River and Gregory National Park as soon as I can get out of Estimates and go back to sanity. Sorry!

**Ms ANDERSON:** Very beautiful country.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, is it possible to find out what the financial arrangements are for the leasing back of parks as part of the joint management plans. I refer to -and I notice it is not one of the parks which is part of your joint management plan scheme - the Katherine Gorge, or Nitmiluk National Park; on the back page it says: 'Annual record payments to traditional owners', and it says 'the payment of this rental in 2007-08 financial year amounted to \$217 972, compared to the 2006 figure; this payment has not been recognised in these financial statements'. Will each park have something so we know what the payments are for each park?

**Mr PHELPS:** The arrangements for leaseback and rental payments were determined and are in the leases for each of those parks where leasing back is part of the joint management arrangements. The minimum amount for those amounts was determined in 2004, and it is on a park-by-park basis as determined by the Australian Valuation Office. The first of those lease payments come due on 1 July, not this coming financial year, the 2010-11 financial year, and prior to that date we will, as agreed in the those lease arrangements, have the values of those parks again assessed by the Australian Valuation office. The lease payments can be no less than was agreed in 2004.

**Mr WOOD:** Will there be a public figure similar to what is in the Nitmiluk National Park Annual Report? Will that be publicly ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Do you want to take that on notice?

**Mr PHELPS:** The amount agreed in 2004 is actually in the lease documents, which are effectively public documents because they are in the Titles Office. I am not sure on the required reporting of the new amounts.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take the question on notice, Mr Chairman.

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**Question on Notice No 8.4**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson, would you repeat it for the purposes of *Hansard*?

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, would you be able to find out whether the annual rental payments to traditional owners through the parks joint management scheme, will be recorded in the annual reports for those parks?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are you happy to take that on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 8.4.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Just to clarify, there was some confusion before. I had a conversation with the member for Brennan about Output Group 1.0 and Output 1.1. They said they had finished questions, but have not quite finished, so I will hand back to them briefly.

**Mr CHANDLER:** We are getting there.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, my question is in regard to joint management programs. Has your department or the NT government started negotiations with the Commonwealth in regard to the transfer of Uluru and Kakadu to the Northern Territory upon the grant of statehood?

**Mr GRANT:** No, we have not had any discussions with Canberra about that.

**Ms PURICK:** Why not, given it is going to be a complex and complicated exercise? It will probably take some years to come to a satisfactory resolution. Is it not timely for discussions to start sooner rather than later?

**Mr GRANT:** It probably is time we should raise that with them, yes.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Just to follow on if I can ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is there more to that answer?

**Ms PURICK:** Are you giving an undertaking the department will seriously consider commencing discussions with the Commonwealth?

**Mr GRANT:** The fact we are a Territory does not have a huge amount to do with having Commonwealth parks; there are other Commonwealth parks in other jurisdictions, areas like Burra in New South Wales and Christmas Island, etcetera. I am not sure those things are necessarily related.

**Ms PURICK:** But they are on the government's agenda, and they have been discussed at all the Statehood Steering Committee meetings and discussions. Are you saying the government does not have a particular policy on the two parks coming to the Territory's control?

**Mr GRANT:** It is not high on our agenda.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, the Statehood Steering Committee is obviously talking about these issues, but until a recommendation comes to government from the Statehood Steering Committee, then government will take the initiative to talk to our federal colleagues about those issues. Maybe that is one way of getting the Statehood Steering Committee to push the agenda, member for Goyder ...

**Ms PURICK:** The question is about government pushing the agenda, given it is a bipartisan approach towards statehood.

**Ms ANDERSON:** The statehood committee is looking at statehood on behalf of the Northern Territory government, and a recommendation coming from the statehood committee would better push the issue along.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Just touching on what the member for Nelson said earlier in regard to the ongoing costs associated with the leaseback of Indigenous lands or parks, at the completion of the program,

does the department have an indication what the annual cost will be to Territorians?

**Ms ANDERSON:** It is very honourable, on behalf of Indigenous people, to leaseback parks to the government for 99 years and it shows, as a Territory, we have matured. I said on ABC last week that the Prime Minister of Australia apologising to the Stolen Generations made us look like a mature Australia. This has made us look like mature Territorians, that we can move on and we can live with Indigenous people. It has shown that Indigenous people will give back what is rightly theirs to all Territorians, to all Australians. For the particular question, I pass to Graham Phelps.

**Mr PHELPS:** Sorry, could you repeat the question so that I am clear.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Sure. I am interested to know when the roll-out, if you like, is complete and all the land you want that is Indigenous land today is part of national parks, and we now pay a lease for that area of land, what will be the ongoing annual costs of these leasing arrangements?

**Mr PHELPS:** We do not know exactly for those parks where lease payments will come on board in 2010, because we will need to get those parks valued prior to that time. I can tell you in 2004 when they were valued and estimated, the lease payments estimated at that time was \$990 000 for those framework parks.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Obviously not using the price of land in Palmerston in the equation. That is all I have on Output 1.1.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.1.

#### **Output 1.2 Parks and Reserves Visitor Management Programs**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We will move on to Output 1.2 Parks and Reserves Visitor Management Programs. Are there any questions?

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, given the large financial commitment to promoting the Northern Territory, why does the budget project a flat line when it comes to visitor numbers?

**Mr PHELPS:** Estimating future developments and visitor numbers is always a challenge, particularly with things like financial crises and whether that will increase the number of Australian visitors because travelling overseas will be more difficult, and the impact that will have on international visitors will be difficult to determine. We have estimated we will stabilise in the next financial year. We have suffered a drop this year of around 3%. However, that compares to an overall reduction of visitors to the Territory of about 10%. So we are attracting more than our share, which we are pleased about. We do recognise in the future it will be crystal ball gazing for those visitor numbers. It is always challenging and will be impacted by swine flu, the global economic crisis, and there is some guesswork about how that will impact. Will petrol prices drive local tourism down, but will the global economic crisis drive it up because people will not travel overseas?

**Mr CHANDLER:** Through the minister, I appreciate that, but I have figures in front of me from a number of parks in the Northern Territory that since 2003 - I can list them - Alice Springs Telegraph Station, Devils Marbles, Henbury Meteorite site, Howard Springs Nature Park, and the big one, Nitmiluk National Park, all show significantly reduced numbers of visitors attending these parks each year. The question I have is that since 2002 we have seen this reduction in visitor numbers: what are we doing to promote our parks well enough to get back to the numbers of years ago?

**Mr PHELPS:** Member for Brennan, promotion of parks in the Territory is really the responsibility of Tourism NT. Our prime role is to provide a park experience and park opportunities of a high quality and meet the market's demands. We do not have an active role in the promotion because that is done by Tourism NT.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Through the minister, I appreciate that, but are we creating the right product for the

market if we are seeing a continued drop in visitor numbers?

**Mr PHELPS:** The work that we are currently doing with Tourism NT, and we are working very closely with them looking at developing experiences around the Red Centre Way and the Red Centre Landscapes, which is a national initiative particularly for driving international tourism and creating high profile areas within Australia which can be marketed successfully overseas. We are very strongly focused on that area in the southern region because the national approach is to promote the Red Centre Way from Alice Springs to Uluru. We are working very closely with Tourism NT and with the tourism operators in Central Australia in our joint management planning for the parks through that region - the West MacDonnells, Finke, and Watarrka, in particular - to make sure we provide opportunities to meet the market demand, and the changing market demand.

One of the key things to come out of tourism research has been a focus on the spirited traveller, the experience-seeker type traveller, rather than a shot gun approach of trying to hit all targets of visitors, and focusing on the people who are most likely to come to the Territory and are also very high yield so they deliver significant dollars into the community rather than a numbers game; focusing on the types of experiences they are looking for, which are authentic bush experiences focusing strongly on Indigenous cultural experiences, developments like the Larapinta Trail which is an example of the types of experience we have ...

**Mr CHANDLER:** Sorry to interrupt. Through the minister, can I get an acknowledgement that the approach you are trying now is different to what has been tried in previous years because we can see we are on a downward slope? Have you changed your approach to try to improve numbers?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, Graham has already explained due to the international economic downturn we have had to come up with other ways, and the fact that Parks is now working with Tourism NT shows us there is a new initiative to bring new streams of the tourism market into the Parks. I believe Graham has ...

**Mr CHANDLER:** You have answered my question. Excellent. Minister, the Manton Dam Recreation Reserve provides one of the only safe freshwater facilities for recreational ski, wake boarding, tubing, etcetera, close to Darwin. The recent announcement that the water from Manton Dam may be used for future water supply for Darwin would appear to put these current activities at risk. What guarantee can you provide that recreational users will not be banned from using Manton Dam?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I believe that question is for Power and Water.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Yes, that comes under Power and Water GOC on Friday.

**Ms PURICK:** I have a question in regard to this output group. Minister, are there any privately owned parks in the Territory which are jointly managed with government? In other words, that are on private land but they have entered into an agreement with government to preserve the land in the parks sense, similar to what happens in Queensland.

**Mr PHELPS:** There are a number of properties in the Northern Territory which are managed by non-government organisations, such as conservation organisations. They manage them separately from the NT government estate and are part of their own portfolio of managed properties.

**Ms PURICK:** Through the minister, does your department have any involvement in helping them to manage those properties?

**Mr PHELPS:** No, we do not have a direct involvement in managing those properties.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, would you be able to table a list of the visitors to all the Territory parks over the past five years? I am sure you have one, because I ask this every year.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I believe we can table visitor numbers for two years, but ...

**Mr WOOD:** It would be nice to get it over a longer period, because then we can get a trend.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Can I take it on notice for the earlier years, and table visitor numbers for ...

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**Question on Notice No 8.5**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you can ask it again, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, could you provide a list of visitor numbers to all Territory parks over the last five years?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can I just put on record, we do not count all visitor numbers in all our parks; so have that very clear in your mind when you look at the figures.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** So, taking that in context, member for Nelson?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I will table the last two years, and we will take the rest on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That question on notice is number 8.5.

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**Mr WOOD:** Minister, has the boardwalk at Fogg Dam been completed? And did it come within budget?

**Mr PHELPS:** No, it has not been completed. We are expecting works to complete the last 100 metres to start in late July. We are waiting for the water to drop back so the contractors can get in there and finish it. And, yes, it will be completed on budget.

**Mr WOOD:** In relation to our favourite nature park, Howard Springs – I could not resist one question – have the plans for cleaning out the park been developed, and will they be implemented at the end of this Dry Season?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I congratulate the member for Nelson for his input into looking at the Howard Springs Nature Park with the government. He has been a core driver in bringing concerned people together from Howard Springs to ensure we had the meeting with our park rangers. I thank you, member for Nelson, for your commitment.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr PHELPS:** We are currently working with DPI on developing the terms of reference for the monitoring which will need to go along with that project of emptying it out; and, yes, we will be emptying it out this calendar year so we have decent refill and a decent opportunity to monitor it through the next financial year.

**Mr WOOD:** Through you, minister, will there be a strategy for cleaning it out? We cannot just clean it out, I suppose - we have to have a plan. What will be required to do that?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, you will be involved in all this process. Once the process with DPI begins, you and I will make sure we take a lead role in looking at all the proposals put to us.

**Mr PHELPS:** In answer to the question, yes, there will be a very clear plan.

**Mr WOOD:** My last question, minister. A couple of years ago, I went to places like Butterfly Gorge and Umbrawarra Gorge. I noticed the signs at Butterfly Gorge were outdated. In fact, they showed tracks that did not exist and they had new tracks put on them with texta colour, which showed the signs were out-of-date. Does the government have someone who is responsible for keeping an eye on signage in our parks? Also, what are we doing about crocodile warning signs? They seem to have dropped off over the years. Are we now looking at reintroducing those signs and making them more prominent?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we have addressed these issues about signage with our Parks staff. When I visited Keep River, Gregory National Park, and other parks around Darwin, I also noticed signs deteriorating. It has been brought to the attention of Parks, and they are doing what they can. Yes, there is someone responsible for that, but I will pass you on to Graham.

**Mr PHELPS:** There are two levels of responsibility in this one. The first is the Chief District Ranger for the area in which the park sits. He has responsibility for all management aspects of those parks which includes signage both for interpretation purposes and crocodile safety. As they manage the people who are on the ground, they should be the people who are most in touch with whether signs are deteriorating, and whether they are up-to-date. It is their role to work with our interpretation people, who are back in central office, to develop new signs, replace them and have reprints if they are faded or damaged. The responsibility for production ultimately rests with the interpretation team, and the responsibility for identification rests with the Chief District Rangers. Because the interpretation team works across multiple districts, they actually prioritise and coordinate the works program to address those problems as required.

**Mr WOOD:** Through you, Mr Chairman, do you have an interpretation staff or group within your parks?

**Mr PHELPS:** Yes, we do.

**Mr WOOD:** How do they ensure all the signs will be uniform? I am not saying they should be a certain size, but so they are recognisable as Parks and Wildlife and are of a similar style to maintain uniformity.

**Mr PHELPS:** We have a sign manual which provides information for the development of signs. It is adhered to quite strongly when it comes to regulatory, safety, orientation type signs. When it comes to interpretative signs, we are more creative. There are still standards for styles for acknowledgement of government and Parks and Wildlife, although there is more flexibility in the manual for interpretative signs.

**Mr WOOD:** You are saying the area managers look at the signs, but is there an overall audit occasionally done of all the signage Parks and Wildlife own to check whether they have deteriorated to the point where they actually give the Parks a bad name. The worst thing you can have is a sign falling apart, because it says that Parks is not interested. Do you occasionally do an overall audit of the signage?

**Mr PHELPS:** No, we have not. In part, that is because it would be such a big exercise and would roll out of date really quickly. The expectation of Chief District Rangers is if signs are in such poor condition that they reflect poorly on the experience, then they are better off not there unless they are absolutely required for safety or orientation purposes.

**Mr WOOD:** There was one other question, but it just fell out of my head. I will not worry. Thank you.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration Output 1.2.

### **Output 1.3 Parks and Reserves Conservation Management Programs**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I now call for questions on Output 1.3 Parks and Reserves Conservation Management Programs. Are there any questions?



**Mr CHANDLER:** I have heaps, but we want to move on.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson, do you have any questions to Output 1.3?

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. Minister, as part of the policy guidelines and procedures for the management of recreational water bodies, and the application of microbiological water quality guidelines in NT Parks and Reserves, what are you going to do when the water quality tests fail? I know it applies to Howard Springs, but do you apply this to all areas throughout the Territory where people swim? What do you do if those microbiological tests do not come up to standard?

**Mr PHELPS:** We certainly do apply those guidelines to the swimming holes in the Territory. Fortunately, in general, we have not had to deal with low standards. We have had occasional closures of places, I understand, prior to my time in this position. I understand we occasionally had to close some of the water bodies at Tjuwaliyn for short periods when there was concern about the quality of water. We have a regular monitoring process which applies to our water bodies.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, can you list, or you may have a table, of all capital works funding and operational funding for all parks for the past five years? I am looking at having each park separated.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take that question on notice.

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**Question on Notice No 8.6**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you could just repeat that for *Hansard*.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, could you table a document showing, for the past five years, what capital works funding and operational funding was attributed to all parks in the Northern Territory?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are you happy to take that question, minister?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We are happy to take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question is No 8.6.

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**Mr WOOD:** Minister, in the 2007-08 Annual Report you said you successfully implemented control programs for Devil's Claw and Ngurr Burr in the Gregory National Park. Does this mean you have eradicated the weed in that park?

**Ms ANDERSON:** No. Mr Phelps.

**Mr PHELPS:** I am going to have to take that one on notice. I know we are getting very close with Devil's Claw. We had our Devil's Claw Festival again, and feedback from staff out at Gregory National Park is that we are really making some significant progress and, if we are not there yet, we are awfully close. We can take that one on notice.

**Question on Notice No 8.7**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you could just repeat the question, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, you say in your annual report that you successfully implemented control programs for Devil's Claw and Ngurr Burr in the Gregory National Park. Does this mean you have

eradicated the weed?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take the question on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.7.

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**Question on Notice No 8.8**

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, you also said in that report you have significantly reduced mimosa infestations in the Adelaide and Mary River catchments. Could you quantify what you mean by 'significantly reduced'? Could you give us a report on the state of the beetles which have been released over the last few years, and their impact on mimosa?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can we take that question on notice?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That would be fine. For *Hansard*, that is question No 8.8.

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**Mr WOOD:** I am not asking you to give me a book on the next question, but could you give us some information on your feral animal control program in relation to buffalo, unmusterable cattle, horses, camels, donkeys and pigs? Do you have a strategy for all those feral animals?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Does that come under Output 3.1?

**Mr WOOD:** It came out of your book under that – I will check. We just used the parks ...

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, Graham is saying that he can answer it under Parks.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Considering we gave advice on this earlier, we will take it at 3.1 as well.

**Mr WOOD:** It came under conservation management programs in your annual report.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I am happy if you are, minister, to ask the question now, bearing in mind the opposition will be asking similar questions.

**Mr WOOD:** It is in the right report, 9.3.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I am going to allow them to ask those questions at 3.1, because it was indicated earlier they could ask.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Are there different rules for the Independents?

**Mr WOOD:** No. I am just taking the annual report ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** No, I am saying you are fine, you can ask the questions, but because we flagged it with the opposition ...

**Mr WOOD:** I do not want to upset the member for Brennan.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I will ask my CEO to answer.

**Mr GRANT:** In 1.3, as I understand it, it refers to programs in Parks, so if the question is about buffaloes in parks it is appropriate now. If it is buffaloes in general ...

**Mr WOOD:** The report says: 'achieve the following feral animal control objectives: assist landholders in the Victoria River region with removal of cattle and unmusterable buffalo'. You did some work in Nitmiluk National Park, you also did some work at Limmen, and you carried out aerial shooting programs in Central Australia. So it fits into this area, but you obviously work outside parks as well, by the sound of it.

**Ms ANDERSON:** That is what we are saying, member for Nelson. Because it comes under that output we will take your question.

**Mr WOOD:** Will we put it under the next output then, is that what you want, 3.1? I will move on and we can cover it next time. Could you give us an idea, again from your annual report, what is your program and what costs are involved in the management of Gamba grass within your parks? Or do you just have a weed budget?

**Mr PHELPS:** We would not be able to quantify the part of our budget which is spent directly on Gamba grass; it is a weed budget.

**Mr WOOD:** I take it from the report; it mentions Gamba and Mission grass specifically. All right. Minister, this relates to a person I saw last week who has a block of land at Tree Point. He was there recently watching a number of turtles trying to lay their eggs on the beach at Tree Point. He said except for one, they were all driven back because there are a continual number of vehicles driving up and down that beach, which is not meant to happen because there is sign there that says 'do not drive on the beach'.

Minister, considering that part of the beach belongs to Parks and Wildlife, and the other part belongs to Land Corporation - unfortunately, I never got to ask Land Corporation about this - would you consider a joint management arrangement between Parks and Wildlife and Land Corporation to establish the permanent presence of a ranger in the Tree Point shoal area to manage both the park and the land belonging to Land Corporation? I am asking the question because it is becoming more and more popular and yet we do not seem to have any management patrols over that beach or the surrounding areas.

**Mr PHELPS:** We do not have any plans at this stage to enter into a joint management arrangement with NT Land Corporation over the area adjacent to Tree Point. The management requirements in that area, particularly over the larger part of land that NTLC manage, would be potentially quite high and we need to look at whether that area is actually of value for the parks estate more broadly.

**Mr WOOD:** Through you, minister, bearing in mind this person has a block of land in that area, there are not many people living in the area, the turtles were trying to walk up a beach belonging to your department, and they could not because there is no control over the traffic that drives up and down there, except for a sign. Surely with the increasing amount of visitation to that area you would you consider some permanent presence or arrangement to protect the Tree Point Reserve?

**Mr PHELPS:** We manage the Tree Point area and the Shoal Bay Conservation Area as part of the Howard Springs sub-district, as you know. Within that area we place our resources as best fit and where the demand is highest. The issue of vehicles on the beach at Tree Point has been an ongoing issue for some time. Unfortunately, it is not a piece of land that lends itself to any form of physical barrier, although it is ...

**Mr WOOD:** A very delicate area.

**Mr PHELPS:** ... and it really is a matter of deploying the resources we have in the Howard Springs area to meet the needs of the overall district.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, what I am pushing at the moment, and I have pushed this before, I believe it is

an area which, unfortunately, has been left by the government to fend for itself. If we cannot put someone out there, either Land Corporation or yourself - because the old Gunn Point prison farm is there, so there are facilities for a ranger station of some sort - if we do not have a presence there, uncontrolled use of the beach will continue and the damage that will occur to flora, fauna and the physical surrounds, the sand dunes, in the long run will cost the government a lot more money to repair. I am putting it to this Estimates Committee that the government should consider a permanent presence, between yourselves and Land Corporation, to manage that area.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, the Northern Territory government is committed to Territory Parks and Wildlife. You can see with the injection of money into Parks and Wildlife and the protection of biodiversity in the Northern Territory that we are committed. This is something we will look at.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 1.3.

**OUTPUT GROUP 2.0 - BIOLOGICAL PARKS**  
**Output 2.1 Biological Parks**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We now move on to Output Group 2.0 Biological Parks, Output 2.1 Biological Parks.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I have many questions, but I would like to move on.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, Biological Parks, it says that 90% of people were satisfied going to the George Brown Botanic Gardens.. Is that 90% of the people who filled in the form, or 90% of the people who actually visited the park?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Could I just welcome to the table Ms Gae Mackay, and Anna will take the question.

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** Anna Malgorzewicz, Director of Museums and Galleries. The response is actually 90% of those who completed the questionnaires in the Orientation Centre.

**Mr WOOD:** There is a bit of interpretation of whether the ones who did not fill in the form were happy or not; which we will never know. There is confusion on the numbers of visitors to George Brown Botanic Gardens. The 2007-08 Annual Report estimated 240 000 people were to visit the George Brown Botanic Gardens; in the 2009-10 Budget all of a sudden it is estimated to be 390 000. That is an increase of a whopping 150 000 people. Also what has changed is in the 2009-10 Budget the estimate for the previous year is 350 000. Why is there a huge variation from the 2007-08 Annual Report to the 2009-10 Budget?

**Ms MACKAY:** Gae Mackay, Executive Director Collections, Biodiversity and Biological Parks. In terms of visitations, it was an unanticipated number attending the Darwin Festival and the Tropical Garden Spectacular. Those figures have not necessarily been taken into account when we did the estimate, or they had been considered as estimates, but it accounts for the significant difference between the two years.

**Mr WOOD:** The 150 000?

**Ms MACKAY:** It was a huge number. It was probably conservative numbers in previous years, and then again, survey methodology has also been refined and the extrapolation has meant that the numbers have gone up significantly.

**Ms ANDERSON:** So more festivals, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Does that figure really count as visiting the park, for the park's sake? I know what you are saying, that there is a festival there, but I think a true figure would be how many people visited George

Brown Botanic Gardens because it was a botanic garden?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I believe what happens, if you have an increase and influx into the community due to the festivals, you would have had people come a week prior and stay a week later, so those people were visiting the Botanic Gardens at that time.

**Mr WOOD:** All right. In the Budget 2007-08 on page 92, it said a sponsorship had been received under the Plant and Seating Sponsorship Scheme. What exactly is that?

**Ms MACKAY:** The tree and seat sponsorship is a new initiative we brought in during this current financial year. It is designed to increase interest and awareness within the parks, and also builds stewardship as much as anything. There are two aspects to it: one is that people can actually sponsor trees, and this is largely aimed at the corporate market, although individuals can also participate. There are a number of iconic trees which have been identified within the park, and different sponsorship levels - the more iconic the tree, the more expensive to sponsor - so that is definitely an attraction for large companies, but there are also less important trees.

**Mr WOOD:** So it has not started yet, or it has?

**Ms MACKAY:** It has just recently been launched, so it's a new initiative. The second part of it is a memorial seat arrangement whereby we have seats available, which have been designed and constructed in Darwin so they are supporting local business, and people can sponsor a seat for, I believe, a 10-year period and have a plaque placed on the particular seat. Locations have been identified within the gardens, in attractive areas, obviously, and people can nominate where they want their seat to be placed and then, for the next 10 years, the Botanic Gardens will maintain and look after that seat.

**Mr WOOD:** Are they the only ones who can sit on that seat?

**Ms MACKAY:** Definitely not.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Very good initiative, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you. What was the budget for the major upgrade of directional signage, and was it adequate to complete the upgrade?

**Ms MACKAY:** I believe any program of upgrade is an ongoing one, so the signage that has been completed is part of a longer term program. In terms of if it been enough to complete it; it is certainly not complete, it is something which will continue on. The signs are designed to improve orientation within the gardens and, as new developments come along, will be added to over a period of time.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, can you give us an update for the handing over of the Window on the Wetlands facility to traditional owners.

**Ms MACKAY:** We currently have a written agreement between the department and the Limilngan/Wulna (Land Holding) Aboriginal Corporation. That agreement actually outlines a set of, almost intentions. The intention is we will work with the Limilngan/Wulna Corporation to promote Indigenous employment, economical opportunities and so forth, with a view at some point in time in the future, if and when the association is ready, the centre can be handed over. At the time the agreement was made it was in line with where the association wanted to head. They were not in a position where they wanted to take it over at that point in time, but the door is now open and ready, so when the time arrives, we are ready to go.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, very early, when I first got the portfolio I went out to Window on the Wetlands and that was the case. There is a very committed Indigenous group of people there who wanted a partner, but did not want to take over straight away until they were comfortable they had all

the knowledge and experience to do so. I believe it has been the greatest opportunity and the greatest partnership that has been seen operating between Parks and the traditional owners - really committed.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, in the 2007-08 Annual Report on page 93 in Performance Measures Output, it has a figure for 'Subsidies per Visitor'. Why has that subsidy per visitor been reduced? For example, in 2005-06 it was \$50.01, in 2007-08 it was \$52.71; now, in 2008-09, it went down to \$47.11. I am not sure whether that is in line with the budget. Why has that subsidy gone down?

**Ms MACKAY:** The figure for the subsidy is actually calculated by taking the community service obligation payment, which is provided to the Government Business Division of Territory Wildlife Parks, and that division consists of the Territory Wildlife Park and the Alice Springs Desert Park. The subsidy is actually calculated by taking the community service obligation and dividing it by the number of visitors to the parks. So, if the number of visitors increases, then the subsidy decreases and, conversely, if the number of visitors decreases, the subsidy increases. In the 2007-08 when the actuals was \$52.71, the estimate at the time was reduced because there was an expectation of increased visitation. Unfortunately, that has not evolved; the visitation has dropped. Therefore, we would anticipate the subsidy per visitor will actually increase rather than decrease.

**Mr WOOD:** You have not set that figure yet? No, because it is not shown under the Performance Measures, even though it is in the performance measures of the annual report.

**Ms KIRKMAN:** We have revisited the performance measures this year, so it is no longer in the budget paper.

**Mr WOOD:** Do you know what it will be? It should be in this budget, shouldn't it? There should be an estimate for what it would be for 2009-10, then?

**Ms KIRKMAN:** I can get back to you on what that will be.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take that part on notice.

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#### Question on Notice No 8.9

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you could just repeat that for *Hansard*.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, could you give us the subsidy per visitor for Biological Parks for 2009-10? That is an estimate, of course.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 8.9.

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**Mr WOOD:** Minister, can you give us a capital works funding, and repairs and maintenance funding, for each property in Biological Parks for the past five years?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we will take it on notice.

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#### Question on Notice No 8.10

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you could just repeat that for *Hansard*.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, can you give us the capital works funding, and repairs and maintenance funding for each property in Biological Parks for the past five years?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.10.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is all for that output?

**Mr WOOD:** That is all.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Okay, that concludes consideration of Output 2.1, Biological Parks.

**OUTPUT GROUP 3.0 – NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**Output 3.1 Natural Resource Management**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We now move on to Output Group 3.0 Natural Resources, Output 3.1 Natural Resource Management. Are there any questions?

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, I have a number of questions here on water management. Do they come under Natural Resources Management, or would you prefer them asked in Water Resources?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Water Resources, Output 3.3.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Output 3.3?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, biodiversity sits under Natural Resource Management; a few questions. How many strategic assessment programs have been developed in the last year? What areas do they cover? What did it cost for each program to be developed?

**Ms MACKAY:** Sorry, could you repeat that question for me?

**Ms PURICK:** Sure, it comes under Biodiversity. It states in the budget papers for this area strategic assessment programs that were undertaken. How many strategic assessment programs were developed in the last year? What areas did they cover? What did it cost for each program to be developed?

**Ms MACKAY:** I will have to take that on notice.

**Question on Notice No 8.11**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, if you could restate your question.

**Ms PURICK:** Under Biodiversity, how many strategic assessment programs were developed in the last year? What areas did they cover? What did it cost for each program?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** And you are happy to take that on notice, minister?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.11.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, it also mentions wildlife management plans under Biodiversity. Could you tell me how many wildlife management plans were developed and implemented in the last year? What do they cover? At what cost were they developed?

**Ms MACKAY:** Wildlife management plans for the 2008-09 program?

**Ms PURICK:** Yes.

**Ms MACKAY:** The ones that are currently in place and/or being reviewed?

**Ms PURICK:** Yes.

**Ms MACKAY:** There are five in total: Saltwater Crocodile Plan, Freshwater Crocodiles, Magpie Geese, Dingoes, and Cycads. Was the question next year as well?

**Ms PURICK:** No. What was the cost in developing those plans?

**Ms MACKAY:** The cost, I would have to take on notice, I am sorry.

**Ms PURICK:** Okay, sure.

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**Question on Notice 8.12**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, could you please repeat the question?

**Ms PURICK:** We have heard how many wildlife management plans were developed and implemented in the year, but what was the cost of developing each of those management plans?

**Ms ANDERSON:** For clarity, Mr Chairman, you were happy with the ...

**Ms PURICK:** The five plans, yes.

**Ms ANDERSON:** It is the costs?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** It is the cost issue.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We are happy to take the costs on notice.

**Ms MACKAY:** Can we just get clarification on that, please? They are the plans that are currently in place?

**Ms PURICK:** Yes.

**Ms MACKAY:** Some of the plans last for five years, so some of the plans may not have had much work in this current year. We do have other programs which are being reviewed, and the costs will vary.

**Ms PURICK:** Okay, that is fine.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Taking that into consideration, for the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 8.12.

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**Ms PURICK:** The final question: under Biodiversity, how many biodiversity monitoring programs are



active currently?

**Ms MACKAY:** How many biodiversity monitoring programs?

**Ms PURICK:** Are active currently?

**Ms MACKAY:** Currently, there are five.

**Ms PURICK:** And they are?

**Ms MACKAY:** Monitoring programs for Kakadu National Park, the Northern Quolls, Slater Skink, *Acacia undoolyala*, and Tiwi plants.

**Ms PURICK:** Okay, thank you.

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**Answer to Question on Notice 8.11**

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we have an answer to a question on notice.

**Mr GRANT:** The strategic assessment programs.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** And that was number?

**Ms PURICK:** It was 8.1.

**Ms ANDERSON:** 8.1, yes.

**Ms PURICK:** Strategic assessment programs? No, this is under Biodiversity.

**Ms MACKAY:** 8.11, I think it might have been.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** 8.11, okay.

**Mr GRANT:** We have approximately \$0.75m committed to the collection of data, and that data is for information and knowledge derived from soil and vegetation data collected to provide the basis for land use planning, sustainable development, utilisation and the protection of the Northern Territory's natural resources.

It is made up of \$0.22m for soil, land, and vegetation mapping in the Daly River Catchment, which provides a basis for our decision making in the Daly River Plan, etcetera; \$0.16m for soil erosion and land cover monitoring in the Daly River Catchment, again, relating to land clearing, etcetera; \$0.21m for soil, land and vegetation assessments in the Coomalie Local Government area and Darwin Harbour Catchment, to provide land capability information for peri-urban development in the Darwin area; and \$0.16m for the collection of broad-based soil and landscape vegetation information across rangelands for the purpose of sustainable Indigenous land development and pastoral land management - those include the Top End, Victoria River District, and the Barkly Tableland.

**Ms PURICK:** Can I ask for that document to be tabled, please, Mr Chairman?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is that a version which can be tabled?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to table it, Mr Chairman.

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**Ms PURICK:** Under 3.1, Natural Resource Management, moving onto the topic Bushfires, I have a series of questions. How many fire plans have been developed over the year – perhaps if I read all the questions, or do you want me to go through them one by one?

**Ms LEEDER:** Diana Leeder, Executive Director, Natural Resources. Perhaps if you give me the questions.

**Ms PURICK:** Sure. How many fire plans were developed over the year? How much land mass do they cover? What was the cost to develop the fire plans? How many active fire brigades are there in the NT? What is the cost for the department to support these brigades? How many volunteers are associated with them? What is the cost to support a single brigade, on average? Within the department's data, how many call-outs were recorded for all the volunteer brigades? What is the cost for a call-out; is there an average cost?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Can they all be answered or ...

**Ms LEEDER:** Some of those questions I will need to take on notice.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can we just have the small ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** In bite sizes? Maybe if we go one at a time, and what we cannot answer we take on notice?

**Ms PURICK:** If it is more comfortable for the minister and the department officials, I am happy for them to be placed on notice.

**Ms LEEDER:** I can certainly take some of them.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we cannot take questions just on notice; we have to understand the question. There is a possibility we could answer them now, and those we cannot answer, we will take on notice.

**Ms PURICK:** All right. How many fire plans were developed over the year?

**Ms LEEDER:** There were 115 fire plans.

**Ms PURICK:** Right. Do you have the land mass they cover?

**Ms LEEDER:** No, I do not have the land mass; I would have to take that on notice.

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**Question on Notice No 8.13**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Please repeat the question for *Hansard*.

**Ms PURICK:** How much land mass, in hectares or acres, do these fire plans cover?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** You are happy to take that on notice, minister?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.13.

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**Ms PURICK:** Next question: what is the cost to the department to develop one of these fire plans?

**Ms LEEDER:** I would have to take that one on notice.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take that one on notice.

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**Question on Notice No 8.14**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you would repeat the question for *Hansard*.

**Ms PURICK:** What was the cost to develop a fire plan?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.14.

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**Ms PURICK:** Minister, how many active fire brigades are there in the Northern Territory, under your department's management?

**Ms ANDERSON:** There are currently 21 volunteer bushfire brigades in the Northern Territory, with approximately 450 registered members.

**Ms PURICK:** What is the cost to the department to support these brigades?

**Ms LEEDER:** The volunteer brigade operations received grants totalling \$468 000. We also have a program for vehicle replacement, which is \$419 000; community firefighting equipment subsidy is \$50000, and protective equipment for the brigades is \$11 000. That is a total of \$948 000.

**Ms PURICK:** I will skip to the last question because the costings you have given probably cover some of them. Do you have record of how many call-outs were recorded by the volunteer brigades across the Territory, whether they be fire call-outs or assisting in vehicle accidents, and events of that nature?

**Ms LEEDER:** I do not have the exact figures here, but we can certainly provide those figures.

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**Question on Notice No 8.15**

**Ms PURICK:** For *Hansard*, the question is: how many call-outs were recorded by the volunteer brigades to attend to fire problems or assistance with road accidents?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, if you are happy to take it, minister, it is question No 8.15.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take it.

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**Mr WOOD:** Minister, there was a letter in the paper the other day regarding waterfowl hunting. I wonder if you could answer some of the questions which were asked there. Does the government have a phase-in period for this changeover from lead shot to nontoxic shot for waterfowl hunting?

**Ms ANDERSON:** It might be answered between two people.

**Ms MACKAY:** Sorry, could you repeat the question?

**Mr WOOD:** Does the government have a phase-in period for the changeover from lead shot to nontoxic shot for waterfowl hunting?

**Ms MACKAY:** At the moment the nontoxic shot is a requirement on hunting reserves. The management program, which is currently in the stages of approval, stipulates one of the actions from the management program will be banning lead shot across all tenures for anyone hunting waterfowl under a permit. That will be a permit condition, and the intent is to introduce that for next season, which commences around September.

**Mr WOOD:** I suppose the question the person was asking is what does he do with his lead shot cartridges? Can he use them anywhere now, or does he have to throw them away?

**Ms MACKAY:** I am not an expert in what alternative uses there are for the lead shot, but certainly for hunting waterfowl under permit, the intention is it will be a permit condition this year.

**Mr WOOD:** I am not against what you are trying to do. I am looking at the practicalities of what is being put into place. Were shooters warned, were they given some lead-up time before this decision was made so that they could ...

**Ms MACKAY:** It was certainly highlighted in the draft program which went out for public consultation. So it is not something that has been slipped in at the last minute. It has been out for public consultation and, in general, the submissions we received were in favour.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, I and my Chief of Staff met with these people, so they were forewarned.

**Mr WOOD:** In relation to the use of lead shot, are those limitations just within parks, or are there limitations on the type of animal it can be used upon?

**Ms MACKAY:** The intention is that it will be introduced as a permit condition for anyone who will be hunting waterfowl for the declared season using an NRETAS permit.

**Mr WOOD:** Are Indigenous people exempted from those regulations?

**Ms MACKAY:** If Indigenous people are hunting in a traditional manner on their appropriate lands, then they would be exempted; but if they are hunting under permit, it would be enforced.

**Mr WOOD:** The question would be, why should one lot of geese have a different shooting regime, you might say, than another? In other words, why differentiate between who shot the geese?

**Ms MACKAY:** The primary reason for the differentiation is, in fact, in legislation. Currently, traditional hunting is exempt, and non-traditional hunting is not. The intent is, in terms of the management program, to propose an educational program and awareness-raising with Indigenous hunters with the view to encourage them not to use lead shot. There have been discussions between our minister and the minister for Police to progress the legislation to try to make it a widespread, uniform approach.

**Mr WOOD:** Why is it not uniform? It does not matter who shot the geese, Indigenous or non-Indigenous. We know lead shot gets into crocodiles; that has been proven. Why is there not simply one rule for everyone? You are not stopping people shooting geese. You are just talking about the method, and lead shot is not traditional. Why is there not one rule for everyone?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Can I just jump in there to say the Indigenous people of Kakadu have taken the initiative themselves and said they will ban lead shot. It is individual traditional owners' choice, and

these people were determined to make that choice themselves.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, I appreciate that but, on the other side, and I am not trying to make this a race matter, non-Indigenous people do not have that choice. The geese and the environment are what we are trying to protect because we do not want lead in the environment. As I said, crocodiles do pick it up, therefore I would have thought the overarching reason should be the protection of wildlife, not necessarily the manner in which it is shot or who shot it. I am asking why do we not produce legislation that covers everyone and phase out lead shot.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will be working with Indigenous people on their country and putting out an education strategy to make sure they are fully informed and they are part of the process of doing away with lead shot.

**Mr WOOD:** I understand that, but would the government consider a uniform policy that no lead shot will be used against native wildlife?

**Ms ANDERSON:** That is something we will have to take back to Cabinet, and it is up to Cabinet.

**Mr WOOD:** The other issue was the removal of carcasses from a hunting reserve; that is a requirement now. One of the arguments is, the best place to leave them is probably on the hunting reserve because they will be eaten there by natural predators, by chicken hawks or whatever. What was the reason for removing carcasses from a hunting reserve?

**Ms MACKAY:** The actual hunting of magpie geese is a consumptive harvest; the intention is the birds are shot for consumption purposes. In some respects you are correct in saying that in leaving the carcasses there they will be eaten for carrion and so forth. I do not know if you have been to hunting reserves but, the problem is that often they are not; they are often left in piles and they do not break down which represents quite a waste of the birds. So, it becomes a twofold problem: one is a littering problem of having big piles of birds that rot and smell and so forth, but, more importantly, it is a consumptive harvest and many of the geese left behind have been shot but not eaten. This is an attempt to fix the littering side of things, to remove the congregation of dead bodies and, equally, trying to encourage people to shoot for eating, not for sport.

**Mr WOOD:** What guarantee is there that people would eat what they shot, simply by taking those carcasses out the park? The Howard Springs hunting reserve is a classic example; they just drive out and dump them on the road. I am not trying to be silly here but, obviously, the person who wrote that letter believes it is a concern. Were these things discussed with the working group?

**Ms MACKAY:** This particular issue was not discussed previously. It was really in recognition of issues which have arisen out of previous hunting seasons. It is a management of a problem, the carcasses being left in great piles, not being spread. We could have asked people to spread them, but the problem is that has not been happening. I guess it is really a way of asking shooters to take responsibility for their own actions in dealing with those carcasses.

**Mr WOOD:** Through you, minister, although we are not talking about cans and bottles here, we are talking about organic material which will rot down. Of course, it will smell; that is what happens when you die. Would you review this policy? I have some doubts that it is a practical policy, and the writer of the letter also felt that. Would this policy be reviewed to see whether it is actually doing what it is claimed to do?

**Mr PHELPS:** This is not quite addressing your question directly, but we are currently in the process of working on joint management plans for some of the parks where hunting occurs. One of the areas where we have had significant feedback is from traditional owners of those parks who are concerned about the carcasses being left in the park. Any consideration of changing that policy needs to take into account the views of the traditional owners of those parks. They have been very strong that leaving carcasses in the parks by hunters is something which concerns them.

**Mr WOOD:** Harrison Dam is not actually a traditional hunting ground.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, it could become a two-way partnership between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people because, as you know with magpie geese and bush turkeys, the feathers can be used for ceremonies and also the small bone on the legs can be used for ceremonies.

**Mr WOOD:** I do not want to see you move the problem from one spot to the other side of the road and still have the same issue.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We also have to take into consideration the cruelty to these birds that get shot; their chests are ripped out and they are just left there and, in some cases, they are not dead.

**Mr WOOD:** I am not advocating cruelty. I am not getting into that argument.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will certainly have a look at it.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay. In the 2007-08 Annual Report under Priorities, it said that you were to:

*Establish the Care and Rehabilitation of Wildlife Foundation to coordinate the community care of injured and orphaned wildlife.*

How is this working? Who administers the foundation? Who funds it? What are its operations?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, can we take that on notice?

#### **Question on Notice No 8.16**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Please restate the question.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister it says in the 2007-08 Annual Report under Priorities that you will:

*Establish the Care and Rehabilitation of Wildlife Foundation to coordinate the community care of injured and orphaned wildlife.*

How is this working? Who administers the foundation? Where does the funding come from? What are its operations? I add in there: how does it fit in with programs, for instance, that the Ark people presently run, and also the Caring for Wildlife people?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.16.

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**Mr WOOD:** That is the last of my questions.

**Ms PURICK:** I have a few more Natural Resources before we go on to the second one. Minister, how many weed plans were declared during the year for the Territory, and at what cost were they produced?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Declared plans for 2008-09 for Gamba grass, mimosa.

**Ms PURICK:** Yes, I wanted the number of weed plans.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Okay, mimosa, cabomba, mesquite and bellyache.

**Ms LEEDER:** In 2008-09, it was Gamba grass the management plan was developed for; and the anticipation for 2009-10 is the other four - mimosa, cabomba, mesquite and bellyache.

**Ms PURICK:** A subsequent question to that is, at what cost were they produced per plan?

**Ms LEEDER:** We have to take that on notice.

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**Question on Notice 8.17**

**Ms PURICK:** For *Hansard* the question is: what did it cost to develop each weed plan for the Northern Territory?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 8.17

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**Ms PURICK:** Still under Natural Resources, but with regard to support for groups which are listed in the budget papers. How much money does the department give to external groups during the year such as PLAN, Landcare, and the Environment Centre? How much grant money was given?

**Mr GRANT:** Could you just clarify? Is that grants within Natural Resource Management or across the department?.

**Ms PURICK:** My understanding is it comes under Natural Resource Management. That is the area that was listed in the budget papers.

**Mr GRANT:** We will work on that.

**Ms PURICK:** Okay. In giving grants to various external stakeholders, is there a requirement for them to acquit that funding back to the government, given it is the use of public money?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Ms PURICK:** Is there a process you could detail as to how they acquit the funds you grant to them for their activities; anything under the public service management systems?

**Mr GRANT:** No, but we certainly have a system in the department for acquittal of grants that is quite rigorous and we hold them to that process, and that is available to anyone who gets a grant.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, money given to groups like the Environment Centre or Arid Lands Centre in Alice Springs, obviously some of that money is used to campaign against the uranium exploration industry. Is this not a contradiction given the government supports the uranium industry, yet gives funding to interest groups to actively campaign against the industry?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I am being advised that environment grants are not in this output group.

**Ms PURICK:** Sorry?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Environment grants.

**Ms PURICK:** The budget papers I looked at, it was grants to outside groups.

**Ms ANDERSON:** But it does not come under this output group.

**Ms PURICK:** It is under Natural Resource Management.

**Ms ANDERSON:** 4.1

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Environment Sustainability.

**Ms PURICK:** All right, I will refer it to that one. That is all the questions.

**Mr WOOD:** We received a tabled document on parks visitation. Is there a more detailed version of this? The one I received last year had Davenport Range, it might even have had Djukbinj, so there are a number of parks which may not be included in this. I was wondering if we could get a more fulsome parks visitation.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I believe there were two parts to that. I tabled that almost straightaway, and I think we are still waiting for the second portion.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** There is a question on notice that had more information, is that right?

**Mr WOOD:** Will it have more parks than this?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, just checking.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Do you have more questions on this output? That concludes consideration of Output 3.1 Natural Resource Management.

### **Output 3.2 – Flood Forecasting**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We are now moving on to Output 3.2 Flood Forecasting. Are there any questions?

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, in regards to Flood Forecasting, can you tell me how many new gauging stations were installed in the last year, and where they are located?

**Ms LEEDER:** If you could just bear with me for a moment, I do have those listed somewhere. Could I have the detail of the question again?

**Ms PURICK:** Yes. How many new gauging stations were installed in the last year, and where are they located?

**Ms KIRKMAN:** In 2008-09, there were two: one is at Waterhouse River, near the central Arnhem Highway; and the second is at King River, downstream of the Victoria Highway.

**Ms PURICK:** Thank you. That is all.

**Mr WOOD:** In the 2007-08 Annual Report on page 106 it states there was \$700 000 from, must have been the Department of Meteorology, for upgrading and telemetering 60 gauging stations. Do those 60 gauging stations come under your department, and can you tell us, roughly, what the upgrades were?



**Ms LEEDER:** Yes, those gauging stations do fall within our area. The detail of the work was to replace redundant systems such as loggers, and replace with telemetry; to improve the data collection ability; and general upgrading of the condition of the gauging stations.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 3.2 Flood Forecasting.  
**Output 3.2 – Water Resources**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I now call for questions on output 3.3 Water Resources.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, I am aware that water management planning is currently being undertaken, however, can you advise if any of the current planning is having a negative effect on farmers, business or any development?

**Ms LEEDER:** My understanding is the community is generally receptive to the process for water allocation planning given that it is developed through a community advisory committee process. In some areas where planning is yet to commence or is in the early stages, part of the process is to raise questions about the possible impact of water allocation planning; but the outcome of the process in Katherine has identified most of the issues which were raised have been successfully worked through.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Thank you. Minister, I am advised there may be an issue with water allocation in the Mataranka area. I am aware of at least one application which dates back to 2005, and we are in 2009. Can you advise why applicants have been required to sink bores prior to having water licence allocated, when your application form does note 'proposed bores'?

**Ms LEEDER:** There has been recent discussion with proponents and applicants in the Mataranka area regarding the way in which, perhaps, conditional licences could be issued which would not require them to have a fully functional bore prior to making application for the licence; but it would mean the licence would not be activated until such time as the bore had actually been proven.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Through the minister, I am not going to talk about individual applications, but if applications go back as far as 2005, has that been one of the stumbling blocks in applications not being approved until now?

**Ms LEEDER:** No, that has not been a stumbling block. The issue you raise has been something which was raised recently, and the department has taken advice from interstate agencies as to how to handle that particular issue; but that has not been the stumbling block.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Brennan, I believe you are referring to the same people we spoke to, and the member for Nelson also spoke to. I thought that the meeting we had in the office upstairs prior to Estimates was a very positive meeting that moved the situation forward, and they went off saying their position had now changed and things were quite different to what they had intended to bring to government.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I appreciate that, minister. My understanding is that a number of people in the Mataranka area have been requested to withdraw their current applications. My question is, even given you may provide your word, a commitment to do something about this, if an application is indeed withdrawn, legally they would not have a right of appeal?

**Ms LEEDER:** That is true. There is no right of appeal for a withdrawal; however the application could be submitted again and considered.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I would be concerned that, in any planning, if you have valid applications on the table that is going to help you plan because you know who wants what and where. If the application is removed, I worry that water would be allocated, people would submit an application, and you say: 'Sorry, there is no more water, we have allocated it'.

**Ms LEEDER:** The planning process is actually determining the amount of the resource available, and then considering the local actual uses and potential uses for it, and determining that way. If applicants do not withdraw their applications, then they are required to be processed and those applicants to whom it has been suggested they might wish to withdraw and resubmit – if they choose not to withdraw, then those applications would be processed and consideration would then be given to what stage the water allocation process was up to and the current level of understanding of the water resource.

For the Mataranka water resource, we are currently awaiting the completion of the modelling for the resource, so we do not know exactly what the situation is, which means for the current year licences would be granted to those people who are actually using water there at the moment. They would only be annual licences so there is no disadvantage in terms of other applications which might be submitted once the state of the resource is known, and the water allocation planning process is completed.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Thank you. I would hate to think that a job application submitted in 2005 had not been answered in 2009; it seems a very long period to have an application to get water. One of my original questions was whether the current plan is impacting on business. I could argue all day that a process which has taken so long has certainly impacted on businesses, on farmers, or whatever development may be in the area. I would argue, if people do take their applications out, with your commitment, I still believe they would be taken them out of the loop as far as any legal right of appeal.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Brennan, I do not think there is any huge crisis for development here. We have water committees right through from Alice Springs to the Top End; these are committed pastoralists, people who live in these communities and who understand the environment. This is not a huge impact on development. Having a water management plan is not about saying no to productivity and development; it is asking how sustainable we can be as a society to ensure we look after the environment and look after development at the same time. The two go together. That has been the primary focus of this government at all times in dealing with water allocations or land clearing. It is about supporting development and preserving the environment.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Thank you, minister, moving on. Minister, I was recently provided with advice which suggested the current average water usage of Territorians was approximately 460 litres per person per day. Can the minister advise whether this figure is across the Northern Territory, or Darwin and rural areas specific?

**Ms LEEDER:** I believe that question on water usage is probably one for Power and Water.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Okay. There are a couple that follow on from that. In regard to planning, however, I am assuming that would certainly be under this heading. Minister, given the average water usage of communities such as Brisbane and Melbourne is as low as 130 litres to 140 litres or less a day, what does this government plan to do to reduce current usage? Do you have a plan?

**Ms ANDERSON:** The very subject that we just spoke about; that is why we have water management plans in place. That is why this Territory government has the foresight to see the damage that has been done in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, and we do not want to put Territorians in the same predicament as New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria. That is why we have water management plans in place, we have water management committees, and we have land clearing committees. We have every aspect of the environment working together. It is about preserving the environment and looking after the future of Territorians. However, to answer your question, I will pass to Diana Leeder.

**Mr CHANDLER:** If I can just clarify the question. Minister, I appreciate what you have said, but what types of programs or plans can government focus on to get the mums and dads, the families out there, to work at reducing their water consumption?

**Ms ANDERSON:** As Diana said, that is a question you need to ask Power and Water. The way people use their water in places like Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek, is something you have to go through with Power and Water, put that question to Power and Water about an education strategy which the government takes very seriously. It is about educating us. If you have a look at Alice Springs compared to Darwin, why are Alice Springs' residents growing palm trees, when palm trees should not be in Central Australia?

**Mr CHANDLER:** I appreciate, minister, that Power and Water is the provider of water. However, I suspect this department with Water Resources and planning would have some kind of educational focus on reducing our water usage.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Absolutely. I refer that question to Friday morning with Power and Water.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, I have some questions in this output group. Can you tell me, in regard to the work by Water Resources and their fieldwork, how many days do they spend in the field doing drilling and testing?

**Ms LEEDER:** During 2008-09, 212 days were spent in the field.

**Ms PURICK:** Thank you. In regard to fieldwork and the departmental staff, does the department have a safety management system for people who do this work?

**Ms LEEDER:** Yes, the department does.

**Ms PURICK:** When was the system last audited? Who did the auditing?

**Ms LEEDER:** I will have to take on notice exactly when and how it was audited, and by whom. It is an ongoing consideration.

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**Question number 8.18**

**Ms PURICK:** Does the department have a safety management system for people who work in the field in regards to water drilling work; when was it last independently audited; by whom, and at what cost?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Question number 8.18

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**Ms PURICK:** Minister, how many commercial water licenses were issued in the last year? And an associated question: how many domestic water licenses were issued in the last year?

**Ms LEEDER:** During last year there were 230 licenses and permits issued; stock and domestic water is not required to be licensed

**Ms PURICK:** That was in total? Do you have a breakdown of commercial licences versus domestic?

**Ms LEEDER:** Stock and domestic are not required to be licensed.

**Ms PURICK:** Through the minister, commercial mango growers, cut flower people, that type of commercial licence versus a person putting down their own bore for their house. Do you have a breakdown of that?

**Ms LEEDER:** No, I do not have an exact breakdown of that, but I can provide it.

**Ms PURICK:** The question for *Hansard*: is how many commercial licences were issued in the year for businesses such as mangoes and cut flowers; and how many domestic licences were issued in the year for residential dwellings?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are you happy to take that, minister?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Can I get the CEO ...

**Mr GRANT:** They are, as understand it, all commercial, because there are no domestic permits

**Ms PURICK:** Residential, putting down a private bore.

**Mr GRANT:** There is no permit required.

**Ms PURICK:** But you have to get a licence to put down a bore, and it is registered.

**Ms LEEDER:** Is the question about the number of bore construction permits and the number of commercial water licences, the two things?

**Ms PURICK:** Yes.

**Ms ANDERSON:** We do not need to take the question on notice?

**Ms PURICK:** I still want the breakdown.

**Ms LEEDER:** I will still need to take it on notice to provide the breakdown

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**Question on Notice 8.19**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** So the question for *Hansard*, which I think they have ...

**Ms PURICK:** It is the number of, we will call them commercial licences, versus bore construction permits.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is Question 8.1.9.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Do you have any more questions on that.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, is it correct that a person in your Water Resource Division has stated publicly that they will be reluctant to issue more licences for water extraction in the rural area for both property development and also horticultural activity?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Can I just ask where that information came from; was it reported in the paper?

**Ms PURICK:** No, it has just been stated publicly in the hearing of various people in my electorate. I just want to clarify this is not a government statement.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Estimates cannot be dealing with anecdotal allegations. This is to do with scrutinising the department on its spending.

**Ms PURICK:** It is associated with spending. I will rephrase the question if I can, Mr Chairman.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If it helps, I will provide the test of relevance I gave at the start of the Estimates Committee in my opening comments. Based on the Senate's Procedures Committee the following test of relevance determined for this sitting is: any questions going to the operations or financial positions in the departments or agencies which seek funds in the Estimates, are relevant questions for the purposes of Estimate hearings.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, about two years ago there was a voluntary meeting of people in the Top End rural area concerning bores, can you tell me how many people are currently in that scheme?

**Ms LEEDER:** At the end of April 2009 there were 85 meters installed under this project in the Darwin region, and a further 15 meters in the Katherine and Douglas Daly regions.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, what was the cost to install these meters on various bores for the voluntary project?

**Ms LEEDER:** I do not have the actual figures, but it was a federally funded program not a Territory government funded program.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, on the Licence of Extraction for the government Top End rural bores at Girraween, what is the maximum number of mega litres per year they can extract?

**Ms LEEDER:** I would have to take that on notice.

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**Question on Notice No 8.20**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Please restate the question.

**Ms PURICK:** In regards to the Girraween bores in the Top End rural area, can the minister tell me, on the Licence of Extraction, the number of mega litres per year these bores currently extract for the delivery of water into Darwin and the rural area?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is Question no 8.20.

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**Ms PURICK:** Minister, this is associated and you may wish to take this on notice as well. As opposed to what is on their licence, what is Power and Water's bores currently extracting in regards to their licence, because they will be reporting back to your department?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can we get the member for Goyder to ask that question of Power and Water on Friday?

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**Question on Notice No 8.21**

**Ms PURICK:** I will rephrase it to make myself clear. Minister, Power and Water have licence to a maximum extraction rate for the Girraween bores, which they may not necessarily be extracting to that level. My question is: how much water, in mega litres, are the government bores extracting per year?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we will take that question on notice, and we will get back to you, because we do not have that information.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** This question on notice is Question No 8.21. If you would just repeat the question, member for Goyder.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, can you tell me exactly how much the government bores are extracting, in mega litres per year, with regard to their licence to extract water?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** As I said, that is Question No 8.21.

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**Ms PURICK:** Minister, the department is undertaking a project to examine localised, high arsenic concentrations in ground water in the Darwin and rural area. I understand the project aims to identify the source of the arsenic and to determine if bore construction influences the concentrations measured at the wellhead. As this project was due to be finished late last year, can you briefly tell me what the project is about, who did the work, and what was the cost of the project?

**Ms LEEDER:** I do not have the details of that with me. It was an externally funded project. I can provide that information.

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**Question on Notice No 8.22**

**Ms PURICK:** For *Hansard*: minister, the department is undertaking a project to examine localised, high arsenic concentrations in ground water in the Darwin and rural area. I understand the project aims to identify the source of the arsenic and to determine if bore construction influences the concentrations measured at the wellhead. As this project was due to be finished late last year, can you tell me what the project is about, who undertook the work, and at what cost?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is Question No 8.22. Are you happy to take that on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take that on notice.

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**Ms PURICK:** Minister, two last questions in regards to water resources. Has the government considered extending the water tank rebate system to all of the Northern Territory, which falls in line with your previous comments about sustainability, rather than restrict it to just the Central Australian area? Which I have no issue with, I think that is commendable. Has your government considered extending the rebate system and, if so when? And, if not, why not?

**Ms LEEDER:** Yes, the water tank rebate program will be offered across the Territory from the new financial year. At the moment we are determining the details of the best and most effective way to roll-out such a scheme.

**Ms PURICK:** That is good news, thank you.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, what work is currently being undertaken in the planning and development of a new dam to service Darwin and its growing hinterlands? Is the Warrai site, near Adelaide River itself, the most desirable place for a dam?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Goyder, I believe that is a question for Power and Water on Friday morning.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, it is Water Resources area and it will be across agencies, but I understand you would be the prime agency.

**Mr GRANT:** No, we do not construct dams, but we would run any EIS process, environmental impact approvals and assessment for the process; that would be our role. There is quite a separation between the construction and the assessment, and we could not speculate on it.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, has your department undertaken any preliminary work in developing guidelines for the environmental impact assessment that would be required for the construction of a new dam?

**Ms LEEDER:** At this stage, there has not been preliminary work in terms of the guidelines for an EIS, but there has been some hydrologic investigation of the area to inform any future information that is required.

**Ms PURICK:** Just one last question, Mr Chairman, with your indulgence. Minister, given that it probably would involve a high level environmental impact assessment, do you believe it will trigger the Commonwealth's environmental legislation - building a dam in the location that is proposed, for example, Warrai?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I believe what we have to do is not pre-empt a Commonwealth EIS, but let it go through the processes it is going through now, and we will see the results at the end of that process.

**Ms PURICK:** That is all. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Okay. Before I hand over to the member for Nelson on Output 3.3, we will take a five minute recess, and we will return to the member for Nelson in Output 3.3.

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The committee suspended.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The Estimates Committee will resume. We were at Output 3.3. Member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Can I go back to the water allocation issue in Mataranka so I can clarify something? Why can the people who have applied for a water licence not leave the application in the system until the government has decided what the water allocation plans will be and then apply the amount of water to that applicant at that particular time?

**Ms LEEDER:** The *Water Act* requires those applications to be either withdrawn or processed; they cannot be pending. That is the current situation. Those were amendments to the *Water Act* in 2007-08.

**Mr WOOD:** It is a regulation that says that, isn't it?

**Ms LEEDER:** That is correct.

**Mr WOOD:** In theory, the regulation could be amended to allow, in this particular circumstance, for it to stay as it is because the concern, as the member for Brennan said, is they are worried there is no guarantee they will be back on the list again afterwards.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, we have to take into consideration here that this is not about throwing people's applications out; this government supports businesses, and these people have businesses. We will look at it in those circumstances.

**Mr WOOD:** The concern they have is no one has been able to guarantee that their application will be permitted after they have withdrawn it. I am not sure how I can answer that when I am asked.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, they have the guarantee of the minister. I met with a couple on

Monday and I assured them, with certainty, their application will be looked at.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, the other issue they raise is on the application for a water allocation licence it says to specify where your bore is. Why would you spend money on drilling a bore until you knew you had a licence to pump water? If you are not sure you are going to get the water, why would you drill a hole in the ground?

**Ms LEEDER:** The department has taken on board those concerns and has looked at how conditional licences could be issued subject to a sustainable bore being put down.

**Mr WOOD:** That makes more sense, because the way the application form is you have to have a bore already drilled. That is similar to what the clearing applications used to be in the rural area; you could not clear for, say, a mango plantation unless you could get permission subject to you finding water.

**Ms LEEDER:** That is correct.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, minister. When do you expect water allocation plans to be completed for the Howard East aquifer?

**Ms LEEDER:** I would not imagine the water allocation planned for Howard East would be completed before 2011. It is quite a lengthy process, as you would be aware. So we are looking at 2011 for the completion.

**Mr WOOD:** In relation to developing strategies for the future Darwin water supply, are you working in conjunction with Power and Water?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We are in a working group together, but because NRETAS is doing the EIS, we have to be at arm's length if we are operating under an EIS later on. We cannot be part of the process for clearing and dams and ...

**Mr WOOD:** Would that not be a good reason for having an independent EPA? Because you are in charge of a natural resource, which is water, and I would expect your department will be talking to Power and Water about the resource itself and the quantity of that resource. Have you not just highlighted a very important issue here, that we really need ...

**Ms ANDERSON:** You have an opportunity when it comes to the EPA to ask me that question.

**Mr WOOD:** There is a note in the 2008-09 papers which states there was a water allocation plan developed for the Western Davenports. Why was that so? It is in the 2007-08 Annual Report as a priority for 2008-09. It says to develop water allocation plans in Mataranka, Daly, Darwin rural and the Western Davenports. I had not heard of one down there. I am wondering if there is a development plan proposed to use water in vast quantities down there.

**Ms LEEDER:** I understand there was some discussion about that, and when the first list of priorities for water allocation plans was put forward that was included. Since then, other plans have become more urgent.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, in the 2008-09 budget on page 264, it said a new performance measure is level of compliance for water allocation plans. I beg your pardon, I might have that wrong, I will just check. This year's budget I believe it is; I will keep going anyway. It says in 2008-09 it was estimated there was 95% level of compliance to water allocation plans, but it is estimated in 2009-10 that would go down to 66%. How was this measured, and why the decrease?

**Ms LEEDER:** Compliance at the commencement of very new plan is expected to take some time to



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achieve, so the estimate for 2009-10 is decreased on that basis, that there will probably about three new plans developed and introduced over the next 12 to 18 months.

**Mr WOOD:** That is a percentage of the total number of water allocation plans whether they are fully developed or just starting?

**Ms LEEDER:** It is compliance with the plans and, yes, where there are new plans the level of compliance is expected to be not quite as high as with established plans. So there is a higher level of compliance in Ti Tree and Alice Springs where the plans have been in place for some time, and people are aware of the requirements; whereas when the Katherine plan is declared later this year, there will possibly some time for full compliance with it.

**Mr WOOD:** I was actually referring to this year's budget on page 264. When the department drills new town water supplies, and there is mention of it in the annual report, is Power and Water charged for those investigations?

**Ms LEEDER:** Yes, Power and Water is charged for the work we do for them.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we have the questions we took on notice back.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Excellent. Do we have the numbers of them?

**Mr GRANT:** Yes, 8.5, 8.9 and 8.6, all of which can be tabled.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration Output 3.3.

### **Output 4.1 – Environment and Sustainability**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We now move on to Output Group 4.0, Output 4.1 Environment and Sustainability.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, I noted from the earlier information provided by the department in regard to carbon emissions from NRETAS, as of June 2008, was 39 195 tonnes. NRETAS has a staffing level of 806; by comparison, the minister for the Department of Health employs 5530 people, has a budget approximately one-third the level of the total Territory budget, and they emit only 47 kilotonnes of carbon. That seems a really big output. Can you provide further details of what the carbon is?

**Mr GRANT:** Ours is very high per person, as a result of some key factors. Territory Wildlife Park with many pumps in the Aquarium, in the Nocturnal House, things like that; the Museums and Art Galleries have massive use of energy for airconditioning and air quality; and, because we have the rural spread-out range we have many vehicles and, also, diesel is used at ranger stations, which is not very efficient. So it is the nature of our work, being spread out over many kilometres, and the museums and the bio parks are incredible energy intensive. We are addressing all those issues. The air-conditioning at Alice Springs will be mostly solar in the relatively near future; Museum and Art Galleries has done much to reduce energy use at the Art Galleries. As I said before, we have been looking at the fleet and how we reduce that; we will gradually put solar power into the ranger stations. Yes, our footprint is very high.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I appreciate the intricacies of the work undertaken by NRETAS, it just seems to send a bad message if it includes Environment within this department.

Minister, does the NT government believe the quantum of funding - which, I believe, for staff of the Environment and Sustainability Section is \$412 000 down on previous years - truly provide sufficient staffing and operational expenses for the roles of this section?

**Mr GRANT:** Sorry, Mr Chandler, could you repeat the question?

**Mr CHANDLER:** My understanding is resources are down \$412 000 in that section. Does the minister believe the quantum of funding truly provides sufficient staffing and operational expenses for the roles of the section?

**Mr GRANT:** I will pass that to Susan Kirkman.

**Ms KIRKMAN:** The decrease in funding predominantly relates to carryover of external grant funding in 2008-09 of \$438 000; and some one-off grant funding received that year as well.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, the question again is: does the government believe these resources are adequate to provide the services this section is responsible for?

**Ms ANDERSON:** If you look at the opening statement in introducing my department, member for Brennan, we have had massive injections to NRETAS and, under the partnership we have with the Commonwealth, we are waiting for dollars to come back under that scheme as well. I believe, as Susan Kirkman said previously, you will see a different figure next year. I will pass that on to either Jim or Susan for greater detail.

**Mr GRANT:** In some areas of the department like Parks, you can go as big as you like, there is endless work; but this is not an area I would be as concerned about. The work is there, this is not an area that typically overspends or pushes the envelope.

**Mr CHANDLER:** I do have another couple of questions on that, but if I have your commitment that there will be additional funds into those areas - I understand they have EIS responsibility, and we have some huge developments about to occur in the Northern Territory - and if the funding in the budget papers was to stay, I was very concerned there would not be enough to cover the work they would be undertaking.

Minister, given the Chief Minister signed up to the 20% renewable energy targets by 2020, can you give a demonstration of what the department is focusing on, or investing in any research into renewable energy sources?

**Mr GRANT:** In terms of research into renewable energy sources, that is not something our department is doing.

**Mr CHANDLER:** That is not sustainable?

**Mr GRANT:** That is not part of our work. I believe it would be the work of Power and Water.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Okay. The following question was in regard to the same thing. As it stands, we use about 1% of renewables in the Northern Territory, and to reach 20% by 2020 is a big ask. That is all I have at the moment.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I just want to confirm an answer that was given before in relation to the environmental footprint, or the CO2 footprint, of the department - 39 kilotonnes was the number handed in on your number here, so that is 39 195 tonnes. What are the sources of those emissions?

**Mr GRANT:** They are energy use in buildings, fuel, and I believe that would just about cover it.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I will tell you why I am curious. The Health department produces 47 kilotonnes and has a \$1bn budget; your budget is one-fifty, one-sixty, somewhere in there, with 806 people, where the department of Health employs 5530 people, eight times the size of your department; it also has health clinics, chilly bins - its chilling facilities alone are a huge remitter of carbon. I note comparable departments, for argument's sake, DCM, I know they do not travel around the bush as much, produce half a kilotonne; Treasury produces 0.8 of a kilotonne; Justice, which does travel, produces eight

kilotonnes; Local Government, which certainly travels, produces 1.5 kilotonnes; and we have the department of the Environment producing 39 000 tonnes of carbon, which is only slightly less than the biggest consumer, which is the Health department. Per employee, I find it surprising that the department of the Environment would probably be the greatest polluter in carbon emissions in the Northern Territory government. Minister, can you help me with this?

**Mr GRANT:** I will repeat, it is mostly the Museums and Galleries which are the huge users of energy to keep their collections safe.

**Mr ELFERINK:** How do they use more energy than the hospital, for argument's sake?

**Mr GRANT:** The conditions we need in the museums are far finer than needed in a hospital, for collection management and the volumes of air, because the gallery sizes, etcetera, are massive. We are airconditioning very large amounts of air in buildings with tin roofs rather than layers of concrete.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Minister, from a policy point of view, as the minister for the Environment and, essentially, the Northern Territory's greatest polluter - you would be somewhat disappointed in that result, I take it?

**Ms ANDERSON:** The CEO has given quite a good answer on that. Member for Port Darwin, you would know when you have collections such as the collections held in the museum, at MAGNT, they have to have specific lighting and also air.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Minister, you appreciate, of course, that hospitals are also fairly large consumers of energy; the chilling alone in hospitals is substantial. They, too, have to deal with very delicate equipment which often has to be chilled to a very specific temperature. They run all the bush clinics, five hospitals across the Northern Territory, and they run a substantial number of four-wheel-drives. For a department of 806 people to generate nearly three-quarters, more than three-quarters, of the carbon emissions of something like the Health department is truly an astonishing result. Whilst I appreciate the museum has airflows and those sorts of things, I am really struggling to imagine how it is possible that a single museum - other than Araluen and Bullocky Point, am I missing buildings?

**Mr GRANT:** The other major users are the nocturnal houses at Territory Wildlife Park and the Desert Park.

**Mr ELFERINK:** The nocturnal houses, of course, and you have the one at – but still, that is ...

**Mr GRANT:** And the ranger stations, which are still run on diesel, are big users as well.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Ah! So, the ranger stations are running on diesel, which are big users. So, it is largely due to the diesel consumption of the department of the Environment and rangers, that you have, per head of staff, the largest carbon footprint of all departments?

**Mr GRANT:** We can get you a breakdown. The ranger stations are part of it. It is all those things added up, it is not only the power stations ...

**Mr ELFERINK:** Can you table something for it?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is that something you can table, or something you want to take on notice?

**Mr GRANT:** We do have the information in the department, and we can table it.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes, can we take it on notice, member for Port Darwin?

**Mr ELFERINK:** But Health also run houses, don't they?

**Mr GRANT:** Yes, they do.

**Mr ELFERINK:** In the bush? They are powered by?

**Mr GRANT:** They would be diesel generators as well, I imagine.

**Mr ELFERINK:** So you understand why I am still trying to figure out why you guys are producing so much. Four museums – I am including the wildlife parks – versus five hospitals. I suspect there are more health clinics than ranger stations - I could be wrong, but they would be on parity, at least – travelling the same distances; I would even venture to say Health may even travel further on a per annual basis. I am still trying to figure out where all this carbon is coming from. It is an enormous amount of carbon.

**Ms ANDERSON:** If you look at the document being tabled, member for Port Darwin, you will see that the department has taken steps, and is putting steps in place to ...

**Mr ELFERINK:** By a factor of eight, almost, over the Health department and that is just an in-my-head calculation, it has to be in that ballpark somewhere. Each member of your department's staff produces eight times the carbon, when you compare it on a staff-to-staff basis with the department of Health, when you are travelling roughly the same distances to probably the same number of bush locations - both running diesel, both running large buildings which are demanding of power. I am still trying to figure out where the factor of eight comes from.

**Mr GRANT:** We can table – we have very good information which we can ...

**Mr ELFERINK:** I looking forward to reading it, but you can well understand my astonishment that the department of the Environment, per head of staff members so far, is the worst polluting department in the government.

**Ms ANDERSON:** It does not matter, member for Port Darwin, you will get the headlines on ABC tonight.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I am just concerned - this is not about headlines. This is about a very surprising outcome about this. Gee whiz, minister, from an environmental position – ouch!

**Ms ANDERSON:** In the document that has been tabled, the department has taken steps, and the CEO has said at ranger stations like Keep River, and a few others, that run some household items on diesel generated power; and their children's education. I believe the department has taken steps to make sure that by next Estimates you are still sitting across there, and I am still sitting here.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Let us see how we go with the Green vote.

**Mr GRANT:** I also point out that at Araluen we are replacing the system with fully solar air-conditioning in the near future.

**Mr ELFERINK:** That is a lot of panels for that sort of consumption.

**Mr GRANT:** It is a massive amount, a massive project. At MAGNT we are restoring the air-conditioning to be far more efficient, as we speak. As someone who has the Environment department and Sport and Museums, the Environment department is not nearly as bad as the Arts and Museums sector, actually,

**Mr ELFERINK:** I understand that, but I do not set the administrative structures of the Northern Territory government. That is set by the Chief Minister, of course. Whilst I appreciate your separation,

unfortunately, when I look at Budget Paper No 3 I see Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport all wrapped in one; I am looking at the department of the Environment producing a lot of environment. Thank you.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** In there was a question on notice.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Did you want us to take the question on notice?

**Mr ELFERINK:** Oh yes, it was just after tabling that

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take that on notice and give it to you, member for Port Darwin.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I believe it is available now, if it is tableable in its current form.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** No, I said you would get that.

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**Question on Notice 8.23**

**Mr ELFERINK:** I can go and get it? For the purpose of *Hansard*, if I can get that material, the list of emissions sources, to be tabled as soon as practicable.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is Question 8.23.

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**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, I only have one more question. In June 2008 the Northern Territory government announced \$106m would be spent on protecting the environment. Could the minister provide a breakdown of how this \$106m was spent?

**Mr GRANT:** That is just through the budget papers as they are, in terms of the \$106m that is our budget ...

**Mr CHANDLER:** Can I have a breakdown of what some of those things are?

**Mr GRANT:** Essentially, the budget papers themselves would provide the breakdown.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, I have a question in regard to the environmental sustainability section which is responsible for environmental assessment of both the private and public sectors. Minister, how many Environmental Impact Statements were completed in the last year?

**Ms ALLEN:** Last year, for various reasons, there was only one completed in the financial year.

**Ms PURICK:** Okay. Because there was only one - how long did it take for the department to complete that exercise?

**Ms ALLEN:** In fact, I am wrong. There were no completions in 2008-09.

**Ms PURICK:** They are still in the pipeline somewhere?

**Ms ALLEN:** They are still in the pipeline.

**Ms PURICK:** Minister, currently there exists what could be called two levels for Environmental Assessment. One is the Environmental Impact Statement, and one is the Preliminary Environmental Report, which is a lower level assessment for various reasons, as you know. I understand there is consideration and discussion underway to get rid of the PER and have all projects, whatever they

may be, assessed under the Environmental Impact Statements; and within that EIS assessment there will be different levels of assessment depending on the project. Is this correct? Is the department moving that way?

**Ms ALLEN:** We have had some discussions about the efficacy of the PER model because we are finding a large number of our projects trigger the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act*, the Commonwealth act, which has a different process from the two-stage one, which is consistent with an EIS process. So, we can see no real advantage in having the PER continue in its current form, given those statistics. We look at it as a risk-based assessment, so we are looking at areas of it - if it is really risky and has high public interest, then it has a particular length of time; if it is less risky, then it has a shorter length of time.

**Ms PURICK:** Yes, I understand. Minister, the bilateral arrangement between the NT government and the Commonwealth regarding environmental assessment, is that up for review any time soon?

**Ms ALLEN:** From memory, the PBC bilateral agreement was certainly revisited in the time I have been here, in the last four years. They are five year agreements, so it is several years from now.

**Ms PURICK:** Not straightaway. Thank you. Minister, are you able to tell me what it cost the government to sort out the McArthur River environmental assessment problem, and did you seek outside legal advice? If so, what did that cost?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am advised, member for Goyder, that was a Federal Court matter.

**Ms PURICK:** Yes, it was a Federal Court matter, but it started in the Northern Territory court system. The question is: what did it cost the department to do the work the department needed to do to sort out that problem, and was there outside legal help sought?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am advised we gave advice to DOJ, and that is as far as it went.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson, do you have questions for this output?

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. Minister, can you explain why you changed the output definition of Environment and Sustainability from the previous budget to this budget? I will quote the previous budget and 2007-08 report said:

*This output assesses and regulates environmental impacts of development, coordinates greenhouse and climate change policy and responses, and promotes the maintenance of aquatic ecosystem health.*

Under our new budget, is just says:

*... assess and regulate environmental impacts of development and promotes sustainable practices.*

Why has it been shrunk to such a generalised description?

**Ms ALLEN:** That results from two structural changes. One, the Chief Minister is now responsible for coordination of greenhouse policy across government; that happened in the previous Administrative Orders, so that is no longer a primary responsibility of the output; that bit has gone. And internally, the aquatic health responsibilities have shifted back to our Natural Resources counterparts.

**Mr WOOD:** Your Natural Resources counterparts? Oh, I see, so I should forget all my greenhouse gas emissions and climate change questions. Right! There might be a question in parliament as to how we have such a muddled up group of departments - who is in charge and who is not. Thank you, minister.

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Minister, in the 2007-08 Annual Report it talks about Environment Assessment Reports to the minister, estimated at six in 2008-09; in the 2009-10 Budget the figure was estimated at one in 2008-09. Why were they withdrawn?

**Ms ALLEN:** In fact, most of them were not withdrawn; they have been slowed for various reasons. The department is not really in control of how assessment processes work. We rely on proponents coming in the door and deciding when they are going to submit their EIS documentation - and that has slowed - associated with the global financial changes.

**Mr WOOD:** In the 2008-09 budget, you mentioned that there would be \$0.95m put towards assisting community, industry and local government to promote environmental sustainability, and that is going to be increased to \$1.29m this year. Will that money be used to help, or give assistance to those people trying to fill in the new land clearing guidelines?

**Mr GRANT:** No, I do not believe the money is aimed at that. The department has been very helpful to people with their land clearing applications. If you talk to anyone who has put one in, apart from those which have gone to EIS, we have been very helpful, but we do not have a specific budget, we just do that.

**Mr WOOD:** That is the old guidelines. Wait until you see the new ones - coming to a block near you! I was just going to ask something about the draft clearing guidelines, minister. I am not sure whether someone had a bad day, but they the new draft land clearing guidelines will require a 50 m buffer on a 2 ha block. That would mean 50 m down one side, 50 m down the other side, with two 4 m firebreaks, a width of 108 m; most 2 ha blocks do not go bigger than 100 m. Where are we going to put the horse and the vegetable garden, minister, if that requirement is approved?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we are just querying the output in this.

**Mr WOOD:** Environment and Sustainability, Land Clearing. The draft guidelines.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Would you mind giving the question again for Diana Leeder, please?

**Mr WOOD:** I am just wondering, in the draft land clearing guidelines, it talks of having to have a 50 m buffer down each side of a block between 2 ha and, I believe, and 20 ha. In the case of a 2 ha block, which is the most common, that would mean you would have to have 100 m of land retained as buffer, plus your two firebreaks, which would be 108 m, and there would be nothing to clear. In other words, there would be nowhere to put the horse and the vegetable garden. Was that the intention of that buffer in the draft land clearing guidelines?

**Ms LEEDER:** No, the intention of the buffer was not to totally reduce the area. The draft land clearing guidelines have been out for public comment, and I am sure any of those anomalies will be picked up. The public comment period finished, I believe, a couple of weeks ago, but a couple of extensions were given to some associations to respond to it. If that issue has not been picked up, I would be surprised.

**Mr WOOD:** Yes, it is a bit limiting. Minister, there was a very interesting advertisement in the paper the other day, which possibly has some great benefit for sustainable energy sources. It is an advertisement from Tenax Energy Pty Ltd, who are looking at putting in 456 marine turbines on the sea floor in Clarence Strait, just north of the Vernon Islands; which interests me, because it is in my electorate. I know the department has put out guidelines for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, but has the department had discussions with this company? And could I ask, in general, is the government supportive of this type of project?

**Ms ANDERSON:** That is the very reason, member for Nelson, as the minister, I cannot have a say in this - it is going through the process of EIS.

**Mr WOOD:** I know that. If the EPA was independent, you could probably give us a comment.

**Ms ANDERSON:** The EPA is independent, and I am waiting for you to get to that output.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay. Let me say - and I am not saying there will not be some problems - it is a very interesting project. What is now happening to the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management? What stage is it at?

**Ms ALLEN:** My understanding of where the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee is with its revision of the plan is it has drafted a strategic framework based on the plan. It has had that out for public consultation, and is now in the final stages of processing the response to that, and changing the draft plan. That will then go back to the committee for endorsement and presentation to government, as I understand it.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, would the government, when it receives this plan, consider giving the plan some teeth by turning it into legislation or making it part of the NT Planning Scheme?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, I will look at it, and it is my job to take it to my colleagues, and I will do that.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay. Minister, has a Water Quality Protection Plan for the Darwin Harbour been completed?

**Ms ALLEN:** The Water Quality Protection Plan project was funded by the Commonwealth government, but was changed part way through with the change of Commonwealth government. It is not yet complete and will, I expect, be a review process. There has been a substantial amount of work done. As you would be aware, we went to public consultation regarding beneficial uses and water quality objectives, and I hope we would be in a position, quite soon, to bring those water quality objectives forward to the minister. We are also working on monitoring and modelling plans as part of that, and looking at options for reporting back. The Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee has been a partner, and we have been very pleased with that; and we will have to talk to them about how it goes forward.

**Mr WOOD:** Will this Water Quality Protection Plan have a say in the development of new suburbs, especially those continuing to be built on the banks of Mitchell Creek in Palmerston, and the new development of Weddell?

**Ms ALLEN:** The Water Quality Protection Plan will have several elements. Part of those will be water quality objectives which my area of the department will be able to use to inform licensing. It will also have elements which deal with run-off and quality associated with more dispersed sources; and we have been working very closely with DPI in getting water sensitive urban design into those new developments. I am very pleased with the way they are doing that.

**Mr WOOD:** Through you, minister, is there a move to try to change the manner in which stormwater reaches our creeks and streams?

**Ms ALLEN:** The answer is yes. While it is not actually my area, I understand in those new suburbs in Palmerston they have installed third pipe technology so that they will be able to collect and manage it.

**Mr WOOD:** The problem I see is we have always had this concrete drain approach to running water straight into creeks, when we should be slowing it down and filtering it.

One other question regarding Tiger Brennan Drive, and I asked the minister for Planning about this. It is in relation to clearing for the new overpass on the corner of Roystonea and the Stuart Highway.



What concerns me is there was a natural wetland there. I am not opposed to development of a road through it, but it is a natural wetland and it is used to filter industrial water coming off Yarrawonga Industrial Estate - and it has been half destroyed in this development. Is there a requirement by government, or the company doing the work, to re-establish that wetland when the road works are completed?

**Ms ANDERSON:** That is a question that should have been fielded by DPI.

**Mr WOOD:** No, I gather Roads had to come to you people and you gave them advice on the land clearing, because there is no land clearing application. Someone must have had to give some technical advice on ...

**Ms ANDERSON:** Can we take that on notice, member for Nelson?

**Mr WOOD:** All right.

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#### Question on Notice 8.24

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, could you please repeat the question, member for Nelson?

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, in relation to the new overpass on Tiger Brennan Drive, the wetlands near the corner of Roystonea Avenue and the Stuart Highway has been interfered with – I will put it that way. What plans were required by your department to make sure that wetland was re-established after construction was completed?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are you happy to take that question on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take that question on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 8.24.

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**Mr WOOD:** Those are all my questions.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 4.1 – Environment and Sustainability.

#### **OUTPUT GROUP 5.0 – HERITAGE CONSERVATION** **Output 5.1 Heritage Conservation**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are there any questions?

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, on 10 June 2009 the Heritage Advisory Council's 17th Annual Report 2007-08 was tabled in parliament. The *Heritage Conservation Act* Part 3 17(1) states:

*The council shall, as soon practicable, after 30 June each year, submit to the minister a report on the performance of its functions during the previous 12 months, to and including 30 June that year.*

Minister, 17(3) states:

*The Minister shall lay a copy of the report before the Legislative Assembly within six sitting days of the Assembly after the minister receives it.*

The question is, minister, can you please advise whether the council has erred or has the minister held this report, therefore not complying with the act?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, can I just say to the member for Brennan that it was late, and we will take the rest of question on notice.

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**Question on Notice 8.25**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, could you please repeat the question, member for Brennan?

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, can you please advise whether the council has erred or has the minister held the report, therefore not complying with this act? The report was the Heritage Advisory Council 17th Annual Report 2007-08 and it was tabled on 10 June 2009.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, I tabled it as soon as I received it, so it was tabled in the House as soon as I received it.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate this Question No 8.25 and you are happy to take that on notice, minister.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am happy to take the question on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

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**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, are you aware of any other reports that have not been tabled in accordance with their respective acts?

**Ms ANDERSON:** No.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, I am advised the Heritage Advisory Council was promised the *Heritage Conservation Act* was to be updated during the Clare Martin government. The message from the 2007-08 report, the report we have just mentioned, by the Chairman states:

*Council became somewhat concerned in the course of the year at the apparent lack of progress in the review of the Heritage Conservation Act. However, by the end of the year council was advised that a draft bill had been finalised and was now shortly to be released to stakeholders.*

Given this report is for the 2007-08 period and we are currently in mid-June 2009, was the advice provided to the Heritage Advisory Council wrong, and what is your government doing to progress the promised update of the act?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we do not know the advice given to the Advisory Council then, but we are working through the process as we speak.

**Mr CHANDLER:** As I said, minister, it was in the report tabled by you on 10 June and the Chair of the council has written that they were given advice it was finalised and was going to be released to stakeholders. That is from a report from 12 months ago.

**Ms ANDERSON:** It has been a long haul for the Advisory Council; it has had five ministers in the whole ...

**Mr Wood:** That is why it is called the *Heritage Act*.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I said, member for Brennan, we are working through the process of bringing that saga to an end.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Minister, can you advise if the old Catalina flying boat ramp at East Arm will be given any protection, or listed as a heritage site?

**Ms ALLEN:** My understanding, although I will have it checked, there was a long-standing decision that area would be developed as part of the broader East Arm development, an industrial area, and the Land Development Cooperation has undertaken to record and interpret the sites. In fact, I am going on a site visit with them tomorrow and we will find out much more about it. Had you been able to ask me this question tomorrow afternoon, I would be able to tell you.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Can we take that question on notice?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will keep you posted on it, we will advise you.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Can we also throw in the Z Force? There is an area just down from East Arm, the Z Force base. Yes? Excellent.

**A witness:** We have some Tourism staff going there tomorrow morning to look at both those sites.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Brennan, we will send you a detailed brief on that.

**Mr BOHLIN:** So what you are saying, if you have some people from Tourism going, you intend to utilise that in the future for tourism, preserving it?

**Mr GRANT:** It is a very early meeting; we have seen what the potential is.

**Mr BOHLIN:** There is a potential intent to actually preserve those sites? Seeing they are on the waterfront, I am sure you are not going stick a building right on the waterfront, there would certainly be a land space gap between the waterfront and any future building, so there is the potential to be able to save it and preserve it for better using our tourism potentials.

**Ms ALLEN:** Our discussions with Tourism will be about the potential for interpreting the site, not necessarily preserving the site, but looking at how we can best incorporate it into the whole of the World War II activities which are going on with the East Point Museum, and the spokes that go out from that hub. It is potentially an area that has significant interest to people, and that can be interpreted accordingly as part of a broader World War II ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** Particularly with the Z Force base. It was actually a very vital part of protecting Darwin during World War II. And, as I said, seeing it is on the water line, surely there is an element where it can be protected and preserved because I am sure the developer will not actually be putting his big shed, or whatever may be built there, literally on the waterfront or on the mangroves themselves, because it is vitally important to consider the mangroves there. I am sure they are not going to put a building right there, surely there will be a land space gap between the high/low tides, and then a another space before they are actually allowed to build, anyway. So would we be looking at the potential for preserving it?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Drysdale, I think Lyn has already answered that question, and so did the CEO. This is an initial engagement between Tourism and this department, and they will come back and report to the government as to what aspirations there is for Tourism.

**Mr CHANDLER:** Heritage is very important. I do have other questions but given the very late hour and the important things we need to move onto, I forgo any more questions regarding heritage.

**Mr WOOD:** Yes, I think heritage is important, too, and regardless of the hour, I have some questions. These questions have been given to me, and I support one of these very strongly.

Minister, will your department somehow secure the old Northern Australian Rail Corridor - from Noonamah across to Darwin River and through to Batchelor and Adelaide River - to ensure it is not sold? I know small amounts of it were sold; so in time it may be developed as a multi-purpose rail trail as part of our recreation and tourism infrastructure. I believe most of the old Northern Australian Railway line did have a conservation zone or a heritage zone, over it at one stage, that is zone in the *Planning Act*, but that seems to have dropped off. Would the government give some consideration to securing this corridor so it is not slowly sold off and the rail trail idea would then not be possible - where the bicycle path will one day be built.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Nelson, I am advised we have not even had a proposal yet.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay, you have now. This has come from the Adelaide River Railway Historical Group, and it is something I also support.

In the 2008-09 budget, page 241, as a performance measure, capacity to maintain government-owned heritage facilities for 2007-08 was \$1m; for 2008-09 it was \$1m; and, as it is not a performance measure in the 2009-10 budget, what is the allocation for heritage conservation in this year's budget?

**Ms ALLEN:** It still \$1m.

**Mr WOOD:** Oh, that has not changed much. Why is it not put down as a dollar value anymore?

**Mr GRANT:** With the KPIs, we have tried to focus on what we actually do rather than on just spending the money.

**Mr WOOD:** That is true, but people want to know where you have spent your money. All right, thank you.

Minister, you mentioned heritage parks in this year's budget, I believe. Is there any money there set aside for the heritage park involving the airstrips in the Darwin rural area; and Hermannsburg, which was the other heritage park.

**Ms ALLEN:** What we have done very recently is to apply to the Commonwealth for funding for Hermannsburg and also for Barrow Creek, as a combined NRETAS heritage and tourism proposal. I believe the Darwin City Council has also applied for World War II associated heritage funding from the Commonwealth government.

**Mr WOOD:** I just need clarification, minister. I believe you spoke about a heritage park for the airstrips in the Darwin rural area, which were not to do with the Darwin City Council?

**Mr GRANT:** When we were looking at this Commonwealth money, we felt it would be better for Darwin City Council to apply for that money rather than us having three applications in; we know we are not going to get three out of three, so we thought it would be best coming from two organisations.

**Mr WOOD:** The airstrips are Sattler, Strauss, Hughes, and Livingstone, and they are all in Litchfield Shire, so why would Darwin City Council be involved in applying for funds?

**Mr GRANT:** Sorry, Darwin City Council has applied for funds within there. We have, within the World War II Museum budget, a view to interpreting the hubs out from there, so that would come under the plan for the Word War II Museum.

**Mr WOOD:** I was getting excited earlier this year when I thought the minister announced that those

airstrips would become part of a heritage park. Have I misinterpreted the minister's statement?

**Mr GRANT:** I believe they will be heritage parks in the future; we have money to spend on working through those airstrips, but in terms of the interpretive, that is what we will be doing. We have applied for Commonwealth money for those other areas, but we have not applied for those, but we have money in the department we can use for those purposes.

**Mr WOOD:** You will be keeping an eye on it?

**Mr GRANT:** Yes.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Mr Chairman, we have just received answers to questions we took on notice - Nos 8.7, 8.8, 8.12, 8.16, 8.17, and I am happy to table them.

**Mr WOOD:** My last question is in relation to the leprosarium. I know there is great interpretive signage in the East Arm area which, I must admit, is hard for people to find, and I do realise the government has now put up a small sign on Berrimah Road, where the entrance to the leprosarium was. There is a very small piece of entrance left. I have been on this issue for five or six years, and the original proposal I was hoping the government would accept was to retain the original entrance to the leprosarium, because there is nothing left, and the interpretive sign really is nice, but it does not relate to anything except a blank industrial building.

Would your department at least visit the original site of the entrance and see if that small piece of bitumen, which is all that is left, could be maintained or retained as some physical evidence that once there was a leprosarium there. I believe the wrong decision was made way back to put this interpretive centre where it is, and while that was happening they destroyed the Gmelina trees that were there and most of the entrance, and there is only a tiny bit left. Can't we retain something?

**Ms ALLEN:** We will add it to our list of visits tomorrow, because we were going to the memorial anyway to see how it all fitted together.

**Mr WOOD:** Not very impressive, but that is all that is left.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I know, member for Nelson, you have brought this up every year at Estimates since I have been a member of this government. Lyn will be visiting there tomorrow, and you and I need to sit down with the department and, maybe, put something up.

**Mr WOOD:** Probably needs a bit of barbwire fence around it so Transport and Works or Lands and Planning cannot touch it. They are the ones who removed it. Okay, thank you. That is it.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That concludes consideration of Output 5.1 Heritage and Conservation.  
**OUTPUT GROUP 6.0 – SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL COLLECTIONS**  
**Output 6.1 Museums and Art Galleries of the NT**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We are now proceeding to Output Group 6.0 Scientific and Cultural Collections, Output 6.1 Museum and Art Galleries of the NT. Member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Good afternoon, minister, how are you today?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am fine, thank you, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Good. Before I kick off, thank you to all your staff and all the people who have supported them to get ready for this, because I know it is a lot of work. I hope we do not waste their time, and we

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will get on with doing it. I do not mean to be quick in any way, but time has been chewed up extensively in the first part, so if we can keep our answers concise so they are factual, it will all be good.

MAGNT is down from \$12.037m to \$11.99m in the upcoming budget. What is the electric and water costs for MAGNT? If you are willing, I will take that as a question on notice and get that back later to save some time. Do you have to take it on notice?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** No, I can answer it. Over the years, MAGNT Bullocky Point has a total water and power bill in the order of \$800 000 per annum.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you very much. What are your plans to covert MAGNT to solar power supported infrastructure, similar to Araluen?

**Mr GRANT:** Once we have bedded down Araluen, then we will get a proposal for MAGNT. We want to make sure we have it right at Araluen first.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Okay. So, we will discuss that further with Araluen, because Araluen has been a good project. You do not have any current plans to convert MAGNT, particularly considering your CO2 outputs are pretty high?

**Mr GRANT:** We do not have any at the moment but, once we get Araluen sorted I do not believe we want to have two types of new technology going. We will get one nailed, and then get a proposal up for the other one. We are working on the air-conditioning at MAGNT to make it more effective and efficient as we speak. When is that due, Anna?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** July.

**Mr GRANT:** July, yes.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I am now going to skip a myriad of questions I had. What plans do you have to expand the storage space for the museum? How soon will that storage be made available, which will then enable display space to be better used for its intended purposes?

**Mr GRANT:** We are looking at the reuse of some government buildings for space for Archives and Museums. We are negotiating with other departments at the moment about the use of some buildings which are no longer being used. The timing on that is, I believe, we have a year or two up our sleeves and by then we should be well and truly ready. I do not anticipate that will become a crisis.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Very good. We have the Papunya Tula boards, and I know the minister has a fair understanding of this. When will they be restored and completed, even if the process to restore them has started?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** There are 212 Papunya Tula boards. The conservation program commenced at the beginning of this calendar year. Boards are being worked on at a rate of eight per fortnight. Currently there are 47 boards that have been conserved. There are 174 remaining. This work will continue over the course of this calendar year and, I believe, having discussed it with the senior conservator, we anticipate the conservation project to be concluded by the end of this coming financial year.

**Mr BOHLIN:** At what cost has that been, or will be by the projected completion?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** A total amount of \$300 000 was committed by government towards the project. At this stage it is estimated that the full cost will be in the order of approximately \$200 000 to conserve the boards. There are also additional costs with regard to future management plans for the

boards once the comprehensive consultative process has been undertaken with all the communities involved.

**Mr BOHLIN:** You are talking of the end of the year, early next year. When will these boards be ready to tour both the Northern Territory, from where they come, and also Australia, so as a nation we can have a better understanding of these vitally important boards?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** The reason why a comprehensive consultative process will be undertaken with community elders is because some of the boards contain culturally sensitive information. So, until such time as we have established the actual content and status of those boards, it is premature to be discussing exhibitions and tours until we know the full nature of the collection.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Have you started that process?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** Since the boards were collected in the 1970s, the museum has always been consulting with communities, and following the minister's request to involve the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, they are now determining the next consultative process; and that will be commencing in the not too distant future.

**Mr BOHLIN:** You have just opened up another concern. You said there has been consultation since 1970. Surely, if that is the case, we should already have an understanding of the importance of these boards and whether there are certain boards which are not culturally sensitive and would be ready for displacement.

**Mr GRANT:** What we are doing now is a really full investigation. There would probably be some boards which we can say are not very sensitive; but we want to display the full breadth. For example, there are some on display at MAGNT at the moment which we know are not sensitive, and there are some on display at Araluen which we know are not sensitive; but we want to have a decent number of boards. We could have a quick and dirty display of the obvious ones, but there are some very beautiful boards we do not know about and we really want to know more about them.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Do you have an estimated cost of that consultation process?

**Mr GRANT:** I believe the cost to our department will be zero because I believe it is coming under the AFA budget.

**Mr BOHLIN:** What is the plan for the East Point Military Museum to be opened up and beautified?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** I assume, through the Chair, you are discussing the Defence of Darwin Museum proposal?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Is that the name you are going to apply to it?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** There has been \$10m allocated to the development of that facility. During the course of this financial year, a steering committee and an advisory group were established to commence development of the scope of the museum development concept as well as finalisation of the visitor experience brief. In consultation with both these groups, the next stage is to look at appropriate operational frameworks, so the proposal itself is on the 2010-11 capital works program. We still have another year in which to consult with all stakeholders and communities to ensure the development is scoped and is appropriate to what is required.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Have we, at this stage - and I understand and accept it is an early stage - any, what I now call 'crayon drawings' to indicate what could be the projected look for this great facility?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** The Defence of Darwin project has two components: there is the

enhancement of the Darwin Aviation Heritage Centre on Stuart Highway; and there is also East Point. Both were on the 2010-11 capital works program. With regard to the Aviation Heritage Centre, because that project is advanced and there are preliminary concept drawings for those enhancements and upgrades, the Minister for Arts and Museums has received the approval of the Treasurer to bring that project forward into the 2009-10 financial year. So, that capital development will be commencing this forthcoming year.

With regard to East Point, at this stage, a scope of the development, its content and purpose and also the anticipated visitor experience, has been developed and is currently before both the committee and the advisory group for feedback. Once that process is concluded, we will forward it to a concept design stage, so there will be preliminary sketches to take out for consultation with the community.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** At this point, I am letting the committee know the member for Nhulunbuy will be chairing.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. It is very good to see that plans are starting to move ahead. What portion of cost will the Aviation Museum incur in this year's budget?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** Through the Chair, when you say this financial year, are you referring to the 2009-10 financial year?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Yes, that is what we are here to talk about.

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** The full amount of \$1.5m committed has been allocated to this department for investment on the Darwin Aviation Heritage Centre enhancements.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Excellent, I look forward to seeing it. In Katherine, we have one of the famous Dr Fenton biplanes sitting in a shed, open to normal atmospheric conditions. What are you doing to ensure this valuable asset of the Territory's history does not deteriorate further?

**Ms ANDERSON:** It is a great history for the Northern Territory. I visited Katherine at the same time as the Katherine Festival and it was a good opportunity to look around the museum. A month prior I had also visited the museum and spoken to the people there, and had morning tea and shared the old history and the way they are linking the Fenton history to the school and the whole heritage of Katherine. It is wonderful to see that happening. For further detail, I will pass to Anna.

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** Through the Regional Museums Grant Support Program, government provides funding assistance to the Katherine Historical Society that operates the Katherine Museum. This year, they received a grant in excess of \$40 000 to engage administrative and curatorial and collection management staff ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** Yes, but that was not the question, unfortunately.

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** Those individuals are responsible for the management and upkeep of the collection, and the operations of the museum, including the aeroplane. However, over the years, through the Museum And Art Galleries Conservation Unit, we have provided them with ongoing advice and assistance with regard to its care, appropriate display and provisions to secure the craft – because at one point, visitors did actually interfere with it - so we provided them with advice and assistance in that regard.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, although it is over \$100 000 worth of beautiful history, you wish to wash your hands of it? Or are you going to put some money into making sure it is protected from the humidity and the climatic changes we have in the Territory?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We have already said that we have given a group of people some money, and we have given them advice on how to look after the plane. That group now has to take the initiative to



come either to the government or this department. No one is washing their hands of it, unless you want to.

**Mr BOHLIN:** No, I am here asking the questions in support of it.

**Ms ANDERSON:** And I am answering them in support of it.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Very good. Even if you could take it on as a consideration, because I believe over \$100 000 worth of historic investment is just sitting there and deserves, perhaps, a little bit better.

The Ghan Museum and Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs is a fantastic regional facility, and a very important part of our central tourism. What plans do you have to support these facilities in the future?

**Ms MALGORZEWICZ:** Similarly, the Ghan Preservation Society and the Road Transport Hall of Fame are eligible to make application through the Regional Museums Grants Support Program for financial assistance. However, they rarely have approached us because, under the management of Liz Martin and her committee, they go from strength to strength and are an exemplar for the regional museums sector. Whenever my staff and I are in Alice Springs we maintain regular contact with Liz and professional staff are available to provide her with advice but, as I say, she and the committee there are a role model for the regional museums sector.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I will support that comment. Liz Martin and her team are doing a fantastic job there. They are probably, in some regard, leading the way in Australia.

As an overall picture of connecting the Northern Territory as one unit, what do we have in the way of plans to set up, using modern technology, a link to our current museums and then linking them to other aspects worldwide?

**Ms ANDERSON:** The CEO has a great vision for Heritage and Museums in the whole of the Northern Territory, not just the Top End, and he is certainly putting many active initiatives to our department.

**Mr GRANT:** As you would know, we have the *Building Our Museum Sector* discussions under way and we have had several meetings with staff. The core of a concept has come out, which is essentially that regional museums are book-ended in Darwin and Alice Springs and the idea is, along the Stuart Highway and also through Eco-Links in the Western Desert, we would build those regional museums, integrating them with the 20 towns, with the art centres, with Parks and Wildlife, with electronic interpretations.

There is a strong vision for growing those areas through the 20 towns and interpreting it through the classic history of the Stuart Highway, and also through the cultural history of the Western Desert. That would take in places like Papunya and find its way across the top to Yirrkala where, as you know, there is a great museum, and an excellent small museum at Maningrida. That is what that group is talking about, the minister herself is on the group, and the new Chair of the museum has already proven to be very good.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I look forward to working with you on that in the future. Due to time, I will pass on any further questions in regard to that, and I pass it over to Mr Wood.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. Minister, some years ago I believe your department employed a specialist studying corals and sponges, but that person left. Is there a person employed who studies corals and sponges? And do you intend to employ someone in that area?

**Mr GRANT:** I can answer that, and Anna may wish to add to it. The taxonomic work of the Museums and Galleries is very, very important; it also is somewhat interesting that there are more than sponges, and I am not sure what we have at the moment, but I know when we look at taxonomy, if

someone has been doing sponges for 20 years, the next time we get someone we might want someone to work on butterflies, or whatever. We tend to roll over the programs, but there is sometimes an expectation the taxonomist will be replaced by someone studying exactly the same thing; but we would make a decision based on the needs of the Territory.

For example, at the moment with marine parks we are really focusing on locating the key hot spots of biodiversity in the seas. We have a very good marine biology team out there doing that. What we are looking at is the whole of marine biodiversity and we have a very good team on the job. However, we would replace those taxonomists with the kind of taxonomy we really needed. For example, we are about to lose, unfortunately, our palaeontologist in Central Australia, and we will definitely be replacing that person with another palaeontologist. But when it comes to other forms of taxonomy, we have to make a judgment about where the need is. If, for example, a taxonomist has named 90% of the sponges and corals, then we would be looking at a group where there was less coverage when we employed the next taxonomist.

**Mr WOOD:** I raised that, minister, because I had some concerns about the proposed Arafura Marina in relation to the East Point – what do they call it? - Aquaculture Reserve. I was hoping the government would have someone who could give me advice on whether that particular reserve would come under threat. That is why I asked whether there is someone in the department who could ...

**Mr GRANT:** There would definitely be someone at the museum who could help. We also have a Marine Biodiversity Group which would be ...

**Mr WOOD:** This is a question, probably out of left field, but it is in your 2007-08 report. I will have difficulty pronouncing some of the names here. It says under a report here that you recovered several rare specimens of dromornithid bird, which has a biological name of *Barawertornis tedfordi* - probably named after someone called Ted Ford – from the – and I cannot pronounce it; I would have to ask the minister to pronounce it. It is written in those funny phonetics, not the Pitjantjatjara phonetics ...

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes, that is right.

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. It says Pwerte Marnte Marnte locality near Alice Springs and it says:

*Few remains of the smallest and geologically oldest species of the flightless birds of this family have been found previously. The fossil locality has produced many new specimens of this species for scientific study.*

When would that become a public display? It sounds like a very important find?

**Mr GRANT:** We are actually working on that at the moment. Much of that material has not turned into massive specimens because we only have bits and pieces; as you can image; we cannot make one of those birds because we only have parts of it. We have in mind an area at the back of Araluen where there are vast amounts of this stuff, it is a real treasure trove, and we are hoping that, in the revamp of the Desert Park courtyard, we can actually get some of that material on display in some of the existing buildings at the Desert Park. What we are hoping is to have a display where the scientists are working on the material and the public, at times, can watch them at work and have a display of some of that material. There is a real treasure trove of stuff that needs to go out there.

**Mr WOOD:** It sounds good. Obviously, it was a hunting reserve where they were allowed to leave the carcasses in one spot. Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 6.1.

#### **Output 6.2 - Archives**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** The committee will now proceed to Output 6.2 Archives. Are there any questions?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Unfortunately, due to the extremely drawn-out processes earlier, I will not have any, just to note for *Hansard*. I have at least nine questions on it, but I will have to pass.

**Mr WOOD:** No, I will pass on my questions.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 6.2.

**Output 6.3 – Herbarium**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** The committee will now proceed to Output 6.3 Herbarium. Are there any questions?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Again, based on time, unfortunately. I know it is smaller area. I had three questions on that ...

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will brief you on it, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you very much for that. I will pass.

**Mr WOOD:** It is a great place, but I do not have any questions on it.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 6.3.

**Output 6.4 – Libraries**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** The committee will now proceed to Output 6.4 Libraries. Are there any questions?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Same again, based on the time frames. I have at least three questions but, unfortunately, I will pass on that for now. I am sure we will be able to chat later.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I am sure the minister will brief you. Member for Nelson?

**Mr WOOD:** Based on the time frames I have one question, Madam Deputy Chair. What plans does the government, in conjunction with the department of Education, have in constructing a new and larger community library at Taminmin High School?

**Ms MACKAY:** Taminmin is a library jointly funded and run with the Department of Education. The current operating costs for the community side of the library is largely borne by the Northern Territory Library budget with a small or nominal contribution from the Litchfield Shire, specifically looking after the Litchfield collection. It is one of those odd ...

**Mr WOOD:** It is a great scheme, sharing facilities.

**Ms MACKAY:** Sharing facilities is a great scheme. Their funding model at the moment is, generally speaking, other shires and municipal libraries.

**Mr WOOD:** We do not always copy, though.

**Ms MACKAY:** Not necessarily, but we do consider all options. In terms of the current agreement or funding model, that is in place for a further two years. During the next two years we will go through a series of consultations to review how funding is supplied to municipal and council libraries and, inevitably, Litchfield will come into those discussions and considerations.

**Mr WOOD:** Been down that path many times. This library is also special in that it does the country

borrowing. Is that correct?

**Ms MACKAY:** Yes.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, I believe the model is a good one. We should not necessarily be doing it because others do it. It is a great library, but it needs expansion.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Absolutely. If you look at government's track record, it has been encouraging history to remain in our children's lives and, of course, inside libraries, and education is the main focus of all this.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 6.4.  
**Output 6.5 - Araluen Cultural Precinct**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I will now call for questions on Output 6.5 Araluen Cultural Precinct. Are there any questions?

**Mr BOHLIN:** In the interests of time, unfortunately, we will not be posing any questions. The Araluen Centre is a fantastic place and, of course, Strehlow. I had a great tour and I encourage you to continue further, minister, with the solar project and expand it as quickly as you can.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Nelson, any questions?

**Mr WOOD:** Nothing.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 6.5.  
**OUTPUT GROUP 7 - ARTS AND SCREEN INDUSTRY SUPPORT**  
**Output 7.1 Arts and Screen Sector**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I will now call for questions on Output Group 7, 7.1 Arts and Screen Sector.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Unfortunately, again, the same: no time, no questions. I have over nine questions. The screen sector is vitally important as we have seen with projects like *Australia* the movie and other stuff. Unfortunately, we are going to have to move on, and I would love to have further discussions if we can. I would like to thank the panel behind you for all their efforts, minister, because I know they have done a fantastic job, and I look forward to working with them in the future.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Thank you.

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

**Mr WOOD:** I just hope to see, and this is a bit of a conflict of interest, we continue to support live theatre; it is a very important part of the community. Taminmin High School finished its third musical the other night and I believe if there is one place government can put some money into it is encouraging theatre in our schools; as well as the broader aspects of arts and theatre in the community.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Thanks for that, member for Nelson. As you can see, we have taken great initiatives in reforming the arts industry, and we will look at theatre as a part of art. I feel we have gone too much into visual arts and left every other art form in an art ghetto or outside of the art industry itself. This is a good reform and it will bring the art industry to the heart of our children's education, as well as encouraging public art.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output Group 7.1. I note that Output Group 8.0 Sports and Recreation will be addressed by minister Hampton later this evening.

I will now call for questions on Output Group 9.0 Output 9.1 ...

**Mr GILES:** Madam Deputy Chair, in the interests of making sure the minister is refreshed for questions; we might have a two minute break?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Minister, do you feel the need for a two minute break?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes, thank you.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Two minute break.

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The committee suspended.

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**OUTPUT GROUP 9.0 - ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY**  
**Output 9.1 Environment Protection Authority**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Order! We will now recommence. I will now call for questions on Output Group 9.0 Environment Protection Authority. Are there any questions?

**Mr ELFERINK:** Pass, in the interests of time. We have about four million questions, but unfortunately we cannot get to them.

**Mr WOOD:** Just one question in relation to what was spoken about before.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Can I just say something before the question is asked? I need to put on record at the outset that, unfortunately, the Executive Officer of the EPA, Ms Juanita Croft, has had to travel to Sydney to attend to a serious and urgent family matter. As you are aware, the EPA is an independent authority, so I can only provide a broad overview of their work. The Chief Executive of NRETAS, Jim Grant, can provide financial information. If you have any questions that go to the detail of EPA operations, we may have to take some of those questions on notice.

**Mr ELFERINK:** We read the annual report, all 14 pages.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. Member for Nelson, you had a question.

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. My question relates to something you said earlier when we were referring to who actually accesses the natural resource of water in relation to whether we have enough water, for instance, in the Darwin region, to supply water into the future. Your answer, basically, was because an EAS would be required if Power and Water Authority decided to build a dam, then to some extent we would have a conflict of interest. Is that correct?

**Ms ANDERSON:** That is correct, yes. I will pass this on to Jim Grant.

**Mr GRANT:** We assess the resource, so we are in charge of knowing how much water is where and how long it will last. As you know, we have these lovely diagrams of aquifers and graphs and we provide all that to Power and Water. Power and Water then would assess the future demand for water in the north, in particular, and then they would make decisions based on information we gave them. So, they would decide whether they need another dam or whatever, and then they would give us a notice of intent about what they intended to do.

**Mr WOOD:** My understanding is you may have a conflict of interest in that, because you would also have to judge the EAS for the dam. What I am trying to ask is: would that possibly be a case where you put the EAS process over to the EPA, or is that not possible?

**Mr GRANT:** The EPA can review major projects, and that is clearly a major project. The EPA's role would be to look at - in fact, I think they are doing it right now - the process for assessment of major projects to ensure there is no conflict of interest, or tell us if there is. I think the EPA is doing exactly the role that you are talking about. They are looking at where the conflicts of interest might lie in those situations. I think that EPA has a role to play; they would not do the EIS for us, but they would certainly look at how major projects are assessed and let us know if it is going to be effective, or if there is a conflict of interest. I do not think there is, because one part is assessing how much water there is, and the other part is basically assessing the effect on biodiversity, so they are very different matters.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, in other states an EPA can assess an EIS, but here the EPA can only assess the process, and not assess an EIS. Would that be fair?

**Mr GRANT:** Yes, the EPA here is fulfilling a role of checking the process and making sure the process is fair and above board and effective. It is not doing the EIS on its own.

**Mr WOOD:** I am putting the point that it can do something, but it cannot do the EIS, so it is not an independent body in the sense of taking over some of the functions your department does at the present time.

**Ms ANDERSON:** It is independent in a sense that any person can refer to the EPA, and the EPA can actually self refer as well.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, no more questions, I hope.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 9.1.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Madam Deputy Chair, we have answers to some questions on notice.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Which ones, what numbers?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Questions on notice Nos 8.10, 8.13, and 8.14. I will table those.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. That concludes consideration of Output Group 9.1.

### **Non-Output Specific Budget Questions**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Are there any Non-Output Specific Budget-related Questions? No. On behalf of the committee, I thank the officers from the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts and Sport who have provided advice to the minister today. Thank you very much for your time.

### **TERRITORY WILDLIFE PARKS OUTPUT GROUP 1.0 TERRITORY WILDLIFE PARKS (Business Line)**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Minister, I invite you to make any opening statement, if you wish to do so.

**Ms ANDERSON:** No.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** The committee will now proceed to consider questions regarding the business line. First of all, Territory Wildlife Parks (Business Line); are there any questions?

**Members:** No. Pass.

### **OUTPUT GROUP 2.0 ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK (Business Line)**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** The committee will proceed to consider questions regarding the Business Line, Alice Springs Desert Park. Are there any questions?

**Members:** No. Pass.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Arafura?

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** No.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of this business line.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER**  
**Output 1.2 – Indigenous Policy**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** We invite the minister to introduce officers who will be assisting her in addressing Output 1.2 Indigenous Policy, which sits within the Department of the Chief Minister.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Madam Deputy Chair, I introduce Mr Ken Davies, Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of the Chief Minister; Mr Peter Wellings, Acting Executive Director, Office of Indigenous Policy; Mr Leon Morris, Director Indigenous Policy; and, Mr Alastair Shields, Acting Executive Director Policy, Coordination and Implementation. Other officials may come forward as required, Madam Deputy Chair.

On 20 May, the Chief Minister and I announced the Northern Territory government's *A Working Future* policy, a strategic approach for remote area investment and service delivery. *A Working Future* is an overarching policy which involves most of our service agencies in the Territory government and many in the Australian government. As the Minister for Indigenous Policy, I have been given responsibility by the Chief Minister to ensure that agencies across all portfolios work together to implement the different parts of the policy. Let me make it absolutely clear, the job of implementing all aspects of *A Working Future* goes across every single government department. We have set some firm policy directions and it is now my job, and the job of relevant staff in the Department of the Chief Minister, to ensure the policies are being implemented and coordinated across government.

To support me in this role, new structural arrangements have been put in place to ensure whole-of-government planning and delivery of *A Working Future*.

From 1 July, a new Service Delivery Coordination Unit will be established in the Department of the Chief Minister to drive reform and coordination across Territory agencies. A key role for the unit will be working with the Remote Service Delivery Subcommittee of the Northern Territory government's Coordination Committee of Chief Executives to drive implementation of *A Working Future* across government. The unit will be the backroom support for the new joint structures we are putting in place with the Commonwealth as part of the five-year National Partnership Agreement on remote service delivery; that is, regional operation centres in Darwin and Alice Springs.

To ensure all this happens smoothly across the many agencies that will be required to overhaul the way they deliver services, we have appointed a Coordinator-General for Remote Services, Mr Bob Beadman, who will work closely with the Commonwealth Coordinator-General. Some of the key priorities I am expecting the service Delivery Coordination Unit and the Northern Territory Coordinator-General will have oversight for in the next 12 months are: overhauling the way we fund services and programs in remote areas to give communities certainty about what government support they can expect in the future; progress in township leases and area plans for each of the 20 growth towns; implementing our new policy and methodology for funding outstations and homelands; supporting the regional operation centres to develop local implementation plans for each of the 20 Territory growth towns to underpin the government's economic development strategies, service

delivery priorities, and other investment; supporting rationalisation of government reference bodies in remote areas for an arrangement which is manageable; establishing a storehouse of government expenditure and service delivery data for all remote towns and communities so we will have a strong evidence base on which to rely for future policy development.

We will draw on resources from the Office of Indigenous Policy to support the establishment of the unit. This is possible due to the fact that much of the work being driven out the Office of Indigenous Policy over the last 24 months - such as the National Indigenous Reform work driven by COAG - responding to the Commonwealth's NTER and the development of the Outstation Homelands Policy, is nearing completion. We have drawn together everything we have learnt over recent years and developed a very comprehensive policy to take us into the future. The Commonwealth has formally endorsed *A Working Future* policy, and will be working closely with us to see it is implemented.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Braitling, you have questions, no doubt; and I reiterate in just under the half hour we have, the Independent members may also have some questions.

**Mr GILES:** We will share some time. Thank you, minister, for your opening statement. I recognise the hard work you and your officials do in Indigenous affairs - whether we agree on the process undertaken.

Minister, the Outstations Discussion Paper which was released late last year was quite good and was rolled out across the Territory through the consultation process with Patrick Dodson in a very informative way. While it, I suppose you could say, sought to deliver some bad news to communities, it did create discussion on the way things might change into the future.

The announcement of *A Working Future* policy, which goes to the heart of many of the outstations, or homelands, as you like to call them, has created a lot of resentment across the Northern Territory and Australia, more generally, with many people claiming the Northern Territory government and the Chief Minister have lied to them because they have not gone back and consulted with an alternative model as set out in the original Outstations Discussion Paper. They have not gone back and described alternative approaches and consulted with people about the way they would look to move forward. How do you respond to those who say the Chief Minister and the government has lied to people, particularly regarding the consultation process, and not going back and bringing people with them?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Braitling, we have not lied to anyone, and certainly the Chief Minister has not lied to anyone. We went through the processes of consultation and, yes, we have seen some anthropologists, some researchers who are up about changing the lifestyle of Indigenous people; we have seen some people in the Laynaphuy Homelands jump and down about the policy. I believe they have been misinformed about having to leave their homelands. This is not about anyone leaving their homelands. The publicity we have had from certain corners - the ABC has used scaremongering tactics in the media, and very ill informed media, may I say - to scare Indigenous people on homelands and make them think the government's policy is to take people away from homelands. It is not. You cannot take any Indigenous person away from their homelands - this is their land.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, do you accept the way *A Working Future* policy was announced - without going back and doing original consultation - has made people apprehensive and made them feel scared?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We have taken all the steps the Minister for Indigenous Policy has had in place, and there will be an economic modelling done on this. The Dodson Review happened, there was consultation with Dodson. We also received submissions. I can place on record consultations were undertaken with all members of the shires and with the four land councils. At one meeting we had the NLC, the CLC, Anindilyakwa and Groote at a full meeting before the announcement was made. We also had meetings either with the CEO and the Chair of every shire before the announcement was made. The only people we have not spoken to is the CLC in isolation to the meeting we had here with the Executive, with both David Ross and Lindsay Bookie at the full meeting here in Darwin. The reason for that was they were moving office and they could not find the space for us to meet with them in Alice Springs. I can table the consultations we have had.



**Mr GILES:** That will be good.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I will table that. There was a briefing conducted by my Chief of Staff and also the Department of Indigenous Policy with all bush members. I can table that document as well for you.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, how did you identify the 20 communities which will now become hubs, and why did you select those communities to become hubs? What is the purpose of a hub?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Communities were chosen because of where they are – the vicinity of homelands within a 50 km radius; it was about how they could better service a population. There has been talk about my home community of Papunya; people say: 'How do you compare Papunya being on the list of 20 to Kintore?' If you look at Papunya's population which is about 230, then 20 minutes away there is Haasts Bluff which has 180 people; and Mount Liebig, 45 km to the west, has 220, then all the other outstations, you find Papunya's population all of a sudden becomes 680 or 700. So, logistically, Papunya is the right place to have a hub town to service all those places. Why would you have nearly 700 people accessing services which are 220 km away, as the member for Port Darwin would know, to Kintore? It just does not make sense.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, part of my question was: what is a hub? Apart from the geographical spread, which I appreciate, what other reasons did you have to pick communities as hubs?

**Ms ANDERSON:** I will ask Ken to answer that.

**Mr DAVIES:** Ken Davies, Deputy Chief Executive. The Territory growth towns selection process took place towards the end of last year. A decision was made by Cabinet on 4 November in relation to the towns that were selected. In terms of categorising the key towns, we developed a schema which looked at the Northern Territory across the board, and we ran with a high level set of towns around Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. We pulled out the specific-purpose towns which are mining-lease related like Nhulunbuy, Jabiru, Alyangula; then the tourism town of Yulara. Then we chose the Territory growth towns because of their proximity to the largest proportion of Indigenous people and Indigenous communities within the radius.

There were a range of scenarios when we looked at the selection of these towns: some had freehold title - Elliott was one, and Kalkarindji was another - they currently had in place schools, a police station, the right infrastructure to build on to create a hub; the right population mix; the right number of communities within a 50 km radius; 15 of them have full-blown SIHIP programs operating or planned; they had a school which, in most cases, was running a program through to Year 12; health clinic, police station; essential services; an aerodrome and, as well, an Office of Local Government in place. They are the reasons they were chosen.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you for your answer. I go back to one of my original questions: what is a 'hub'? I appreciate you mentioned some of those things, and I am not opposed to hubs, I believe hubs are a good idea, but I believe we need to get evidence right, and I believe you have not utilised evidence in this process. When I ask 'what is a hub', we go back to the promises made about Elliott - Elliott has a number of services; it is classified as a town in the Northern Territory. I want to know what a hub is and how it is going to have an effective change on Elliott. What will change in Elliott?

**Ms ANDERSON:** One of the things, if you look at the financial or economic modelling of anything, if you do not put a blueprint policy out in advance, before you do any kind of economic modelling, what have you got to model on? What is your framework? So, the fact the government has put out a blueprint policy allows us to use any kind of financial or economic modelling based on the framework of the policy we have announced. If you take away the policy, or we did not announce it, and you want economic or financial modelling done on it, what are you modelling? That is what I want to know. What are we modelling?

**Mr GILES:** I would say, minister, this *A Working Future* stuff is not a blueprint framework. This is a policy to go forward. It is not a blueprint at all, and decisions should have been made on economic modelling to pick these communities, not pick them and then do the economic stuff later on.

**Ms ANDERSON:** But that does not make sense, member for Braitling, it does not make sense. What are you doing economic modelling on without a framework?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Braitling, you have the call.

**Mr GILES:** It would be my opinion that you identify what the economic opportunities are and what the potential growth is before somewhere is selected as a hub. This is why I am trying to identify what is a hub? What was the economic modelling to choose it? What are the future opportunities? Elliott is a good example; they have a number of services there now. That is a simple example of: what is the future, based on what economics did you pick it, and how will that increase services? Until these questions can be answered, this seems more like a political stunt to pick the 20 biggest communities based on population for a voter base, rather than how you can support these communities in the future. If there are solid reasons for them being picked, I fully support and do not have a problem with that, but I have not seen anything or heard anything about why they were picked.

**Ms ANDERSON:** You have just been told for the last three or four minutes why they were picked - based on the services they have, and Ken has given you that in detail. I go back to what I said before; this is a policy blueprint we have put out in order to then do economic or financial modelling. I cannot believe you would do financial and economic modelling based on nothing. You have to have a framework, and this policy is the framework; then we come to the economic modelling on it.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Thank you, minister. I will go through *A Working Future*. *A Working Future* will refocus the government's Indigenous funding, and we will see more than a \$160m invested over the next five years through the remote service delivery National Partnership Agreement with the federal government. I have a number of questions and I am conscious of time, but they are important questions, and I do not think government has done this to get the hit politically. I understand and I know this is government's policy, and there are some valid questions I have on this which I would like answered and treated with some seriousness so the information going out to remote communities is exactly the right information.

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**Question on Notice No 8.26**

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I will go through a series of them because you might want to take some on notice.

How much of the \$160m will be invested, and what is the full amount for the five-year period? Is the amount of more than \$160m all federal government money; if not, then what percentage or portion of it is federal government money?

Was it a condition of the federal government providing the funding to the Northern Territory government that none of the money be spent on housing or infrastructure on homelands or outstations?

Was it a condition of the federal government providing the funding to the Northern Territory government that the money be concentrated on particular growth towns which had been agreed to by the Commonwealth?

Is there a document in existence setting out the terms of the agreement between the federal government and the Northern Territory government? If there is such a document, is it signed? If so, when was it signed, and by whom?

If there is no signed document recording the agreement between the federal government and the Northern Territory government regarding the more than \$160m, when was the relative agreement

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made, by whom, and on what conditions? Is the more than \$160m to be distributed between the 20 Territory growth towns and, if so, on what basis and according to what criteria?

Will the Northern Territory government be deducting an administration fee from the more than \$160m amount? If so, at what percentage rate, and how much of the more than \$160m amount will be spent in the 2009-10 financial year?

I can table that for you, minister, so I can get a comprehensive answer.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Yes. I can go through and list some of the millions and millions of dollars we are putting into all those areas. One question I thought you might be able to answer is about the signing of the partnership agreement. You were the former minister for 14 months; I have only just taken over the portfolio, so that would be something you might know about.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Which agreement is that?

**Ms ANDERSON:** You just outlined in your statement that you want to know whether there was documentation signed by whom, and when.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** No, this is in relation to the National Partnership Agreement which, I, as the former minister, like you, do not get to sign. It is signed by the Chief Minister or the Treasurer and comes out under the NPA – that is the agreement I am talking about. I will get to questions in terms of the MOU which was signed in 2007, because there are implications from the 2007 agreement, which was signed way before our time and, as you know, comes into much of this. But it is the NPA, the National Partnership Agreement.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I will task that part to Ken. I would like to put on the public record, over the next three years the investment this government is making to Northern Territory's Indigenous people - and this is about reforming, not just money - about reforming the federal government's money, about reforming welfare. Who in this room, or who in this society, believes people should live out in the middle of Woop Woop with no services? I do not think any of us would think that. I believe this government, with all the initiatives and in collaboration with our colleagues in Canberra, is really taking Indigenous people forward, and we will see the results in five, 10, 15 years time. I want to put some of this on the record.

There is \$50m in the next financial year under the Nation Building and Jobs Plan for remote schools; \$14m for the transition of CDEP participants to school council positions; more than \$230m as part of the Northern Territory government's *Closing the Gap*; \$209m to continue the Northern Territory intervention; \$43m under the National Partnership Agreement for Low Socioeconomic School Communities; \$38m under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development; \$204m for Indigenous Health under the National Partnership Agreement to Close the Gap on Indigenous Health Outcomes; and \$67m to improve power, water and sewerage services in remote Indigenous communities.

That is just half of the millions and millions. We are talking about billions when we talk about Health, Education, and Early Childhood. Every bit of money we see being wasted through duplication in Indigenous communities, the hub and spoke model is about allowing outstation people to access better services from those hub towns. It is not at all stating to those outstation people that they have to leave their communities; it is actually giving them better infrastructure so that they can go into these hub communities and access the services.

I keep referring to Papunya because the members for Port Darwin and Braitling know Papunya. Haasts Bluff, Mt Liebig, Mbunghara, and all those little outstations were better off serviced out of Papunya than travelling 230 km - as I and the member for Port Darwin know - to services in Alice Springs. We cannot force people off their homelands, that is their country. However, what they also have to understand is the public purse has been very generous building four houses - and I am not at all stating all outstations are empty - some of them are empty and some of them have beautiful

infrastructure, as the member for Port Darwin would know. There are four, five, six houses on these outstations that no one has lived in, or few people have lived in. Do we still want money to be going into Northern Territory outstations that have been empty for six, seven, eight, nine, 10 years? No. We want to transfer that money from empty outstations into good, viable, healthy outstations that people are living in, so they actually get more money. That is what we are saying.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Can I just follow on with another question?

**Mr ELFERINK:** Just one quick one ...

**Mr TOLLNER:** No, no.

**Dr BURNS:** A point of order, Madam Deputy Chair! The member for Arafura has asked some very important questions, in fact, a whole sequence of questions. Earlier today, we had the member for Goyder ask a similar set of questions. What I suggest - I know the minister has offered to take some of them on notice - we need to work through this in a systematic way ...

**Mr ELFERINK:** A point of order, Madam Deputy Chair! I believe the member for Arafura wanted to table her questions.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Those I have asked the minister will be tabled. I was just going to follow on from that, however, if you have a question, I will wait.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I do not have a question. I was just going to ask that the minister's answers also be tabled when they are produced. That is all I am asking, then, back to you.

**Ms ANDERSON:** I am going to pass on to Ken so the member for Arafura's other questions can be answered.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Can I just make a general statement? Yes, sorry, Madam Deputy Chair.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Can we just finish on this series of questions, member for Arafura? We have under 10 minutes left and I would like to be able to return to the members for Port Darwin and Braintree for their questions.

**Mr GILES:** Do we want the questions tabled?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Yes, the questions are going to be tabled, but we are part way through some remarks ...

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Just for expedience, because I am concerned that we do not have much time and I just want to run through a couple more questions. The minister has given me an undertaking the department will provide me with a comprehensive response. I want to make it very clear though - and I agree, minister, there has been a lot of misinformation about closing outstations - I would like to state on the record, very clearly, that I have never said for a minute the Northern Territory government is going to close outstations.

I did say, though, I felt the Northern Territory government had lied to communities because there were very clear stages where we had not consulted. I just wanted to make sure that was clear, minister; I know you and the Northern Territory government are not going to be closing outstations.

Another question which I would like the department to take on notice, minister: how much of the \$300m *Closing the Gap* money is to be spent in the 2009-10 financial year? Is any of the 2009-10 financial year *Closing the Gap* money to be spent on *A Working Future* policy project or program? If so, how much in total, and according to what breakdown between projects and programs?

**Mr DAVIES:** In terms of the detail, DCM is responsible for coordination here and the application of the policy. The funding distributed to agencies is in those particular agencies. We could aggregate that for you.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Minister, I realise what the Indigenous Policy Unit's role is in that. I was wondering in terms of your policing role, and I know you are not a service provider, but you are working across agencies. I note the minister's statement at the outset of this output, she said there would be a new coordination unit and you would be working across those agencies; so in terms of the \$300m - I am not saying you are going to be servicing it - will those government agencies be meeting their targets under *Closing the Gap*? Rather than going through it, if I could have that information?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Okay, we can take that on notice and make sure we get it to you. Just on the stages we went through on the consultations; the first stage was the formulation and public release of the discussion paper which occurred in mid-October 2008. The second stage involved community engagement and consultation about the discussion paper which occurred in December 2008. Patrick Dodson then provided a report to government based on these consultations. The third stage was the development of the Headline Policy by the Territory government which was based on the discussion paper. The consultations were conducted with more than 900 different people and included written submissions received from organisations, the Dodson Report, and comments from government agencies. This Headline Policy was released on 20 May 2009. The fourth stage involves implementation of the Headline Policy including development of a funding disbursement methodology through follow-up consultation; this is now getting under way. As part of these consultations, the Territory government wants to directly engage with representatives of every permanently occupied outstation in the Northern Territory. The fifth stage will be the final implementation of the new service delivery arrangements. All stages are being informed by local views and in-depth research. Financial modelling will be a key feature of the fourth stage, currently underway.

So those are the steps we are taking, and we will be going to visit every single little outstation. We will ask every single little outstation, whether they have 10 houses and 40 people, or two houses and two people, what their service requirements are from those hubs, and tell them what they can expect from the Northern Territory government. I would really like, as a collective, for us to move forward and really encourage Indigenous people to think of the basics. When I see people from Canberra or Sydney jumping up and down on television that tells me our disadvantage and our poverty determines many of those people's work. They just want to research us; they want to keep us in poverty and disadvantaged so they have a job. Well, we are saying to those people: you do not have a job in the Northern Territory any more; go and find yourself another living.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Sorry, member for Arafura, if I can just clarify a point I have sought advice on from our Secretary. With regards to the list of questions you have there, we cannot actually accept tabled written questions, however, if the minister is prepared to accept those questions ...

**Ms ANDERSON:** Madam Deputy Chair, we can answer the member for Arafura's ...

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I could quickly read through some of these

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** No, what I am saying is to save that, you have already read through all of those questions.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** I have not read through half of them ...

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** We can work with *Hansard*.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** ... I have two more I would like to read through.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** All right, let me finish this clarification. If the minister is happy to accept the

questions you are reading out, on notice, minister, then we will not ask you to re-read them all, member for Arafura, but we cannot accept them in tabled form.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Okay.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Following those two questions, I will throw back to the member for Braitling and extend for an extra three minutes beyond six o'clock.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. If the member for Braitling does not mind, can I just finish these next couple of questions?

**Mr GILES:** As long as the answers are tabled for the PAC.

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** Minister, what will be the establishment and recurrent costs respectively for the one-stop shops which have been outlined under *A Working Future*; and will the money come out of the more than \$160m amount? What is the difference, if any, between the role of the person running a one-stop-shop and that of a government business manager under the federal government's intervention?

I would like to acknowledge Mr Bob Beadman who is in the room, minister.

**Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms SCRYMGOUR:** What are the establishment and recurrent costs respectively for Mr Beadman's position as Territory Coordinator-General for Indigenous Services; and what will the cost be for his associated bureaucracy, and will that money come out of the more than \$160m amount?

**Ms ANDERSON:** We will take that question on notice.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. For the purpose of *Hansard* those series of questions from the member for Arafura are Question 8.26.

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**Mr GILES:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. Minister, before when you were giving a bit of a spiel about the way things need to change, about the money you are going to put into Education, Health and Housing, you spoke about bucket loads of money from Kevin Rudd's borrowings. One thing I did not hear you talk about, and this goes to the heart of what I was saying before about economic analysis - you did not talk once about jobs; you did not talk once about business. When I look at the Indigenous Business Funding Program as part of the department of Regional Development, there was a funding cut this year.

I know you know the changes required are welfare reform. And it is not just welfare reform in terms of the dole or CDEP, it is also reform in terms of the way people have responsibility over their lives in an economic framework. I have not heard you talk about that. I have not heard you talk about business development. The reason I was asking questions about identification of hubs is because that goes a long way to where the potential economic opportunities are. I can see economic opportunities in many of those hubs, but there are also many where I cannot see there is any potential for economic development.

When you say your government is so committed to this I would have thought the government would have put money into business development, but it has not, it has actually cut money for business development, apart from some pork-barrelling to ex-Labor members.

Minister, in the identification of the hubs, what economic opportunities came into consideration?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Some of the things we looked at, member for Braitling, are some of those towns identified are, in fact, in royalty hubs.

**Mr GILES:** Royalty hubs?

**Ms ANDERSON:** Royalty hubs. A certain community which was aired on ABC *Stateline* a couple of Fridays ago was a community that is very, very rich, but you would have seen the cameraman take a very tight shot just of the house and a person sitting there. That community is one of the richest communities in the Northern Territory. It is an outstation and it should stand alone, be viable, vibrant and have healthy people living there. But it does not, and that is the very reason why that shot was taken the way it was that night. Certain people have something to gain out of that silliness. For others like me, who have been around in that country and had a look, we know the difference. The reason that shot was taken the way it was is because you would see absolutely squalor and poverty, and they did not want that shown.

**Mr GILES:** I do not think that has answered my question.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Member for Braitling, I will get Ken to answer that.

**Mr DAVIES:** Member for Braitling, could I very quickly say that 15 of the priority remote service delivery locations which make up the 20 Territory Growth Towns are actually part of the National Partnership Arrangement; they were chosen in concert with the Australian government. So some of those decisions about the modelling and the economics were actually about servicing the population, getting a township lease in place and starting to grow from that base. The mechanism for doing that is going to be around private ownership, proper township leasing, and understanding there is a sufficient population base there to drive some private investment in those places over time.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** I apologise, but it is nearly five past six. That will conclude consideration of Output 1.1.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the minister for appearing before the committee, and also the officers who have provided advice to the minister and the committee.

**Ms ANDERSON:** Madam Deputy Chair, I thank my departmental staff for their assistance.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** The committee will reconvene at 6.30 pm.

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The committee suspended.

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#### **MINISTER HAMPTON'S PORTFOLIOS**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We are going to start the Estimates Committee process. Minister, you could introduce the officials accompanying you and if you have an opening statement, it would be great if you can make it.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Thanks, Mr Chairman. I am very pleased to introduce the senior executives from the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport, who are joining me this evening as we examine the Sport and Recreation output group.

I would like to introduce to my right the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Jim Grant; to my left the Executive Director of Sport and Recreation, Mr Steve Rossingh; and to my second right, the Executive Director of Finance and Governance, Ms Susan Kirkman.

Mr Chairman, I have a short opening statement. Budget 2009-10 invests \$31.4m in Sport and Recreation in the Northern Territory. We are investing in sport from the grass roots level, through to the NTIS athletes at the elite level. We are investing in first class sports facilities for our children and

all Territorians to enjoy and to attract national and international events to the Northern Territory.

We are determined to deliver opportunities for all Territorians to participate in sport and recreational activities, both in urban and remote areas of the Northern Territory, in the cities and the remote Indigenous communities. The government is serious about promoting involvement in sport and active recreation. This is demonstrated by the significant progress towards the development of a Sport and Active Recreation policy which is currently being drafted after extensive public consultation.

Finally, we are getting behind our Territory teams, like never before, as they take on their interstate opponents. We are providing financial support to the men's and women's hockey teams, The Stingers and The Pearls; the rugby team, The Mosquitoes, and our fantastic NT Storm netball team. We have also made a \$1m five-year commitment to supporting the NT Thunder's entry into the Queensland AFL. This has been a significant investment via the government, and the Thunder has not disappointed Territorians with terrific performances in Queensland, Alice Springs, and Darwin. The Territory Thunder players, coaches and the board have done an outstanding job in preparing for the competition and the results speak for themselves.

There is much great news in the Sport and Recreation portfolio, but I leave it there for now, and invite questions from the committee.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are there any questions to the opening statement? Member for Nelson?

**Mr WOOD:** No.

**OUTPUT GROUP 8.0 – SPORT AND RECREATION**  
**Output 8.1 - Sports Development**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** In that case we move on to Output Group 8.0, Sport and Recreation, Output 8.1, Sports Development.

**Mr BOHLIN:** For the years 2006-07, 2008-09 and 2009-10, how many staff were employed working primarily within Sports?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will pass it on to my Executive Director, Mr Steve Rossingh.

**Mr BOHLIN:** If you need to take a question on notice to find out those stats.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Steve Rossingh, Executive Director of Sport and Recreation. Member for Drysdale, can I clarify the question? Is that in the Sports Development area or through the whole division?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Working primarily within Sports. One could surmise it is predominantly around Sports Recreation House.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** We currently have a total of 50 staff within the Sports Recreation Division. That was in the 2008-09 financial year, and what is planned for the 2009-10 financial year. Of those positions, four are what I call executive support positions, including myself. All other staff are involved directly in providing Sport and Recreation services.

**Mr BOHLIN:** The other part of the question, which you may need to take on notice, are those figures for 2006-07 and for 2007-08.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** I will take that one on notice.

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**Question on Notice 9.1**



**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, the question again, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** For *Hansard*, for the years 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10, how many staff were, are, and will be employed primarily within Sports?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 9.1.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. I have to step back; it was rude of me not to acknowledge the panel and say thank you very much for coming along tonight. I recognise the amount of effort you have put into tonight and I hope we do not waste too much time in getting about business. Thank you very much for coming in, and likewise to yourself, minister.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Thank you, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** How many of these positions are or were located at Sports House?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** I will take that one on notice as well.

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#### Question on Notice 9.2

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, Member for Drysdale, if you could ask that again.

**Mr BOHLIN:** How many of these positions are or were located at Sports House?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard* that is Question 9.2.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Where are or were the other positions located? Basing it on the fact that maybe not all those employees are going to be located at Sports House, where are the other employees located?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The answer to all these subsequent questions flow on from the response to the first question. So once we have that information, we will be able to feed through these flow-on questions as well.

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#### Question on Notice 9.3

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Yes, we will take that on notice. Please read that for *Hansard*.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Where are or were the other employees located?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 9.3.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** How many sports staff are funded by NT government without a contribution from Commonwealth funding?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** We have seven positions funded through the Commonwealth, and the balance of the 50, that is 43, are funded directly through the Northern Territory government.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, can you detail the positions of those seven Commonwealth funded positions? I will clarify that, I do not want to know the individual descriptions of jobs, but what are their position

titles, and where they are based.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Six of the seven are Indigenous Sports Program officers, the seventh is the Manager of the Indigenous Sports Program, which has been renamed the Indigenous Sport Unit and fulfils the same role. Of those positions two are located in Alice Springs, one is located in Tennant Creek, one in Katherine, one in Nhulunbuy and the other two in Darwin.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, on the 26 May 2009 you stated you would deliver the first ever Sport and Recreation Policy for the Territory. But this is not the first time a Labor government minister has promised a policy to direct the future of Sport and Recreation in the Territory, is it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** The Sports and Active Recreation Policy I am looking at implementing, I believe, is the first. We are committed to this process and we have undertaken extensive consultations over the last couple of months through regional centres and communities; we have a dedicated website and, I understand, that process has been completed today in Tennant Creek.

I am committed, and this government is committed, to developing a Sport and Active Recreation policy. And I am looking forward ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, I have even participated in part of that. But did not Mr Ah Kit launch consultation, and I quote: '*the Northern Territory's first really comprehensive sporting policy*' – more than five years ago?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I am not aware of that, and I am looking forward. This government has shown a huge commitment, not only in terms of this policy, but also in increasing the Sport and Active Recreation budget over the years since 2001. I am working forward on this, I believe we have great potential, we are doing much good work and this process of consultation has been done comprehensively, and I am looking forward to the results coming back from those various meetings.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Unfortunately, Mr Ah Kit's policy failed; it never got off the ground properly. He promised to consult with the community, so I suppose you are one step ahead of him already, which is good, and I applaud that. But I notice from your discussion paper that you are promising better access, better schools, better pathways, better events, etcetera, which are basically the same promises made by Mr Ah Kit in 2004.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Is that a question or just a comment, member for Drysdale? I am not sure where you are coming from or going to.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Are they not the same baseline consultation programs?

**Mr HAMPTON:** As I have said, member for Drysdale, I am looking forward. This government has shown much commitment to Sport and Recreation since 2001. I believe our record speaks for itself, by kicking goals - and I am going to kick a big 50 metre goal with this Sport and Recreation policy. I am looking forward, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Can we find out, minister, how much it has cost so far to advertise for participation, to develop the new sports policy, and hold all the public forums? Please detail the costing of transport for staff to the community consultations, venue hire, and other running costs of community consultation.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, my understanding is, and I will seek further advice or comment from my Executive Director, but in the 2008-09 Budget we committed \$69 000, and in the 2009-10 Budget we committed \$31 000 towards the Sport and Active Recreation policy. For other details, I will give it to Mr Steve Rossingh.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** A fairly detailed financial question. We will need to take that one on notice, but we will be able to get the information.

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**Question on Notice 9.4**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Could you repeat it again for *Hansard*, member for Drysdale?

**Mr BOHLIN:** How much has it cost so far to advertise for participation, to develop the new policy and hold all the public forums? Please detail the cost of transporting staff to the community consultations, venue hire and other running costs of the community consultation.

**Mr CHAIR:** You are happy to take the question on notice, minister?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is question No 9.4.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. Even off those rough figures, minister, it has cost you in excess of approximately \$110 000 to drag a five-year old plan out of the cupboard, dust it off, put your photo on the front of it, and hand out some glossy brochures.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I believe this is money well invested in the Northern Territory sports community, and the community in general. I believe we have demonstrated clearly that we have a very good process in place with consultations; as you have said you have attended a couple of these meetings yourself. We have gone out not only to regional centres, to Palmerston and beyond, but also to many remote Indigenous communities. I believe that is money well invested in our community.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, you mentioned before that after the visit to Tennant Creek, today or yesterday, the process is technically finalised, the consultation phase, anyway. When will the data of that plan be brought to the table? And will you commit on a date when the actual plan will be delivered?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have said publicly that a final policy can be expected in August. I have said we have to go through and review and assess the findings of that consultation, so August is when I would be looking at for some announcement in policy.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Very good, minister. Will the report be tabled as a complete public document, including the findings?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We will be sending out the draft report for consultation and feedback so, yes, that is open for public input.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Very good, I like the sound of it. With the output group Sport and Recreation in the budget, it states: 'Provision of sports and recreational activities for the community, optimising performance opportunities for athletes and managing sporting fixtures'. Minister, I note that sports grants have increased from \$8.77m in 2008-09 to \$8.83m in 2009-10, but you estimated that there will be 11 fewer programs delivered; your community participation programs are down. What is the reason for this reduction, and how is your statement in the budget paper even true?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** You will notice that in last year's budget the estimate for the number of participation programs was 35 as well. We exceeded our estimate and we were able to deliver 46, and that is something we are always reviewing - our policies, procedures, approaches - so we have more time and ability to deliver more programs. Thirty-five is our baseline estimate. We achieved 46 this year,

and I would be hoping - to put it even more firmly - very disappointed if we do not exceed 35 in the 2009-10 financial year.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, how many sports do you provide grants for, and what is the value of each of these grants?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, my understanding is there are various forms of grants we provide. There is a peak body grant; the grassroots grants; the facility development grants, to name a few. It is my understanding the total grant funding distributed, across all regions, is just over \$5m. Once again, I seek advice from my Executive Director, Mr Steve Rossingh.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The total grant program for 2009-10 is \$8.829m. Of that \$8.829m, \$6.579m is allocated to the ongoing recurrent grant programs. Those programs are the peak sport and recreation programs, which is funding available to peak bodies to manage and govern a sport. Secondly, our active remote communities program, which is funding provided to shires and one or two other non-shire bodies, for the employment of community sport and recreation officers.

There is a facility development grants program, which is generally grants up to a maximum of \$50 000 for minor facilities work; grounds maintenance grants program; a national league incentive program, which provides funds, as the minister said in his opening, towards the NT Pearls, NT Stingers, the Rugby Union Mosquitoes, and also the Australian National League netball side; a grassroots development program; and a special assistance grants program. I can give you the breakdown of those amounts.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Through the minister, I wish to have the number of sports you allocate the money to, and what is the value of each of the grants to those sports? If you are talking about a peak body, you should be able to identify how many peak bodies, and if we can take that as a question on notice, you should be able to identify how many sports benefit directly from those grants, even if it is through peak bodies, so we can understand what the breakdown of finances are.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, if you have that answer you are welcome to provide it now, or if you have it in a form you want to table, you can table it, or you can take it on notice; it is up to you.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, I do not have a problem. We can table that.

**Mr BOHLIN:** We can have it on notice, I do not mind.

**Mr HAMPTON:** All right, we will take it on notice if you would not mind, member for Drysdale. We will get it to you as soon as we can.

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#### Question on Notice 9.5

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, can you restate that question, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** How many sports do you provide grants for and what is the value of each of these grants?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** That is Question No 9.5 for *Hansard*.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, how many registered members of these sporting groups are there, broken down by sporting code, for which you have supplied grants? I am quite willing to take that as a question on notice.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I am pretty sure we do not keep that level of detail of membership. You would have to go to the relevant sporting organisation and ask them.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, surely we have some idea of how many registered members are under our peak bodies, because we supply grants to them which, I must say is a fantastic thing and I fully support that, but surely we must have an understanding of where this money is going, what breakdown, how many sporting athletes, whether they are children, that would help us deal with our quantifiable outcomes.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, the advice I have received is that is much detail and it would take some time to produce the level of detail that you are asking.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I am willing - I know we will not have it tonight, I am quite happy. I am not asking that you will have to do miracles and make all your advisors work overtime until we get it. But could you take it as a genuine question on notice?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is that a question you want on notice then?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes.

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**Question on Notice 9.6**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Okay, for *Hansard*, member for Drysdale, could you repeat that question?

**Mr BOHLIN:** How many registered members of sporting groups are there, broken down by sporting codes, for which you have supplied grants?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 9.6.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** As a matter of housekeeping, if officials can provide answers tonight, if they would provide it with the written number it is given.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, how many athletes participate interstate and/or locally as Northern Territory representatives? We know we have a fantastic Thunder and they are doing a great job; in fact, I was at a function where we discussed that last night. How many athletes participate interstate and/or locally as Northern Territory representatives?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, the advice I have received is we do not keep that level of detailed information. When we get to the next Output 8.2 NTIS, there is some stuff we could give you regarding the Institute of Sport.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, minister. I actually find that a little concerning because, last year, much the same question was asked. One could have almost foreseen it was data we are already chasing. I accept that, obviously, is your answer, therefore, we do not have that data at hand. Perhaps for the future? I will hand over to the member for Braintree.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, I know the member for Drysdale has asked questions about grants already, but I want a specific grant. Do you provide grants to Riding for the Disabled?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, we do.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, is that provided on a Territory basis, to a peak body, or is it provided on a regular basis?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I want to make sure we get the right information, member for Braitling. I keep focusing on that sign. We do normally provide grants directly to the peak body, but with the RDA we have provided grants to both the Top End and the Central Australian bodies.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, how do you ensure that funding - I am talking about Riding for the Disabled, in particular - does not just stay with the peak body but is divested to the regional bodies that are members of the peak body? In other words, how do you make sure Alice Springs Riding for the Disabled receives some of that money?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** It is a fundamental role and a part of peak body funding that they are responsible for the development of the sport across the whole Territory. To try to shore that up we have developed a new code of conduct, which will be inserted in all grant agreements from 2009-10, and states quite clearly that all peak bodies have to provide that funding and deliver a service across the whole of the Territory; and they maintain certain behaviours and professional relationships with all their member bodies.

**Mr GILES:** Has Riding for the Disabled, in the 12 months to 31 May, been functioning in the Top End? Can you tell me how much grant funding you have provided for RDA as a peak body, and how much of that would have gone to Alice Springs?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Sorry, member for Braitling, I was receiving some advice. I did not hear the question.

**Mr GILES:** I was interested in how much money went to the peak body for Riding for the Disabled? How much was supposed to, and how much did go to Alice Springs? And was RDA operating in the Top End in the year to 31 May, full time?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** There is no formula for how the peak bodies operate. It depends on different sports and the different needs of the sports. Those needs would change over time depending on the development and stage each sport is at; there is no hard and fast formula. We expect the peak bodies to develop the sport over the whole of the Northern Territory.

Your second question about the operation of the RDA in the north, yes, it has been inactive for some time but it is at a stage now of trying to ramp itself back up and become operational again.

**Mr GILES:** Can you tell me how much money was provided in grants to RDA peak body NT, this year or in a three-year cycle?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I advise you that the Riding for Disabled NT receive the peak Sport and Recreation annual funding - in 2007-08 it was \$30 000, in 2008-09 it was \$31 000. Also the Sports Infrastructure Fund, the Alice Springs branch received a grant in 2008-09 of \$30 000, and a special assistance grant was also given to the peak body Riding for Disabled NT, in 2007-08 was \$16 000, 2008-09 was \$35 000.

**Mr GILES:** All right. Now I have tried to make a note of all those in the right order. Have Riding for Disabled NT and Alice Springs, as two separate corporations, both acquitted their funds and concluded their agreements?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Yes, all grants have now been acquitted.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, did you have any concerns providing funding for the RDA peak body in light of the fact that they were not operating in the north, where the peak body is based, this or last financial year?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, I am aware there were some issues with the peak body. The

advice I was given was they were working through those issues and they have now sorted them out. But in terms of more detail, if you like, I can pass onto Mr Steve Rossingh.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** All organisations go through cycles and from our perspective, in terms of the advice I have given to the minister, RDA provides a very important service to the disabled community, so it was inherent upon us to do what we could to try to help the organisation get back on its feet. There are a number of approaches you can take to try to do that. On this occasion our advice to the minister was to try to continue their funding, but have a more active involvement with the organisation.

We have a Sportsbiz area which has put considerable time and effort to assist the organisation to get back on its feet and operating as well as possible. We took the view that would not happen if funding was cut. We are reassured of the propriety of the funding which has been received, and we have worked through the issues to the point where the peak organisation has now had a restructure, it has a new committee on board and, we believe, looking forward to a much better future.

**Mr GILES:** Thanks very much. Minister, in response to that last answer; how long was the organisation not on its feet? Who was looking after the body while it was not on its feet and making sure that RDA North was operating and running and all the regular things were happening - the horses were looked after and so forth?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** There are a number of elements to the regulatory environment which looks at the health of organisations; they are incorporated under the *Associations Act*, and they have reporting requirements. Our grant conditions, as you have already mentioned, require grants to be acquitted and also have reporting requirements which is where we are looking at the organisation; working with them to try, firstly, to detect any danger signs and then get into a process to help the organisation if those danger signs are apparent.

**Mr GILES:** I am not chasing anything, but I understand RDA North, from working with RDA in Alice Springs, is that RDA at Palmerston, or up north, has not been operating for the past 12 months. Sportsbiz might have been involved and got it back up and running now and that is good, but while it was not operating it was still provided with grants, and the horses were not being looked after. I know this is a small issue for a big department, but Alice Springs had been looking for horses for a number of disabled riders they have, and were not able to access horses or any other services or facilities from up north due to the destabilisation of the body.

My question is: how can you continue to fund them when they were not operating? Did you have a role in trying to facilitate working through the problems they were having up north? And why were those problems not rectified to support Alice Springs and get RDA back up and running sooner? Does that make sense? I know it is a long winded question.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, look, I understand my department conducted a independent governance and financial review of the organisation in March this year, and that was to address the financial and governance difficulties in the organisation. That is something I have, over the term of being Sports minister, been acutely aware of. From time to time sporting organisations do get into trouble and my department plays a very important role in resolving some of those issues; the department also provided mediation within the organisation. In terms of those other issues, I am quite comfortable in saying I support my department and what they have tried to do. They do have a limited role in this. Sometimes it is up to the sporting organisations to sort out their differences. Does my Executive Director want to add anything, Mr Rossingh?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The only other thing to add is that some of the funding was directed to assisting the horses in Darwin, there was some neglect evident and funding was put in to try to help recuperate those horses.

**Mr GILES:** The Northern Territory government took a while, minister, to look after those horses?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We provided funding, member for Braitling, to assist that.

**Mr GILES:** Right. I want to get off this topic and back to the questions.

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is an important question.

**Mr GILES:** I do want to get to the end of it. The horses were neglected, and the money went to the organisation and the horses were not looked after. To me it seems there might be a gap in this system and no one stepped in; whether it was the RSPCA – I do not know, but no one stepped in to look after these horses

There are disabled people in Alice Springs through RDA who need horses to ride for rehabilitation, and there is a gap in the system somehow, because those horses, one, were not being looked after; two, they had funding to the organisation; and three, were not sent down south to provide a service. I will provide notice that something was wrong and can you work to fix it somehow so it does not happen again. If any of those horses could be sent down south so those kids have horses to ride, I would appreciate it.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, member for Braitling, I will take those issues on board. As minister for Sport and Minister for Central Australia, I am very keen to hear those concerns, and you know you can write to me if you do pick up these types of concerns. My CEO, Jim Grant.

**Mr GRANT:** I would like to emphasise what Steve said before about the Code of Conduct. I believe that is the system you might be looking for and will cover some of these issues. It is very difficult for the department because we are funding the bodies, but we do not want to run the bodies for them.

**Mr GILES:** No.

**Mr GRANT:** But I believe the Code of Conduct, if you look at the system we are going to insert, will be the system to address many of these issues.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are you finished, member for Drysdale?

**Mr BOHLIN:** No further questions in this output.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson, do you have questions to Output 8.1?

**Mr WOOD:** I was interested in questions about RDA, because I have received some complaints, so I would be interested to know what happens ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** We will raise them all in Facilities and Events.

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. Could I ask, minister, where does Clontarf fit into this?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Can I go back to make a very important point, Mr Chairman, that my department, quite adequately, did contact the RSPCA in the previous matter. It is an important point I want to put on the public record.

In terms of the Clontarf Academy, member for Nelson, that is funded through the Department of Education and Training.

**Mr WOOD:** So you are not involved in that?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Not in terms of the budget or the estimates process.



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**Mr WOOD:** Are people employed in your department referred to as NRETAS employees, or Department of Sport employees?

**Mr HAMPTON:** NRETAS, I would say, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay. Minister, NT School Sport is a very important part of sport development as many of our elite athletes come into that program, such as Nova Peris, Crystal Attenborough and Shannon Motlop – what involvement does this department have in School Sport?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Historically, we have not played a key role. In March this year, the Chief Minister asked for a review of the NT School Sport policy; you may have seen that advertised in the papers. As part of this review, Sport and Recreation were involved. A steering committee is looking at this review, and my Executive Director, Steve Rossingh, is on that steering committee reviewing the NT School Sport policy. I am not sure if Mr Rossingh would like to add anything further.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The only thing to add is that a draft report is due in a week or so. It has been quite a productive and relatively expedient process.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, was much used from a Sport and Recreation committee the government set up which also looked at NT School Sport. I know that committee did not have a chance to finalise what it had done when you started up this review. Was there at least some use of the information that committee had?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, member for Nelson. I chaired that previous committee - the Sport and Youth Parliamentary Committee - we did much work, and that was an issue which was regularly raised with us as a parliamentary committee. I asked my office to look at the report which was tabled in parliament in terms of its deliberations with this policy.

**Mr WOOD:** Was there any feedback when you did your review, from people who said: 'A few months ago you had a review through a committee and, now, you are asking for another review'? Was there any reluctance for people to be involved, thinking they had already done this work and now you are having another review?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I pass to Mr Steve Rossingh to answer that.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The feedback I had is that one has really led to another. The sessional committee consultations raised many issues and concerns with Schools Sport NT both as a program and an organisation. We have taken that a step further and identified some fairly rigorous terms of reference to take those initial comments, put more detail into them and, hopefully, will receive some fairly robust responses to them.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, one of the key achievements in your 2008 Annual Report was called Beginning Coaching in Katherine, Darwin, and Alice Springs. Do you have any programs that encourage umpiring or adjudicating? It is an important part of sport and there are always complaints that no one takes up that side of it. I am wondering if the department encourages people into those areas.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The referee, umpire, or the chairman are very important. We know that, Gerry.

**Mr WOOD:** That's right.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Thank you, member for Nelson, I know you are a very good umpire, particularly AFL.

**Mr WOOD:** Just because I gave you a free kick in Alice Springs about 10 m out from gaol.

**Mr HAMPTON:** There is a program we are running at the moment in umpiring and encouraging

umpires. I will ask Mr Steve Rossingh to give more detail of that program.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The program is the Coloured Shirt Program. It is really trying to get a visual recognition of umpires or referees in training and some promotion for spectators and players to give those people with their L-plates a little latitude, so they are not put off at the beginning. We have also run three workshops in 2008-09 and an advanced mentoring workshop for coaches, an accredited presenter course, and an accredited assessor course. These three programs are being run and the big one is the Coloured Shirt Program. Hopefully, they will encourage more people to take up umpiring and refereeing.

**Mr WOOD:** I have seen the Coloured Shirts in AFL, with Auskick at Bees Creek. It is a very good program. Does it apply to other sports and, if so, what other sports does it apply to?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Yes, the next sport we will be running a trial in is hockey. We are doing a fairly intensive trial and some good evaluation to ensure the objectives we are trying to achieve from it are happening. From there, depending on the results, which we hope will be positive, we will roll it out to more sports after that.

**Mr WOOD:** Through you, Mr Chairman, is there any encouragement to get ex-footballers, netballers, or cricketers to come into the umpiring/adjudicating area? Someone said to me tonight: 'We try to train up people to be elite footballers, netballers or whatever, but are we keeping up with the standard required for good umpires and good referees and that sort of thing?' Is that a policy of the government's sporting development?

**Mr HAMPTON:** As I said in the introduction, member for Nelson, we are going through the development of a new sport and active recreation policy. I am hoping these types of issues are raised through that policy consultation phase. The other event we used to have were the Come and Try days. I suppose it is up to individual sporting organisations also to get out there and encourage - through schools or other networks - kids and younger people to get involved in umpiring.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, I am saying that we are trying to get the best sports people and the best footy teams, but if we do not have the best umpires and adjudicators, the quality of what you are trying to do is diminished.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will certainly take those comments on board, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, I will get into the bigger issue: how are you working with the Active After-school Community network? You did mention it earlier, but what is your actual role in that?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** We have a pretty good relationship with Active After-schools; we meet with them quite regularly to see how we can channel the participants in their programs into sporting clubs. The nub of the relationship is based on regular meetings and discussions and we let each other know what is going on. David Brabham, the local State Manager, has a good working relationship with us, and we have also attended the national forum on how we can work better together. There will be some further recommendations and, if not recommendations, then observations coming out of the School Sport NT, and how that fits into the triangle as well.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Sport and Recreation are working with the Australian Sports Commission in relation to the Active After-school program, particularly through the BMX and golf projects.

**Mr WOOD:** One of the problems in the Territory is often our elite athletes do not put back into the sport; for example, even when juniors are playing they do not go to junior games to encourage and talk to juniors. This does not have to be a formal structure, but seeing senior athletes around the club and taking an interest in junior sport promotes the sport within the community. I do not believe some of the elite athletes know how to do it. Has your department considered a program to use our elite athletes to inspire juniors in sport? Not just turn up, but have the ability to talk to those kids and mix

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with them, as well. Do you see a role for elite athletes in that sphere?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I do, member for Nelson. There are programs such as the Red Dust Role Models, that I am aware of, where they use ex-Olympians or ex-AFL and ex-NBL players.

**Mr WOOD:** Do we use our local people?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I agree. Through the Clontarf Academy there are many local people who are now employed through Education and Training in the Clontarf Academy. They are inspiring and mentoring young Indigenous men through the education system using football. They are two examples I can think of. I have been advised that the NTIS athletes are required to do six community events or community service roles during the year.

**Mr WOOD:** During the sessional committee, much of the discussion was about recreation and sport officers. One of the complaints was they were poorly funded or partially funded by the council. Part of your program is to upgrade those positions. Have you put more money into this area? Have you increased the number of sport and recreation officers? Are they being paid a good salary which will guarantee to at least try to keep them in the communities, which was one of the problems with the low pay?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In terms of *Closing the Gap*, we have increased our funding into Sport and Recreation. Through *Closing the Gap* in 2008-09 we provided \$1m, and in 2009-10 we provided a further \$1m. With the old community government councils moving to the local government shires we changed our program to reflect those changes. The program is now called the Active Remote Communities Program, and in 2008-09 that received \$1.236m and will receive the same level of funding for 2009-10. There are a total of 56 sport and recreation officers located in the eight local government shires and the Darwin region.

**Mr WOOD:** With the government's proposal to have these new centres, would you be concentrating some of these people in some of those areas?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Certainly. I suppose it is up to the shires where they locate them. I would say most times they would be in the larger centres where they can coordinate their activities.

**Mr WOOD:** The other thing I remember being discussed in the sessional committee is the issue of Recreation, that sports development administers the Sport and Recreation Grants Program. What does the government consider as recreation, and how does it see recreation as a means to good health and physical fitness, as distinct from official sports or formalised sports?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Through our grant programs we acknowledge and recognise recreational organisations such as the YMCA and the important role they play in our community. Through our grant programs we do fund recreational organisations to undertake those types of activities. Some of the key organisations, besides the YMCA, are the Australian Red Cross, the Girl Guides, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, the Scouts, and Life. Be In It, which we do provide with funding through our grants.

**Mr WOOD:** Are those figures at the back of the annual report, which are grants you give for Recreation, are they available somewhere, or do we need to ask for them?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, they should be on our website.

**Mr WOOD:** On the website? I do not know whether they are in your annual report; some departments put all their grants in the back of the report.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, I know, probably because of the number of organisations and the number of grants we give out, it is probably easier to put them on the web - environmentally friendly.

**Mr WOOD:** The other question is about Women in Sport, which I know has been going for sometime, is this program being continued on an annual basis? I thought it was a good program; it encouraged people to have a go at sports they have never tried before. Does it still operate? And if not, why not?

**Mr HAMPTON:** That is an important question, member for Nelson. Through all our grants we provide as much as we can for women to be involved in sport. I know one of the grants we funded, the Shire Softball Competition, has been hugely successful in encouraging many remote Indigenous women to be involved in sport. As I just pointed out, we have funding going to the Girl Guides Association and, at the elite level, we support the NT Netball Team, Storm. We recognise that in the Women in Sport program. I will hand over to Steve Rossingh to give more detail on that.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The minister has already referred to the Territory-wide women's softball competition which has been a raging success because it is dealt with, the competition, on a sustainability basis. To take up your previous point, member for Nelson, there has been an accredited coaching program as part of that because, you might be aware, scoring in softball is quite complicated. To leave a legacy of those skills to ensure sustainability of the competition has been a very dedicated project and has really lifted women's sport in remote areas.

We receive a portion of a grant from the Australian Sports Commission to deliver some of their Women in Sports program, and we have promoted, quite heavily, an Australian Sports Commission Women in Sport Leadership Grant Program as well, to promote the leaders who can deliver the Women in Sport services.

**Mr WOOD:** We do not have a formalised Women in Sport either as a weekend or a week, where women are encouraged to try - I know cricket was one sport that was pushed, and there were other sports the government was encouraging women to try; I know it used to happen in Darwin. I still believe we need to do much more for women's sporting facilities. At Freds Pass, in the rural area, it is nearly all male-oriented sports. I am wondering why the Women in Sport program seems to have been cut off and does not happen any more.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Nelson, in terms of facilities, we have completed the new netball facilities at Marrara and Larrakia Park. If you went there during the Arafura Games, there were some fantastic women's football games there. In terms of facilities in remote and regional centres, I believe this government has delivered much, both for women and for Territorians in general.

**Mr WOOD:** I will get you down to Freds Pass yet.

**Mr HAMPTON:** We will get down there.

**Mr WOOD:** We will get some softball facilities?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In terms of those other comments, Mr Rossingh, did you want add anything about Women in Sports?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Under the grassroots program, many of the applications for grants are for Come and Try days, and almost always those applications have a fairly clear focus on women's sport as part of the Come and Try activities. There are Come and Try activities happening which are focusing on women's sport.

**Mr WOOD:** That particular event we used to have, does not exist any more; would that be right?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Not as a dedicated carnival or event on a weekend, no.

**Mr WOOD:** That is all the questions I have.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Braitling, you asked for more questions on this output?

**Mr GILES:** Sorry, minister, I did have a couple more questions I forgot to ask before. Can you tell me, does funding for major events or sporting events, come out of your portfolio, or does it come out of Chief Minister's?

**Mr HAMPTON:** No, that is under the Chief Minister's output, the V8's, Arafura Games, Masters Games.

**Mr GILES:** Bulldogs games?

**Mr HAMPTON:** No, that is Sport and Recreation.

**Mr GILES:** Is that 8.3?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes 8.3, member for Braitling.

**Mr GILES:** Is 8.3 under Events?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes.

**Mr GILES:** Okay. If I ask now, what percentage of funding from the Northern Territory government department of Sport goes towards AFL or AFL sport, whether it is community sport, Clontarf, or Bulldogs, or whatever?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Clontarf is funded through Education and Training, so that one would be to the minister for Education. I will ask Mr Steve Rossingh to answer the other question.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** AFL in the Territory receives just over \$900 000 per year. The major components of that \$900 000 are the payment for the Western Bulldogs agreement; the NT Thunder side in the Queensland Football League; and the peak bodies grant which goes to AFLNT for their operations, which is \$90 000 a year; and significant upkeep and maintenance of TIO Stadium. That is the bulk of that money, \$900 000 out of a total budget of \$30m in Sport.

**Mr GILES:** Where does the majority of money, in terms of sport, go?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** It is spread around.

**Mr GILES:** You cannot say if AFL gets more funding than netball or umpires; can that be determined in any way?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Things obviously change over time. For example, if you were doing an analysis of netball, you would say a \$6.2m facility has just been built and completed, along with everything else, so it is difficult to say. But in terms of ongoing funding for peak bodies, which is \$3.3m in grants, we can give you the list. The maximum grant available under that program for any peak body is \$130 000, and we can give you the list of which peak bodies received which amounts.

**Mr GILES:** Okay, thank you for that answer. Minister, the \$900 000 for AFL, does that come out of the three point something million?

**Mr HAMPTON:** \$30m.

**Mr GILES:** That comes out of the \$30m, okay. Adelaide United was in Alice Springs over the

weekend; they were disappointed that you were not there ...

**Mr HAMPTON:** I saw them on the Saturday morning, member for Braitling.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you. They were very disappointed that, when you saw them on the Saturday morning for the handover, you were wearing your Territory Thunder clothes.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I did ask for a hat.

**Mr GILES:** Yes, I heard. What is the Northern Territory government doing to secure Adelaide United pre-season games and a competition game in Alice Springs? I know they are very keen to do that. I want to know what the Northern Territory government, through you and the Chief Minister, is planning to do about that, or any negotiations you have been involved in?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Thanks, member for Braitling. As I said, I did meet with them on Saturday morning. I will pass it on to Steve Rossingh.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** You would be aware – I know it is not Alice Springs – we are hosting Adelaide United on 2 July in a match playing the new North Queensland Fury side. That will be the start, hopefully, of a relationship and discussion with Adelaide United as to how they can enhance the work they have already done in Central Australia.

**Mr GILES:** There is nothing on the table at the moment to get them to play pre-season or season games in Alice Springs?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have not seen a formal submission from Adelaide United, or anyone else. As Mr Rossingh has indicated, we are funding a game here in the next few weeks. We also provide Football Federation NT with the full amount, through the peak body funding organisations, of \$130 000 a year. As I said, we have just built a new facility at Larrakia Park. We have a significant interest in all sports and we show that clearly through our grants. Once I receive a submission from them, we will look at that. Also, as you have indicated, member for Braitling, I was at Ross Park at the weekend and handed over the keys to the Mayor for a \$500 000 facility which this government has funded.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, where are negotiations to get an NRL trial game back to Alice Springs? What is the roadblock to making that happen?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Have we skipped, Mr Chairman, to Output 8.3?

**Mr GILES:** I did not believe this is an event; I thought it was sports development.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** To clarify, to attract an NRL game to Alice Springs is going into the Events section.

**Mr GILES:** Is it?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We started off talking about funding for AFL, which is fine under Output 8.1, but when we move into attracting events, that comes under Events.

**Mr GILES:** I suppose it would come under a grant to help it get there; that was the reason I was asking it now. I am happy to ask it later on.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am trying to stick to the output areas.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Do you have any other questions to Output 8.1?

**Mr GILES:** Yes. Do you want me to ask them now, or come back to them later?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I am happy to be flexible, minister.

**Mr HAMPTON:** If you want to. I am easy.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Really, at the end of the day, it is all about trying to develop our existing sporting people by exposing them to upper level sports, is it not?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, I am happy to take that now if you like?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If it follows on with a series of Events questions then maybe we will do it later, but if it is a one-off, no worries.

**Mr GILES:** We will do it later. How about that, minister?

**Mr HAMPTON:** All right.

**Mr GILES:** To save some confusion.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** To ensure the outputs are acquitted all the way.

**Mr GILES:** I am sure in the opening discussions with the Minister for Business, he would have answered a set of generic questions. Part of those generic questions would have been about advertising and promotional matters in sports development, which may fit under advertising and promotional work. Does the Northern Territory government hand out - and this sounds a bit weird - things like small footballs or any sort of gimmicky things to kids or adults as marketing tools to develop and promote sport?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am not aware. From time to time I do receive uniforms or guernseys that are signed by visiting teams, for example, the Bulldogs; and I will donate that to a charity or an event, but it is up to the sports themselves.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Do you provide money towards that, or is it done as a part of marketing?

**Mr HAMPTON:** No.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Do you have a communications unit? If so, how many people are in the communications unit and what are their positions, broken down by position? What are the personnel costs and the operational costs of that unit?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Thanks, member for Port Darwin. Those signs are getting me mixed up.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For clarification, when the department was here earlier, were those questions asked and answered as part of that section?

**Mr GRANT:** Jim Grant, Chief Executive. We read out those details with minister Anderson in an earlier section.

**Mr ELFERINK:** This is the same communications unit that works for NRETAS. I wanted to make sure.

**Mr CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output 8.1.

## **Output 8.2 - Northern Territory Institute of Sport**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We now move to consideration of Output 8.2, Northern Territory Institute of Sport. Member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, you are estimating NTIS scholarships will be reduced from 149 to 120. Can you explain that to us?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In 2008-09 we estimated in Budget Paper No 3 there were 149, that is down to more athletes being offered scholarships during that financial year. The normal estimate is 120. In 2008-09 it shows 149 because there were a greater number of athletes offered scholarships.

**Mr BOHLIN:** The figure you would normally use is 120?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes. There may be more who are offered scholarships in the 2009-10 financial year, but that is the estimated number.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Last year there were 149 people offered scholarships; which sports have had their scholarships numbers reduced?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will ask Dr Ian Ford from NTIS, to answer that question.

**Dr FORD:** No sports have specifically had scholarship numbers reduced. As we said, we estimate 120 athletes would be on full scholarships per year across all the squad programs, there are 10 squad programs at the Institute, and also eligible for scholarships under the individual athletes scholarship program.

The selection of athletes on scholarships within squad programs comes down to the sport to choose which athletes they believe warrant selection in the squad programs. Based on resources available, we usually have somewhere between 15 to 20 athletes on full scholarships. On top of that, coaches in the program have an opportunity to add other athletes from time to time on an associate scholarship program which fits outside the full scholarship program.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, at the end of the day, last year you reached 149, this year it is going to be 120.

**Mr HAMPTON:** This is the estimated number.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Hopefully, there is room for flexibility; otherwise some of them are going to be missing out on a chunk of cherry pie this year. Some of our brilliant athletes will miss out. How many athletes will not have their scholarships renewed this year? Please explain the method by which you arrive at the number 120.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will ask Dr Ian Ford to answer those questions.

**Dr FORD:** The sports, the squad programs, set the selection criteria for athletes. As a centre of excellence the aim is to have the very best, the most talented athletes put on scholarship, and often there are limitations to the depth that can go. The more athletes we have, while that is terrific for kids and families to be involved with the NTIS, will ultimately impact on the quality of training and services we can provide to the very best athletes; the ones we hope have the potential to go on to represent the Northern Territory at national and international levels.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. What sports are covered by NTIS? I am happy for you to table the document containing the sports.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, as Dr Ian Ford said, there are the individual scholarship holders, there is also the associate member holders, we also have the squad scholarship program. I



will go through that for you.

In squad programs category one: Australian football, cricket, hockey, netball, Rugby Union and Rugby League. Squad programs category two: football or soccer, which I understand is the first time for them to be involved in a squad program in the NTIS, swimming and tennis. Category three: athletics, cycling, ten pin bowling and yachting. I understand it is the first time for yachting and ten pin bowling. They are the squad programs and the sports involved.

**Mr BOHLIN:** From that, can you explain what the different categories are? Can you give an explanation of each category of program?

**Dr FORD:** A category one program is where the Northern Territory Institute of Sport employs a coach on a fulltime basis for the sport. Key eligibility criteria for that category is the sport, through its national and state sporting association, contributing up to at least \$40 000 per annum.

Category two are those sports which are able to provide a fulltime coach or technical director to run its high performance institute program. No funding is required from the sport to the NTIS, and the NTIS will provide the full services available, as we do for category one programs.

Category three programs are those sports which have less organisational capacity, if you like, to run a fulltime, high performance program but, in order to give it some incentive and an opportunity to develop its athletes and to develop the high performance aspect of the sport, we are offering a camps-based program for the first time from 2009-10 onwards. The sport is required to employ, usually on a voluntary basis or through an honorarium, a coach or coaches running the actual program, but we provide, as a category three program, access to full range of services as appropriate to the sport and its development.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. I thought it was nine, but you mentioned earlier, 10, what are the 10 programs offered?

**Dr FORD:** Are you referring to the sports on squad programs or the actual services we provide to the sports?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Let us do both. Let us have a go at both.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Always good to find out these things.

**Dr FORD:** Currently, until 2008-09, we have provided scholarship programs for 10 sports, some of which have already been mentioned: AFL, cricket, hockey, netball, Rugby League, Rugby Union, they are the six full-time category one sports. The other four sports that have been on scholarship in the squad program include tennis, weightlifting, cycling and ten pin bowling.

The services we offer to those sports and to our Individual Athlete Scholarship holders are high performance coaching services, we even offer a range of sports science disciplines with strength and conditioning, physiology, biomechanics and skill analysis, psychology, athlete career, and education counselling. We also have a nutritionist on a consultancy basis, which we provide to athletes in sports, and we have a full-time sports physiotherapist and sports medicine coordinator.

**Mr BOHLIN:** What is the breakdown of ages for the NTIS students, by numbers: under 14-year-old students; under 16 students; under 18 students; under 20, and/or now, above or older than 20? A breakdown of how many in those different areas. Of course, as we know, in different sporting categories people come to the fore at different ages. I will take that as a question on notice if need be.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the purpose of *Hansard*, please repeat that, member for Drysdale?

**Mr BOHLIN:** What is the breakdown of age for the NTIS students, those under 14; under 16; under 18; under 20; and older?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the benefit of *Hansard*, that is question No 9.7.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, in Output 8.1 you could not tell us how many NT representatives you have representing the Northern Territory either interstate or locally? How is it then possible for you to determine how many and of which sports you will deliver under NTIS?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Sorry, are we going back to 8.1?

**Mr BOHLIN:** No, it is under NTIS.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Could you repeat the question?

**Mr BOHLIN:** The question is, you were unable to tell me earlier in Output 8.1 how many Northern Territory representatives we have, the guys and girls who have put on an NT guernsey or a bib and brace, or gymnastic suit, that wear our black and ochre ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Drysdale, you have the call.

**Mr BOHLIN:** ... who wear the Northern Territory uniform, representing within the Territory or outside the Territory. If you cannot tell me how many people actually represent the Northern Territory, how is it possible for you to determine how many, and of what type of sports you will need to deliver under NTIS?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I am extremely proud of our NTIS program. I believe they really punch above their weight.

**Mr BOHLIN:** So are we.

**Mr HAMPTON:** In fact, I know many national and international teams that visit Darwin on their way to access the NTIS; it has a very good reputation particularly in terms of heat, humidification and acclimatisation. I definitely talk up the praises of our NTIS.

There are a range of sports people have come from through the NTIS to achieve national and international levels in 2009, including Rugby League, cycling, hockey, judo, yachting, swimming, tennis, ten pin bowling, touch football, wheelchair basketball, pistol shooting and weightlifting.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, I appreciate that they are all great sports and we have great people representing us there, but I believe you might have missed the point.

How have you determined which sports we will deliver through NTIS in the Northern Territory if we have no real concept or understanding of who is representing the Northern Territory on a day-to-day basis out there on the field? How do you know if you are going to do netball, because you have not been able to identify who or how many players represent the Northern Territory in netball? You have not been able to identify how many people represent Northern Territory in dragon boating, or rowing, or any of the other potential sports. Can you see that you must have a quantifiable understanding of

where your elite athletes are coming into this arena from, and that is how you are going to be able to determine what sports will be under NTIS? How do you determine what sports will be there if you do not understand which sports our elite athletes are coming from?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, it is all based on merit and achievement. Both the group scholarships and the individual scholarships are put out annually for expressions of interest. People apply for those every year. I will ask Dr Ian Ford to talk more about that process; the yearly round of applications to apply for these scholarships, and the panel that will go through and assess those on merit and achievement.

**Dr FORD:** Thank you. We have two processes to determine athletes' eligibility for scholarship to the institute. There is the Individual Athlete Scholarship program and, as minister Hampton pointed out, we advertise that annually to all Territorians who believe they have reached the criteria necessary to get an NTIS scholarship. The NTIS does not develop that criteria; it is developed by the Northern Territory and the national sporting organisation. We invite all Territorians to apply for those and they go through an assessment process, in consultation with the state sporting organisation and the national sporting organisation, to determine which athletes have the performance and the potential to contribute to the key performance indicators in the Northern Territory Institute of Sports; which is about getting Territorians into Australian teams or into professional sporting competitions.

The other process we have is for the Squads Scholarship program. We run on a four-year cycle, pretty much in line with the Australian Institute of Sports and all other state and territory institutes and academies of sport. It is a four-year cycle; every four years we invite all Northern Territory sporting organisations to apply. There are criteria for eligibility. We are finishing the current four-year cycle, and 2009-10 is the start of a new cycle, so late last year we invited all sports to apply. There were 14 sports which actually applied for an NTIS scholarship, and we are able to offer 13 of those scholarships. The one sport was Sepak Takraw, I believe, which really did not meet some of the eligibility criteria necessary for us to run a high performance program.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Adding to Dr Ford's comments, that process is highly successful. Since the inception in 1997, the NTIS has supported over 1000 NT athletes, including eight Olympians, eight Paralympians, eight Commonwealth Games athletes, 38 World Championship competitors, 24 national League club representatives, and over 270 national squad representatives. That speaks highly of not only the NTIS, but their process.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, there is no doubt I believe in our athletes and that we are doing the best we can to support some of them. Sometimes, we need to do better. I do not want to get bogged down on this because we need to move forward. However, take note that I am suggesting if we do not understand where our elite athletes, off their own back, are representing the Northern Territory, how can we better tailor our NTIS programs? We need to understand that so we can move forward and deliver better programs. We are delivering good programs, I am not knocking you guys, but there is a need to grasp that information. We need to be able to quantify where our athletes are. We have some great athletes here, and we need to move forward. Thank you, minister.

What is the cost expenditure per athlete under the NTIS, and what types of things are covered by those costs? I heard that certain category ones require input from the major sports bodies, obviously AFL Australia. Can we also have a breakdown of inputs from those peak bodies into that? This may need to be a question on notice.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will pass that to Dr Ford.

**Dr FORD:** Yes, we would need to take that question on notice to provide the details.

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#### Question on Notice 9.8

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Can you repeat that for the benefit of *Hansard*, member for Drysdale?

**Mr BOHLIN:** What is the cost expenditure per athlete under the NTIS, and what types of things are covered by those costs? Please include the cost breakdown of Northern Territory government funding, including peak sporting body funding.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Happy to take that on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For the benefit of *Hansard*, that is question No 9.8.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. I have a couple of questions in this area before I move on. How many gymnasts are represented by the NTIS?

**Dr FORD:** No gymnasts are currently on scholarship with the NTIS.

**Mr BOHLIN:** How many lawn bowls players?

**Dr FORD:** No lawn bowling athletes are currently on scholarship with the NTIS.

**Mr Elferink:** Over arm or under arm.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Over arm. Are we playing for Australia or New Zealand? What about equestrians?

**Dr FORD:** No equestrian athletes are on scholarship with the NTIS.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Soccer players?

**Dr FORD:** None are currently on scholarship, but we expect that to change in 2009-10 with the new soccer program coming on board.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Also, the Chief Minister's recently announcement of two scholarships with Timor Leste for football.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Bearing in mind that we have had a representative and a winner at the Olympic level, what about pistol shooting?

**Dr FORD:** Currently there are no pistol shooters on scholarship but, before my time, there have been pistol shooters who received NTIS scholarship or funding from the Northern Territory Government.

**Mr BOHLIN:** At this stage, I have no further questions for this Output Group and will pass over to the member for Nelson.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I have been tracking back through some old budgets, and I draw your attention to page 184 of the 2002-03 Budget where it talks about NTIS athlete scholarship holders and it gives a performance measure of 145. Going to more recent budgets, I draw your attention to the current budget paper where the 2008-09 athlete scholarship holders are 149. I notice in your last annual report for 2007-08 you squeezed them to 168.

I note back in 2002-03, the budget for the NTIS was about \$2.5m. I notice from the 2004-05 budget, Budget Paper No 3, page 211, the estimate for 2004-05 was 149. This year you get about \$3.5m to run the NTIS, so we allow for five years of growth. The target for 2008-09 is 120, yet you expect to achieve 149, and then you set a lower target again at 120. Why are we setting such low targets when we have such large increases in funding?

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**Mr HAMPTON:** You were not here when I answered that question previously, but I am happy to repeat it. We estimate annually or target 120. In 2008-09 there were 149, because there were more athletes who were offered scholarships in that financial year. There may be more athletes expected to be offered scholarships this financial year.

**Mr ELFERINK:** You are consistently about 20 or 30 over the mark each year, so why does that not become your performance measure?

**Dr FORD:** We require sports to identify and select the athletes. We are basing it on what we believe are realistic full scholarship holders - that is something which needs to be clarified. Many numbers in the past would have referred to all scholarship holders and would have included associate holders, which are athletes who come on for shorter periods during the year, which the sport and the coach deem, for various reasons, need to be brought into the squad programs. But in consultation with the sports and knowing the resources we have, we believe a realistic number is somewhere around 120. Generally, we have been able to exceed that, but it really comes down to the quality of the athletes who come through the system each year and the willingness of the sports to offer them scholarships through the NTIS. We do not control the selection process itself, and do not ultimately control the total numbers but, they are, obviously, influenced by the resources and what we believe are the thresholds necessary to ensure the very best athletes are getting the highest quality services. We are not denuding that quality by taking on athletes who, at the end of the day, are not going to help us achieve our KPIs.

**Mr ELFERINK:** It is just that this is such a consistent trend; we are talking about a shift of plus or minus five; from the few budget papers I have looked at, I presume that is consistent over the last eight years?

**Dr FORD:** I have to take that on notice.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I will make the assumption on the three I have seen, that being the case, minister ...

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Are we taking that question on notice?

**Mr ELFERINK:** No, I do not believe it is necessary. I have enough to illustrate my point, thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you for caring.

I will go back. I want to pick up on what you said first, which was that there were scholarship holders and then there were there were associates. So when I am reading a budget paper from 2002-03, I am not reading the same thing I am reading in the current budget paper, they are actually different things, are they?

**Dr FORD:** Yes. I am unable to work out exactly what happened back then because I was not with the institute, but over the last couple of years we have changed what was used prior to that and now only look at full scholarship holders. The other types of scholarship holders who come into the Institute, as I mentioned earlier, are associate scholarship holders, which the coach and the sports determine. They only come on board for short periods of time, usually to do with Northern Territory representative teams, for example, to bring extra athletes into the program to provide our full scholarship athletes with the numbers to do appropriate training, drills at team training sessions, and so on.

**Mr ELFERINK:** The old budget papers are, at the definitional level, slightly different to what they are today, so it is like comparing apples with oranges and, whilst we would like to think it is consistent, it is not. Does that change the nature of my original question which relates to why are we still setting our targets so low, because you are still reaching that high level target? Consistently reaching it.

**Dr FORD:** Yes, it is a fair question. I suppose overlaying it is that we rely on the sports. We base it around 120 which we believe is the right number for us to put the quality into the athletes with the resources we have. At the same time, we do not want to avoid having a higher number of athletes. In

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consultation with the sports at the start of each year, they give us an indication that they are likely to have 15 to 20 athletes available for scholarship. That can change once the program gets under way.

**Mr ELFERINK:** So you plot your course for 120, and all of a sudden you get 149. This is elite athlete training; this is the *crème de la crème* of our athletes. I am confused; if you are making the same money stretch further, how is it that you are keeping the quality of the training at an elite level, when you are extending it consistently over more athletes than you budget for?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Port Darwin, I am happy to take those comments on board in terms of the target we are setting. We are happy to look at that, along with my department and the NTIS. I will take that comment on board.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Thank you, but where I am coming to ...

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will get Dr Ian Ford to answer that.

**Dr FORD:** We will take that point on board and look at what targets we are setting each year.

**Mr ELFERINK:** That is fine, but coming back to the question I just asked, which was: you are now trying consistently to stretch 120 athlete's worth of funding over 149, is that the number for the final estimate this year? Someone must be missing out somewhere; the tea lady is not buying enough sugar; where is the money coming from?

**Dr FORD:** Much of the expenditure is not directly through cash funding, if you like, to the athletes, so it goes to services.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Goes to services, yes.

**Dr FORD:** It means our staff, in consultation with the coach and the sport, will find ways to ensure an appropriate level of servicing, increased services provided to those additional athletes.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Coaching staff, for argument's sake, is paid on an hourly basis, is it?

**Dr FORD:** We currently have six coaches in full-time employment as salaried employees of the Northern Territory government.

**Mr HAMPTON:** That is the squad program.

**Mr ELFERINK:** All right. It has been about a year since I looked at the flow chart, the organisational chart for the Institute of Sport, it was a year, a year and a half ago, and all but the receptionist and the head of the NTIS positions were vacant, the coaching positions. I presume that was a product of the fact that you drop coaches into those positions as and when you need them. If coaches are paid, and you are funding 120 athletes, is it not the case those coaches will be spending a little less time than they would have been if they are servicing 149 athletes?

**Dr FORD:** The six full-time coaches we have are only a part of the scholarship athletes; they are only servicing the category one squad programs. There are another four squad coaches for the category two programs, and then we have our individual athlete's scholarship programs, which have individual coaches for those individual athletes.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Minister, you do not give a scalping bonus, if you like, to the NTIS for getting a few more through the door? They do not receive a little performance bonus for that, do they? They have to stick within their budget, do they not?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Certainly. The other point, member for Port Darwin, is that the individual scholarship

holders do get support from other bodies, not just the Northern Territory government, so that could also help with your issues.

**Mr ELFERINK:** The question is, and remains, that the NTIS budget does not get a dollop on the side for the extra; they have to find the money from within the budget, I presume? From an elite athlete point of view, whilst it is nice to have a collective embrace, it must be frustrating for those elite athletes who rely on this program to suddenly find their programs have been diluted by demands not catered for in your own planning processes, minister.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Port Darwin, they are not diluted in any way. The outcomes I have demonstrated and talked about this evening show we maintain a high level of performance and outcomes through the NTIS program, and I am not going to talk that down.

**Mr ELFERINK:** No, I am not talking it down, I am trying to find out whether - talking it down publicly is not the issue - you are talking it up behind doors when you are in Budget Cabinet, trying to squeeze an extra few dollars out for your department. If memory serves me, from looking at the Budget Paper from 2002-03, you actually had more people at the elite level participating in national teams than you do now. You are planning for 120, you are delivering 149, but the amount of players actually ending up, I believe 24, from memory; when I read this paper, is actually less than it was on that paper.

One would ask the question: is the dilution - I know you do not like the word - stretching the dollar further, affecting your capacity to put elite athletes into national teams when, in the space of eight years, it has dropped by about six per year.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will get Dr Ian Ford to answer that. He is at the coalface of the program.

**Mr ELFERINK:** Before you do, minister, whilst I appreciate the good doctor has to make this money work; this is actually a policy issue. This rests with you and your capacity to minister your ministry. The doctor will answer me, and he will tell me what he does with the money, and I am sure he does an excellent job stretching that meagre dollar a little further.

This is a comment about the capacity of ministers to go into bat, no pun intended, for their portfolios in the Budget Cabinet process so when 149 or 168 or 150 athletes turn up, we will have the sort of representation in national teams that we had in 2002-03, as opposed to 2000 - or is it this financial year? Frankly, without talking down the NTIS, it is a disappointing result from a government policy perspective.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Minister, before you answer.

**Mr ELFERINK:** I am not sure it requires an answer; it was more an observation with an exclamation mark rather than a question mark.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The minister can respond. While the terms of reference say officers are not necessarily required to comment on policy matters, I believe that comment also went to the results of the NTIS. Dr Ford would be welcome if you referred to him to comment on the results of the NTIS. Minister, you have the call.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes. I will ask Dr Ford to talk to that.

**Dr FORD:** Yes, in terms of servicing, we aim to service around 120. When the numbers start to creep up we spend a great deal of time in consultation with the staff, the sports, the coaches, and so on, to determine what we can accommodate within our existing resources to the point where it becomes clear we are starting to compromise on the quality; then we will not permit any more scholarships in that particular sport, or with that particular coach.

**Mr ELFERINK:** In performance reporting and TPIs – the measures we all use to see how it is going -

eight years ago, there were 30 people on national teams, and this year 24. That is the result.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Member for Nelson, do you have questions to Output 8.2, Northern Territory Institute of Sport?

**Mr WOOD:** Not many. Is it possible to obtain a copy of the budget for the NTIS to show what its operational and personnel spending is?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am happy to take that on notice and provide it.

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**Question on Notice 9.9**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** I know it is a simple question, but if you can repeat it for the benefit of *Hansard*?

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, could you provide a copy of the budget for the NTIS, including operational funding and personnel funding?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Adding to that, member for Nelson, there are details of that in Budget Paper No 3.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that was question No 9.9. Is that the answer to No 9.9?

**Mr WOOD:** That was quick. There is efficiency in that department.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Is that okay to be tabled, or does it have personal notes on it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We will take it on notice.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** It is on notice, question No 9.9.

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**Mr WOOD:** Minister, what contribution does the Carbine Club make to junior elite development scholarships? Who is the Carbine Club? I notice you issued a media release last year announcing a number of scholarships this year.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, the Carbine Club is a great supporter of the NTIS. They sponsor the NTIS Athletes Awards every year, and they are great supporters and sponsors of the overall NTIS athlete awards. I do not know if Dr Ford would like to add to that?

**Dr FORD:** The Carbine Club in the Northern Territory is a very important sponsor of the NTIS. They provide us with an annual funding amount, which they determine each year, and it goes directly to individual athletes in our Development Athlete Scholarship Program. Last year they contributed over \$20 000 towards athletes in the Development Scholarship Program and, as the minister alluded to earlier, they also provide prize money for our athletes at our annual awards night.

**Mr WOOD:** Could I ask – sorry.

**Mr FORD:** Who the Carbine Club in the Northern Territory are?

**Mr WOOD:** Yes.

**Mr FORD:** They are a coterie of gentleman, local businessmen around the Territory who, through fundraising lunches and initiatives raise a significant amount of funding each year. One of their pet projects, if you like, is to give back to young Territory athletes through sponsorship.



**Mr WOOD:** Does that money go to NTIS or to individual athletes? If it goes to individual athletes, what do they do with the money? Do they give it to NTIS? And does that bring you up to 149?

**Dr FORD:** The Carbine Club prefers to provide the funding directly to the athletes. Part of the scholarship application and annual planning process with the athlete and their coaches determines where necessary funding needs are and the amount of money that is required, and that information is provided to the Carbine Club, which then allocates the money directly to the athletes and/or their parents.

**Mr WOOD:** And does that money from the athlete eventually end up with the NTIS?

**Dr FORD:** No.

**Mr WOOD:** What do they use the money for?

**Dr FORD:** They can use it for a variety of costs relating to training or competition, often to do with travel for interstate competition, clothing, equipment, and other things related to their training and competition commitments.

**Mr WOOD:** And those young people would already have an NTIS scholarship, would that be right?

**Dr FORD:** Yes.

**Mr WOOD:** It is mainly for juniors? Or is it for juniors only?

**Dr FORD:** Yes, our Individual Athlete Development Scholarship Program is for our younger athletes, generally aged between 15 and 17 years of age. The Carbine Club has a preference for younger athletes to receive the funding, but it does not always have to be so.

**Mr WOOD:** Are there special scholarships for Indigenous athletes?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Not that I am aware of, member for Nelson. We do have Indigenous athletes holding NTIS awards within the group scholarship system and individually. Dr Ian Ford, do you have ...?

**Dr FORD:** There are no specific Indigenous athlete scholarships offered by the NTIS. We rely on the sports to select which athletes they will have in the NTIS program. At the moment, we have 28 Indigenous athletes on NTIS scholarships across the ten sports and the Individual Athlete Scholarship Program.

**Mr WOOD:** How do you help athletes who would like to be in NTIS but come from remote areas? Is there a package that helps them with accommodation, someone to look after them, mentor them, if they come from the bush?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes. We have an NTIS academy in Alice Springs. We have one athlete from Katherine, I believe. We offer support in the southern region. In terms of the remoter communities, I ask Dr Ian Ford to answer that.

**Dr FORD:** As the minister mentioned, we have a full-time staff member based in Alice Springs who services our southern region athletes who are on scholarship, but the vast the majority of our staff and our programs are centred here in Darwin. When an athlete from a regional area is selected through the Individual Athlete Scholarship Program or through the squad programs we do not hold that against them, it is up to the sport and the coach to figure out how we can provide adequate services where it is possible. The reality is, once an athlete gets to a certain level they are either going to have to move to Darwin or Alice Springs to receive the sort of support necessary. This is very similar to

some of our best athletes who eventually have to move down south for better quality training and competition.

**Mr WOOD:** I understand that you have to move to Darwin or Alice Springs, but I find you have a new footballer playing for Melbourne this weekend?

**Dr FORD:** Liam Jurrah.

**Mr WOOD:** Liam Jurrah is coming from way out bush and someone spotted him. Someone might spot a similar bloke jumping close to world record, highest in the high jump out bush, like a fellow from Emu Point a couple of years ago; is there an opportunity for someone to pick that person up and bring them to the NTIS to look after him and see that he has an opportunity, because he will not have that club sponsorship you are talking about at the moment?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I believe it is up to individual sports as well; the AFL, out of all sports, probably does the best in regards to that. In the Central Australian region you have the Barkly AFL and Central Australian AFL that have combined their community competitions with the town competitions, and also in Katherine as well. Often that requires the community teams to be playing in Alice Springs, but the Katherine League has really led by example and they are playing games for the Katherine League in places like Kalkaringi and Barunga and also coming up to Ngukurr. I believe it is up to individual sports, member for Nelson. There is much talent out there; there are probably another 10 or 12 Liam Jurras out there.

**Mr WOOD:** I suppose, yes. For example, athletics, you do not have athletic clubs at Yuendumu, but you might have a bloke there.

**Mr HAMPTON:** That is right; it is something I would hope the sports policy consultation has picked up. As I said, we have gone to all the regional centres, and we have gone to some of our major growth towns to consult with the people, and through the schools sports structure as well. I believe that is one area we can improve on, and it came up through our sessional committee meetings and hearings. We need to improve access for all Territorians, no matter where they are living, to these types of opportunities. I would be hoping that process picks it up.

**Mr WOOD:** How many NTIS scholarships are held by Territory athletes residing interstate?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will ask Dr Ian Ford to answer that.

**Dr FORD:** I will have to take that question on notice.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

**Dr FORD:** I do not have the exact figures in front of me at the moment.

#### Question on Notice 9.10

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If you would repeat the question for the benefit of *Hansard*, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, how many NTIS scholarship are held by Territory athletes residing interstate? How many, and maybe name the sport so we understand why they are interstate?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 9.10.

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**Mr WOOD:** This is a general question. The NTIS is based at Marrara, is that correct?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, as well as in the southern region.

**Mr WOOD:** Is there an audit done as to when it needs an upgrade? I presume there is much equipment; gym equipment, weight lifting equipment, all types of equipment. Is there an audit done after so many years to see whether the equipment needs upgrading? There are always new techniques occurring in sport and sometimes new equipment is required. Is that done on an annual basis? Is that something the NTIS looks at?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** We are constantly upgrading and replacing equipment and taking on new equipment. For example, as part of our heat acclimatisation area, we put in effectively a cooling spa area which has allowed sports scientists to trial some of the cooling techniques. We are constantly upgrading. The gym equipment is replaced quite regularly on a cyclical basis. We have a sophisticated heat chamber which has measuring and other equipment and is always kept up-to-date, and that is done within the budget.

**Mr WOOD:** That leads to another question: does NTIS look at the science of sport in hotter climates? Is that part of your role?

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is, member for Nelson. As I said before, it has built a reputation both nationally and internationally. We had the Hockeyroos here before they went to Asia. We have also had one of the staff attend the Beijing Olympics with a wonderful invention; I believe it is the horse pill, which Dr Ian Ford might want to elaborate on.

**Dr FORD:** The Northern Territory Institute of Sport hosts the national Heat Training and Acclimatisation Centre, and is recognised by the Australian Institute of Sport for the work we do in research as well as the applied science we do in training athletes in high temperatures and humid conditions. Some of that work also involves working with other professions.

More recently, we have been doing some work in collaboration with the Northern Territory Fire Brigade, looking at firemen working in very hot conditions, in very heavy clothing; working in partnership with them to allow them to get a better understanding, and also for the Institute to learn what we can from that to apply to our athletes and educate our coaches. For example, what strategies coaches can employ to better prepare athletes to perform at their best in hot conditions, and how they can recover faster so they can continue with high training loads and continue to perform at high levels?

The head of our Sports Science area, Dr Matt Brearley, is internationally recognised for the work he did through his PhD research at Charles Darwin University. He was invited by the Australian Olympic Committee, prior to the Beijing Olympics, to provide some education and information to all the Olympic sports about strategies and issues they would need to deal with in the lead-up to and participation in the Beijing Olympics. We work very closely with some of the other national sporting teams, the Olyroos, the Kookaburras and so on, who are often in touch with us for information and advice.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, do you receive external funding for that, or is that something the Northern Territory government funds on its own?

**Dr FORD:** Most of the funding for research comes from within our own operational budget. We have recently received some additional funding from the NT Innovation and Research Board and, depending on the research, and we often do it in collaboration with organisations like the Australian Institute of Sport or other university bodies, they will contribute funding towards that research.

**Mr WOOD:** I know this is probably slightly off the mark as regards the budget, but have they found people who are either born in the Territory, or have lived in the Territory for a long time, require far less water, do not dehydrate as much as people who suddenly come from the southern climate

straight into the northern climate? I umpired the Masters football this year, Aussie Rules, and the guys from Tasmania were nearly dead, but I thought it was wonderful day. Is there proof that some of the figures they bring out about what athletes need in hot climates has to be adjusted according to where the person has come from?

**Dr FORD:** There is certainly an acclimatisation effect. If you are born or reared in the Territory, particularly in the northern end at this time of the year, for example, then you are at an advantage and your body is able to adapt. It is not my area of expertise, so I need to be careful here; but you are able to adapt. If you come out of a colder climate into a hotter environment without an acclimatisation period, which is generally somewhere between five and 10 days, I believe the research would suggest, then you are going to struggle. I was going to say something funny there, but I had better not.

In terms of the question you are asking: even for Territorians there are still very large individual differences, even for people born and bred in Darwin, for example. Their capacity to exercise or perform at high levels, and the body's ability to retain or dissipate heat, varies from person to person, regardless of where you are from.

**Mr WOOD:** One more question on that topic. Recently, the Thunder went to Alice Springs and Alice Springs had its coldest day, I believe ever, in March, and it rained as well. Do we work on the reverse? If our athletes go south, is there any work done in helping them? Do you have a snow machine in the NTIS to get people adapted to cold weather? And is that a real issue for our athletes?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Some of the athletes you are talking about would be NTIS scholarship holders.

**Mr WOOD:** That is right. And they are going to a colder climate, yes.

**Dr FORD:** Unfortunately, we do not have a snow blowing machine at the institute. Through our heat training and acclimatisation chamber, we can actually drop the temperature down to 5°C, but it is not a room that is going to allow the Territory Thunder under-18 football team to train for very long or in very conducive conditions. However, it is an issue our athletes face travelling interstate in winter - not only cold but very wet conditions. It is part and parcel of the challenges of competing in sport at the higher levels, and you need to be able to adjust. Part of the strategy is to try to get into those environments or places as early as possible and spend the time acclimatising or becoming used to the conditions.

**Mr WOOD:** I know the local junior football teams left here in nearly 30°C and arrived in Canberra next morning to play a game of football and it was 1°C. Thank you, minister.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Any more questions for that output, member for Nelson? In that case, I suggest that as it is 8.30 pm, and we have been going for two hours, we take a five-minute break.

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The committee suspended.

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**Mr CHAIRMAN:** We might start the process again. Minister, we are on Output 8.3 Facilities and Events.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. In 2005, the Territory government made an election commitment to supply a pool to the rural area and deemed that it had some responsibility in doing that. In the four years since that promise, the government has built a water park at Leanyer, a wave pool at the Waterfront, and promised a water park at Palmerston, but rural children still do not have a pool. The Labor government promised it in 2005, and I remind you we are now 2009.

**Mr KNIGHT:** Can I clear up that irrelevance? That belongs in the output of the Minister for Local

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Government, and it was answered last night.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, member. Minister, it was discussed last night by the Minister for Local Government; you are welcome to answer it if you want to, but I do believe it comes under another output.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, it is another output; I understand that the Minister for Local Government answered it last night and ...

**Mr GILES:** Speaking to the point of order, Mr Chairman, I am pretty sure it was deferred to Sport yesterday.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** No, you can look it up on *Hansard* if you want, but I am pretty sure it was not referred.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Let us put it this way, minister: is swimming a sport or not? At the end of the day, I am pretty confident swimming is a sport and is part of the provisions of Sport and Recreation, and more specifically, Facilities and Events, as is the development, management and maintenance of key sporting facilities, which is your responsibility.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, swimming is definitely a sport.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank God for that!

**Mr HAMPTON:** In terms of facilities, the one you were trying to allude to previously was dealt with last night. We are committed to the people in the Palmerston area; we made an election commitment for a water park, and there is \$5m in this 2009-10 Budget for that election commitment.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, minister, for your response. I know there has been much pushing and shoving of this response from Local Government or not. At the end of the day, out in the rural area, out beyond the woods - take the pun - there is a need for more facilities like this, and swimming is a very popular sport; unfortunately, we do not have the bus services to get kids in and out of the area. It was once an election commitment by the Labor Party. Surely you, as the minister, have some vision to be able to supply that sport to that region.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, it has been said already, that particular question you are alluding to was answered last night.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Perhaps I can provide some assistance by quoting the test of relevance I provided in my opening comments on Tuesday morning. We are using the Senate Procedure Committee Report from 1999. It says: 'Any questions going to the operations or financial positions of departments and agencies which seek funds in the Estimates are relevant questions for the purposes of Estimates hearings'. My understanding is the funds for this are not in this output or this department.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Very good. I am happy with that, anyway.

Minister, which are the government-owned sports facilities leased to sporting bodies? If you have it as a tabled document, I am happy to take it.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** There are two categories of government-owned sporting facilities which are leased to sporting bodies. There are a number that are Crown leases in perpetuity, and there are a number on shorter-term leases. The ones in perpetuity generally are within the Marrara sporting precinct, and include the South Darwin Sporting League; Darwin Basketball Stadium; Darwin Clay Target Club; the oval currently known as Austar Park for Rugby Union; the area adjoining the Pints Club, which is a Crown lease in perpetuity to NT Cricket; Marrara Cricket Ground; the hockey ovals to Northern

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Territory Hockey Association; the Jingili BMX Club; and maybe not relevant, but the Italian Club, which has a soccer oval associated with it, are all Crown leases in perpetuity.

In terms of the facilities on shorter-term leases: the new football stadium at Larrakia Park; TIO Stadium; the new netball stadium currently has a licence-to-occupy in place, very close to a fully blown lease, to NT Netball; Mickett Creek, the shooting facility on the other side of Berrimah; the multipurpose hall at Marrara Indoor Stadium has three licences-to-occupy to NT Table Tennis, Judo and NT Gymnastics; and finally, at the Hidden Valley Motor Sports complex, there are leases for the three more outlying facilities at NT Go Karts, Mud Racing, and Speedway. Sorry, the last one, Arafura Athletics Stadium, as well.

**Mr WOOD:** Member for Drysdale, can I just piggy-back on that for a minute?

**Mr BOHLIN:** Yes, why not.

**Mr WOOD:** The other pistol and rifle clubs such as the gun club on Cox Peninsula Road, are they counted in sporting facilities? There is also the TEPsL site at Acacia, and the Robbie Robbins Reserve, which has rodeo, polocrosse and quarter horse. Are they also counted as sporting facilities?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The ones I have listed there are the ones owned by the Northern Territory government and leased out to two other bodies to operate. The ones you have mentioned are owned by other bodies, not the NT government. They still are sporting facilities and the owners could apply for a grant to enhance the facility, but ...

**Mr WOOD:** They are all leases; they do not own the land.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** But not leased from us.

**Mr WOOD:** I see, okay.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Which are the government-owned and managed sporting facilities? Do you have any particular government-owned and managed sporting facilities?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The two we own and manage are the Blacktop area of the Hidden Valley Motor Sports Complex and the Marrara Indoor Stadium.

**Mr BOHLIN:** For everyone's reference - and I know we all know this - that is a map of the Northern Territory on the wall. This little glossy brochure by the government says Northern Territory - so we refer to that map - Northern Territory Sporting Facilities. Minister, this talks about predominantly Marrara, and does not talk about Alice Springs, Katherine, or Tennant Creek. What was the purpose of this document? If it advertises Northern Territory sporting facilities, yet it only covers Darwin, what was the point? How much did this document cost?

**Mr HAMPTON:** What year was that published, member for Drysdale? Sorry, I do not have that in front of me.

**Mr BOHLIN:** That could be an interesting question because, as with many other documents, it is probably missing some vital details like that. It is looking pretty flash.

**Mr HAMPTON:** You give it back.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I like the document, it is a pretty one, and I would like to know the cost of producing such a document. It claims to be about Northern Territory sporting facilities but, in reality, it only deals with Darwin. As we can quite easily identify, this is the Northern Territory.

**Mr HAMPTON:** The costing of the publication was tabled by my colleague, the minister for NRETAS or Natural Resources, so that information is already provided regarding publications and the budget for that.

**Mr BOHLIN:** How much was that document, which sprouts only about Darwin venues, when it claims to be Northern Territory sporting facilities? What was the point of that document?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Regarding cost, I would like to take it on notice.

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**Question on Notice 9.11**

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Would you mind repeating that for benefit of *Hansard*, member for Drysdale?

**Mr BOHLIN:** This sporting document presented portrays Northern Territory sporting facilities. What is the point of this document, considering it only discusses Darwin facilities? What did it cost to produce - as an entire sample? I am not talking about one, I mean the entire run. If you would like to take a photocopy of the front and back cover so you have a reference, then I can have the document back.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** For benefit of *Hansard*, that is question No 9.11.

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**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you very much for that. How was the lease on the Marrara gymnastic facility decided?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Our philosophy - and in my advice to the minister - has been to try to grow sports and to deliver sporting services through empowered and peak bodies which have the capacity to manage their sport. Part of the management of the sport is managing any facilities that go with that sport. In this particular example, the three organisations which utilise the multipurpose hall at the Marrara Stadium - gymnastics, judo, and table tennis - have all received five year licences-to-occupy. That was on the advice of best practice from the Department of Justice.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. I am presuming the same arrangement would have happened with table tennis and judo all squeezed into that one facility. Minister, did not your report into the gymnastics dispute between Darwin Gymnastics and GNT disclose errors in the leasing of this facility?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Yes, the report - and I do not have it in front of me - suggested it would have been better if the lease had not been issued.

**Mr BOHLIN:** That is an interesting point, is it not?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** That was the reviewer's opinion.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, is that not somewhat in contrast to the executive summary you put before parliament, where it really disclosed no great errors or any great bad doings? That one point in itself is considerably important in this dispute which, at the end of the day, comes under your management as the minister for Sport?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am aware of this. It has been a long-running issue, this dispute within gymnastics. As the minister I want to see this resolved in the best interests of the young gymnasts and the families who participate in the sport. Since I have been minister, I have put this resolution in the hands of the peak body, which I recognise through my capacity as the minister for Sport. We did undertake the review or the report into the issue and there are a number of recommendations in that report pointing ways forward for this. I also spoke to Jane Allen, who is the...

**Mr BOHLIN:** GA CEO.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, the CEO of Gymnastics Australia. As we have said earlier this evening, I am looking at a code of conduct being incorporated into our funding grants, because it is an issue across many sporting organisations. I am committed to making sure that I deal through the peak bodies, both at the national and Territory level. We have supported as much as we can the mediation and bringing these groups of people together to sort out their differences. I will hand over to Steve Rossingh to add further.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Not too much more to add, minister.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, Steve pointed out that part of the leasing arrangement is to empower the peak bodies to grow the sports. This report identifies there has been, before the lease was signed, and still, very aggressive problems stemming from the peak body. Does that not fly in the face of your previous comment? Yes, you have definitely empowered the peak body, in fact, you have given it a licence to rule the roost, but they are definitely not managing the sport in the way they should; not in a fair and equitable manner.

Minister, you are responsible for the facility and, therefore, the costs this budget will bear upon those facilities. Did the report into this dispute between Darwin Gymnastics and GNT not also identify that a business, Metropolis Gymnastics, was originally only meant to occupy space at that facility for a very short period, as determined by the member for Karama who was, at the time, the minister for Sport?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The dispute between the club and the peak body has been long-standing. The nub of the dispute really commenced when the coach of the Darwin Gymnastics Club left the club and formed a new club which was in competition with Darwin Gymnastics.

**Mr BOHLIN:** A business, in other words? He formed a business? It is a registered company?

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** A clarification there, member for Drysdale. We try not to interrupt officials while they are speaking.

**Mr BOHLIN:** My apologies, Steve.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** When any new organisation forms, one of the first decisions they need to make is what corporate structure or what structure they will take on board. Most clubs take on board an incorporated structure through the *Associations Act*. This new club elected to take on a partnership structure, and that is consistent with the way the sport of gymnastics operates Australia-wide. There is a combination of traditional incorporated clubs and partnerships, and other corporate structures which are incorporated differently.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Mr Chairman, if I could just add to that. As I said, I will, as minister for Sport, go through the peak bodies I recognise. I understand the national body, Gymnastics Australia, recently brought down its determination on this dispute. The formal award found the claims made by Darwin Gymnastics against its peak body, Gymnastics NT, have been dismissed. As both parties agreed to abide by this determination, I urge both groups to get together in the best interests of young gymnasts and resolve this long-running dispute.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, I pick up you just said that both groups have agreed to abide by this report. Is that what you just said?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Right.



**Mr BOHLIN:** This document should be tabled in parliament in full.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Which document?

**Mr BOHLIN:** The actual report by Michael O'Donnell, not the Executive Summary, because the Executive Summary is in stark contrast to this report. In fact, this report is actually quite scathing and ...

**Mr HAMPTON:** Can I clarify which report we are talking about? The report done by the peak body or ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** No, the report brought down by the minister for Sport, done by Mr Michael O'Donnell, into the dispute between the gymnastics clubs.

**Mr HAMPTON:** The report I am talking about is the determination put down by the national sporting body, Gymnastics Australia. That is the one I am referring to.

**Mr BOHLIN:** The one you paid for into the dispute is named the Report of the Review of the Dispute between Darwin Gymnastics Club Inc and Northern Territory Gymnastics Association, July 2008, by Michael O'Donnell. Are you saying the report done by Michael O'Donnell no longer holds any weight?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am saying that the national body, Gymnastics Australia, has been involved in this and has worked with both groups, as it should as the national organisation. Its determination on this dispute, and the formal award, found the claims made by Darwin Gymnastics against its peak body, Gymnastics NT, has been dismissed.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I understand that Gymnastics Australia have done this mediation at arms length, basically, all the way from down there and not up here, whereas Mr O'Donnell actually did the review up here and, in fact, makes note that the peak body even refused to speak with you about it, and refused to speak to this report about the matter. That is gross arrogance, in the first place, and adds to the fact that this peak body is perhaps not running the sporting code appropriately, and will continue to go un-reprimanded by the minister about this issue, while they continue to bully and put various obstacles in the way of Darwin Gymnastics, which affects over 500 gymnastics kids?

Are you not concerned that they continue to bully this club over what, I must agree, is a very trivial aspect? But we do have supporting documentation in this report written by the member for Karama; and there are further comments by the then minister, who took over from the member for Karama. It is littered with dots from ministers who have really failed to act decisively, including yourself, to resolve this dispute about your facility.

You have control, at the end of the day, of this facility. It is a government facility into which money is injected, and that is what we are talking about, the money. It was mentioned that the idea of leasing, about the operational aspects, is to empower peak bodies. You have essentially done that; given them the legal authority to do whatever they want, and you do not check them. What are you going to do to bring your facility back under control in the best interests of all gymnastics in the Northern Territory, so we can get our athletes back up where they deserve to be?

**Mr HAMPTON:** The code of conduct we will be introducing into all our grant agreements will hold all peak bodies accountable. That is what I am doing, as the minister.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Good. I applaud that code of conduct. In the interim, why do you not say to this peak body: Listen, this is what we are going to do anyway. Smarten up your act, now'. The latest correspondence which Mr Jim Grant, whose presence I acknowledge today, has received from Darwin Gymnastics in the last two days, essentially talks about the fact that the peak body is refusing, again, to issue the licence to operate for the gymnastics group, Darwin Gymnastics, right before they

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come to their schooling program; and we have many kids go from the schooling program and do a great thing - which is get involved in sport - and that is what we want them to do. And they hold over their head a very huge financial burden.

Gymnastics Northern Territory pays \$1 a year for the facility. Currently, between GNT, Gymnastics Metropolis and Darwin Gymnastics, they individually pay about \$17 to \$18 per hour only; Palmerston gym at the YMCA is \$30 per hour, and Palmerston High School is \$55 per hour.

GNT, the peak body, have now said: 'We cannot find members to form a quorum this month to make a decision on whether we are going to affiliate you again' - which gives them all the insurance and protection they require to operate as a sport, and which comes under your banner. They are going to say: 'If you fall outside, and we are not going to be able to meet until July' - and by the way, their interim membership finishes at the end of this month - they are going to say: 'If you become that, you are going to come under a commercial agreement and we are going to charge you \$70 an hour'. Is that not absolutely stinking of a peak body? It needs to be brought under control, by yourself, whilst they are using your facility, so we can get on with doing great gymnastics?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Is there a question?

**Mr BOHLIN:** That is the question. Is it not his responsibility?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I believe I have answered it. Through our grant agreements, we will be holding peak bodies more accountable through a code of conduct. My office has contacted the NT Gymnastics people and asked them to reconsider their decision today.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Today? I commend you for that. I really do. As you know, when this first raised its head in January, I spent a week of my holidays with my daughter trying to resolve and mediate this, and I have no problems with that, because it is for the benefit of over 500 children. I was in New Zealand at the time, and I could not even contact you, minister. I spent the following week doing individual phone mediation to do this, yet nothing significant came from your office. You are the Sports minister; you are responsible for bringing these bad little boys and girls under control. If this facility had been used, and it is a government-owned facility, for drugs, creating drugs or whatever, would you not stop that? Would you not say: 'No, you cannot do that; it is bad'? But you are letting this reprehensible behaviour continue.

Are you going to now, in front of this committee, make a promise to step up and protect over 500 students, and greater respect for all gymnasts in the Northern Territory, and say you are going to take action and resolve this dispute for the benefit of all the students, so we can get on with this and have our money and our facilities used in the appropriate manner?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, my office has been working on this issue very hard, as well as my department. I have full trust in the amount of effort they have put into this. As you have e-mailed your concerns before, I appreciate that, from your position as a parent.

Through the code of conduct and our grant agreements, I will be holding accountable peak bodies such as Gymnastics NT. My office has contacted Gymnastics NT today and asked them to reconsider its decision.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Is this, essentially, you signalling your intent to them to ensure they are clear on that? I know we can get past this; I know the members either side of you know we can get past this. However, it does take leadership, and I know there is the ability. Until then, we are looking at a very strange arrangement. In a sense, this report, which you have refused to table in parliament, which is very condemning, displays that, and you should table this report in parliament to make it a public document. It is taxpayers' money that owns this building, and we need to get back and get on with kids in sport properly.

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**Mr GILES:** I would not mind asking a question, if that is all right? I will change the sporting code, minister.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, sure.

**Mr GILES:** We did not ask before how many people in the entire NTIS are in tenpin bowling. I understand there is a facilities upgrade for bowling in Darwin coming along soon. I am wondering what facilities the people who are in bowling in the NTIS will be able to utilise.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, I have been advised we do not own any tenpin bowling facilities. The one you may be alluding to is privately owned; maybe that is work they are doing privately.

**Mr GILES:** Okay. I cannot ask the question regarding how many people there are in the NTIS because we are in the wrong output. What sort of facilities would those people use if the private owner is going to do rehabilitation work or an upgrade of their facilities? What does a tenpin bowler do when there is no facility to use?

**Mr BOHLIN:** It is interesting to see they are as good as they are; they are extremely good here.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am hoping the sports policy does pick up on some of these issues regarding facilities and further needs in particular sports.

**Mr GILES:** That is all right. If you are not aware, that is fine. Kevin Rudd has announced or launched a campaign with Australian Soccer to try to bring the World Cup to Australia in 2018 and 2022. I believe they even used the Northern Territory in some of their ads. It has been reported today that the Northern Territory probably will not get a game in the World Cup if it were to come to Australia. Can you explain the reasons for that, and what we are doing to try to ensure the NT does get a game in the World Cup, if we are so lucky to get the World Cup to Australia? Why was the NT ruled out?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Obviously, with the World Cup, they would be hoping to pull in fairly big crowds. I do not know if we would have the facilities and capacity in our facilities to cope with the number of people and spectators they would want to come to a game.

**Mr GILES:** I understand to host the World Cup we would need to have 12 stadiums which could host 40 000 people around the country. Currently, there are not enough stadiums around the country, so the infrastructure would have to be built. More than likely, the federal government - Kevin Rudd - will borrow some more money from our kids to build this stuff. What are you and your government doing to try to ensure we have the opportunity to get a game in the Northern Territory?

**Mr WOOD:** We need a lottery.

**Mr GILES:** Before you answer, is this something you have not considered? Surely, if South Africa can deliver the World Cup, why cannot ...

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, that is being led by the Chief Minister. An event of that size is being led by the Chief Minister ...

**Mr GILES:** But are you not the minister for Sport?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am the minister for Sport, yes.

**Mr GILES:** Surely you should be across an Australian bid to hold the World Cup, to try to win a game for the NT.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** If I can be of some assistance, the World Cup qualifies as a major event. The

Department of Chief Minister has major events in its Output Groups. The member has asked a question, minister, and you have the call.

**Mr HAMPTON:** In terms of events, we need to maximise opportunities. If we manage to get our bid up for a World Cup, we have some fantastic facilities in terms of our NTIS. There could be other ways we could become involved in that, whether it is lead-up games or camps. In terms of hosting a World Cup game, I cannot see us having the capacity or the crowd to make it possible.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, I have been trying to change the flavour of the questions, I thought you had a good answer for this one. I am surprised, because for AFL games, the Bulldogs, when they were here on the weekend and Port, that was a major event. You are the minister assisting the Chief Minister on Major Projects, which falls under a similar line. As the Sports minister, I believed you would have some idea about soccer; I would like to believe the Sports minister of the Northern Territory would try to bring soccer here. When you have to put your bids in, it has to be a whole package; the NT would have to be involved. There is no point putting in a bid, seeing if you are successful, and then trying to get something for the NT; so it sounds like you have fallen over.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Mr Chair, if I could respond to that.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Yes, the minister should have the right to respond.

**Mr HAMPTON:** In terms of major events, that is under the Chief Minister's portfolio. We have a Major Events Company that does fantastic work and I would say, no doubt, they would be working hard on this. They do a superb job with Arafura Games, the Masters Games, the Finke Desert Race, these types of events. We have many good people in major events who would be working on the World Cup.

**Mr GILES:** You have just been caught short now. Minister, what are you doing to get the second AFL game to Alice Springs, if it comes to the Territory?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Discussions are underway with the AFL, as the national sporting body. We are at the end of our three-year agreement with the AFL; the last game was last week. We are in discussions at the moment about that, and getting the best deal for Territorians.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you. Has the AFL agreed to have a second game in the Territory?

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is up for discussion.

**Mr GILES:** I appreciate that the location is up for discussion. They have agreed to a second game in the Territory, what is the issue about the location, between Darwin and Alice Springs?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In terms of a proper NAB Cup game, Alice Springs is on the agenda to get a proper pre-season game. We are saying we want two premiership point matches here in Darwin. We are battling to have the Allstars games in Alice Springs.

**Mr GILES:** Are you ruling out any chance of having an AFL game, a season fixture in Alice Springs?

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is in terms of the capacity of the facilities required by the AFL.

**Mr GILES:** Yes or no. I am happy with that.

**Mr HAMPTON:** We are looking at two premiership point games for Darwin, a proper pre-season game for Alice Springs, as well as an Allstars game.

**Mr GILES:** All right, and what would we have to contribute financially, roughly, to make that happen,

the pre-season game?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will hand over to Mr Rossingh regarding cost to us to give you some sort of figure, but for this next agreement, that is being negotiated.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The current agreement is a four-party agreement between the AFL, AFLNT, NT government and Western Bulldogs; that agreement provides seven games every two years, the odd number being the Indigenous Allstars every second year. The cost of that agreement is \$420 000 each year; \$840 000 over two years gets seven games, including the NAB Challenge in Alice Springs every year.

**Mr GILES:** And that would be Bulldogs every year?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** I can only talk about the current agreement, and in the current agreement the Western Bulldogs have played the matches in Darwin, but they have not played the NAB Challenge games in Alice Springs, because it is a competition and it is dependant on wins and losses. I do not believe the Western Bulldogs have played any of the games in Alice Springs.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, you are trying to get the pre-season game in Alice Springs as part of the new agreement?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes.

**Mr GILES:** Will that require an upgrade to facilities at Traegar Park, if that game was to go there?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The AFL will have standards for televising the pre-season games. There will be a need to look at facilities at Traegar Park. That is up for discussion, as well.

**Mr GILES:** Can you tell me about attracting an NRL pre-season game to Alice Springs, and whether upgrades are needed to the facilities at ANZAC Oval?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We are looking at that agreement. There was a three-year agreement with the Australian Rugby League, which was for 2007, 2008, and 2009. Unfortunately, there were no matches held in 2008. The total budget for the 2009 match held between the Cronulla Sharks and Gold Coast Titans was approximately \$145 000. We are currently in discussions.

**Mr GILES:** Will you have input into that?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We sent out expressions of interest to all ARL and NRL clubs, and we received some interest from some of those clubs.

**Mr GILES:** Does there look like anything for Alice Springs next year? Or do you have to upgrade the facilities?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Alice Springs is very much a part of that future agreement. We would want to see games in Darwin and Alice Springs.

**Mr GILES:** So will there be a game next year?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We are still in negotiations with the Rugby League.

**Mr GILES:** When will you know whether there will be a game in Alice Springs?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The responses from the NRL clubs have all been assessed and we have only just put a recommendation through the minister to Cabinet. It is doing the rounds at the moment.

**Mr GILES:** Is it a financial decision, or a logistical decision?

**Mr HAMPTON:** There are a number of decisions to be made about that agreement.

**Mr GILES:** The recommendation would be that Alice Springs get it, but it comes down to money and some of the issues?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Alice Springs is very much a part of that, but there are number of things to consider.

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**Mr GILES:** My final question is on Riding for the Disabled, coming back to the facilities. I know your government has had a lot of representations from RDA. I believe the previous minister, Chris Natt, was involved.

Currently, a trivial matter for some people, the disabled athletes cannot access the toilet facilities because you cannot climb up steps in wheelchairs. I would really appreciate if your staff could look at it, because it is completely unsuitable for people to utilise facilities like that, especially when RDA Alice Springs have been running all year and the Top End has not. I know it is owned by the Blatherskite Park Trust. You know what I am talking about, you have to climb up steps, and people who have problems getting around need some support. I would appreciate if you could have a look at that. I will not ask questions about it, but if you could chase it up for me.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, what plans does the department have to upgrade or remedy the problems with the athletic track at Marrara? Perhaps you could say what is wrong with it, because not long ago it was rebuilt.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have been advised in 2008 the track's irrigation and draining systems failed causing extensive damage to the surface. The drainage was repaired and the irrigation system decommissioned. Whilst repairing the drainage system, the current track surface was identified as being poorly designed and not capable of dealing with the extreme climatic conditions experienced in Darwin.

In November 2008, there was a detailed report for the reconstruction of the Arafura athletics track. In an effort to explore all options to minimise costs, the consultant was asked by the department to investigate staging and a reduction in the scope of the works. In April 2009, further track repairs and lining repairs were completed to prepare the track and the venue for the Arafura Games. Mr Rossingh, do you want to add anything further?

**Mr WOOD:** How old is that track, because I believe Mr Ah Kit was the Sports minister when it was replaced?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** I would be pretty confident, but I would prefer to check, that it was in relaid 2002.

**Mr WOOD:** Would you expect an athletic track to have these types of problems in seven years?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am not sure of the life they expected from the track. Given the climatic conditions and the Wet Season, the weather conditions, I am not too sure if that was planned for, but Mr Rossingh might have something to add.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** I suppose when you are doing major upgrades, you do an assessment of the risks at the time. I believe the risk assessment which was done at the time was the most cost effective way to upgrade the track would be relaying the surface on the existing substructure. What has happened over time since then is the substructure in the middle of the ground has compacted, which has removed all the natural drainage from the track.

**Mr WOOD:** That is the grassed area, hammer throw and javelin?

**Mr HAMPTON:** The grass in the middle, yes. In the Wet Season, in particular when there are irrigation failures and large volumes of water fall on that central area, it has been running off under the track and that has caused lifting of the track.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, has it now been repaired, or does it have to be replaced?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am pretty sure that is what I said earlier on, member for Nelson. As I understand it, there were some records broken at the Arafura Games on the track.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Sorry to interrupt. I want to point out that the member for Nhulunbuy will be chairing.

**Mr WOOD:** That might be because you had a downhill slope, because of the damage. All I am asking is, it should not need any repairs now, and it should be right for a few more years?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** All I can really say is it was repaired after the Wet Season to be serviceable enough for the standard of the Arafura Games. We have also done work on the drains to be able to absorb much of the run off. Time will tell whether that is a long-lasting remedy, or whether something more needs to be done.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, would you be able to detail any grants given to sporting facilities in the rural area?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, I can answer that. Member for Nelson, I advise that in the Litchfield Municipality Council region, in 2007-08, there was a total grant expenditure of \$73 644; \$60 000 of that was for facilities; \$10 644 for grassroots grants; and \$3000 for a special assistance grant.

In 2008-09, there is a total of \$163 489 given to the Litchfield Shire Council; \$153 489 of that was for facilities; \$10 000 for grassroots; and, in 2008-09, that is a total of 3.23% of the grant pool that was given to Litchfield.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, minister. In relation to the upgrade of cricket facilities at the Gardens, it is mentioned in your 2007-08 report, did that happen? It says \$2m was set aside for construction of cricket facilities at Gardens Oval. Did that happen, or was that part of the possibility of Gardens Oval being turned into a full-time cricket facility?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In 2008-09 there was a \$2.02m capital grant given to Northern Territory Cricket. Also, the Northern Territory government, Cricket Australia, and Northern Territory Cricket have committed to a heads of agreement to stage international cricket in Darwin over the coming five years. This \$2m was part of that agreement, member for Nelson. Cricket Australia also provided \$1m towards the infrastructure upgrade. As you have said, the facility upgrade was initially planned for Gardens Oval; there were some issues there and I made a decision to redirect the project to the NT government-owned Marrara Cricket Ground. I am not sure if Mr Rossingh has anything to add in terms of an update on that particular project.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The grant has not been paid to NT Cricket as yet. We are waiting on a dual agreement between the Northern Territory government and Cricket Australia. The elements of the heads of agreement were that Cricket Australia would guarantee to provide international cricket to the Territory and, in return, they would also contribute \$1m to a facility, and the Northern Territory government would contribute \$2m to that. There are two agreements arising from that. One is a future events agreement for cricket to guarantee future matches. The other is a funding agreement. It is in the spirit of the heads of agreement that both of those documents need to be executed simultaneously so both sides of the bargain are met at the same time. I expect that agreement to be signed next week. At that point in time, the funds will be released.

NT Cricket has done much planning on this already. They have conceptual plans drawn up; they have a project manager in mind to appoint once they receive the grant, so it will all be going ahead pretty soon.

**Mr WOOD:** Is there any idea what that money will be used for? Will it be a small grandstand?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** The works will include some drainage work at the site, and there is turf work which will provide an indoor practice facility. One of our big issues is our junior sides go away in January and February, in the middle of our Wet Season, to play in the southern competitions, and they are not able to train – those based in Darwin, anyway. There will be indoor nets facilities; a video analysis room; a specialised catching room - which I believe is a wall with all sorts of shapes so the ball bounces back at different angles ...

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**Mr WOOD:** I can do that normally.

**Mr ROSSINGH:** Don Bradman on the water tank.

**Mr WOOD:** Is there room enough for that to be sited on the ...

**Mr ROSSINGH:** At Marrara?

**Mr WOOD:** At the MCG?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** At the MCG? Yes, as far as I know.

**Mr WOOD:** That sounds good. Minister, you mentioned the netball courts are completed now. How long before they are officially opened and ready for use?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, member for Nelson, the netball courts are a fantastic facility. That \$6.2m was committed in 2008-09. The key features of the new netball centre - which I have been down to look out and tried to throw a few goals, but missed - includes 10 new national standard netball courts, including four with Rebound Ace GS Club surface, and six with Rebound Ace Synpave surfaces; court lighting; first-class amenities including change rooms, a canteen and a bar; car parking; a drop-off zone; security fencing; and obviously, adequate land for future expansion of courts and car parks. The stadium was completed on 30 April. At this stage, the netball season has just commenced and it has been used. Regarding the official opening, that should not be too far away.

**Mr WOOD:** You will be opening it after you have practiced a little more, will you?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, that is a good idea.

**Mr WOOD:** What happens to the Parap courts? Are they privately owned or are they government owned?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I believe they are owned by the Darwin City Council.

**Mr WOOD:** In relation to the Alice Springs Aquatic Centre, construction was supposed to have commenced in 2007-08 for the paddle pool. I believe there were also heated indoor facilities. How much will that cost? Has that construction been completed?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In June 2006 the Alice Springs Town Council received an \$8.1m capital grant to construct an indoor 25 metre heated pool, a program pool ...

**Mr WOOD:** How much was it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** ... for an outdoor leisure fun pool. It was \$8.1m in 2006.

**Mr WOOD:** That is eight times more than Litchfield gets. Sorry, I could not help myself. So the pool is finished?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, the outdoor leisure fun pool and the program pool.

**Mr WOOD:** Power upgrades and utilities upgrade at Hidden Valley, that included drainage, water supply, sewerage, and electrical. Has all that been finished, all the upgrades mentioned in the 2007-08 report?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** This is a major \$820 000 electrical upgrade which was signed off by Power and



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Water Corporation either last week or the week before. There is also some major works to repair a lightning strike, that was just under \$400 000, and that has been completed and commissioned as well.

**Mr WOOD:** You mentioned there were drainage, water supply, sewerage services issues to be addressed, is that also included in that \$820 000?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** No, that is part of an election commitment, a \$4m election commitment over four years. \$250 000 worth of that commitment is allocated to the Major Events Company to do works for this weekend's V8s; \$1.75m is in the 2009-10 Budget to do this sort of work, to do major drainage works, direction of water, sewerage works and some further electrical works.

**Mr WOOD:** Does your department have anything to do with the possibility of the Casuarina Pool closing down and a new pool at Charles Darwin University? Is that still on the agenda? Casuarina is a Darwin City Council pool, but Charles Darwin University comes under the government's area. Do you have anything to do with that possible redevelopment?

**Mr HAMPTON:** No. Mr Rossingh, do you have any update? I have not seen anything.

**Mr WOOD:** There was about \$22m set aside for recreation facilities at Palmerston. Do you know what those recreational facilities will be?

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is a significant election commitment from the Territory government. It is a \$22m international standards sporting facility for Palmerston which includes training lights at the Palmerston Magpies AFL oval; a rugby and soccer field with training lights; a grandstand between the oval and field, with seats on both sides; change rooms, toilets, a bar and a kiosk. That is stage one. Stage two is an international standard 12 court tennis centre.

**Mr WOOD:** Do you think it is reasonable that I am concerned when you tell me you gave the rural area around \$236 000 and Palmerston is receiving \$22m? There are a reasonable number of people living in the rural area, so...

**Mr HAMPTON:** They use Palmerston facilities.

**Mr WOOD:** Palmerston plays soccer in Litchfield, too, minister. We are entitled to facilities, as well. Is that money coming out of your department or the DPI department?

**Mr HAMPTON:** It will be appropriated through this agency.

**Mr WOOD:** I hope one day something close to that could also be spent in the rural area. I do not have anymore questions on that area.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Drysdale, do you have further questions on 8.3?

**Mr BOHLIN:** I do. Minister, I will try my best to get these out rather quickly, as there are other things we must get on with.

Part of your initial statement within the budget is managing sporting facilities as part of this output, yet there is no sign of funding to repair the Alice Springs basketball court grandstand wall which currently prevents half of the grandstand seating being used in Alice Springs. Do you know of that? Although it is owned by council it is still a sporting facility - a major sporting facility - which falls under the minister for Sport? Do you have any plans for assisting the council to get this sporting facility up and running so it can be used to its full potential, and which will obviously develop and benefit things like the Masters Games?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, you are right, it is a council owned facility. I am not aware of that issue, but I will follow it up. Obviously, we have invested much money in the Traeger Park complex overall: over \$5m on Traeger Park, the AFL oval with the grandstand, and also the hockey facility in the Traeger Park complex. I am sure the town council still has a sports facility advisory committee or council. They are the ones who would come through to the council with their priorities in terms of those types of issues; so I will follow that up.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Could I give you a suggestion then, as part of the research I have done? For approximately \$100 000 - and they have a quote for this - they can rip down that wall which is faulty, which is not structurally supported; replace it, which would allow the first half of the grandstand to be used, because it is currently all caged off so people cannot use it, which will obviously develop and benefit all the regions. You are in that area, and I would love to see that happen.

Can we look into that? Can we take it on notice that I would like you to look into that, because I honestly believe for such a small issue, price wise, it is something that should be considered? I accept you do not know about it, so please take it on board. That could certainly benefit the regions and, obviously, the Masters Games which is fantastic.

Another quick one, the Alice Springs Cycling Club asks for very little in life. Will you support its grant application of \$50 000 to complete a junior flat run at the bottom of the velodrome? It is a great, self-supported group which owns its facility. It is a fantastic little group and it does much with schools and school programs; it even has its own bikes for the school kids to use. Are you going to get out there and support its \$50 000 grant application?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, the process for the grant is they apply for it, it goes through to my department, and they come to me with recommendations. Obviously, that puts me in a tenuous situation if I am supporting grant applications and approving them; so I will stick to the appropriate process and wait for that application to come through.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I am sure you will. It is a great little club doing its best. Cycling was, last year, one of the four most participated in sports in Australia, and this is a group, like the velodrome up here, off their own bat, running their own joint, and thumbs up to those guys because they are doing a great job. Minister, this is a good thing for you, mate, it sits under your banner; great sporting athletes.

There have been all sorts of talk and concerns over the Manton Dam Recreational Water Facility. What assurance can you give Territorians that you, or one of your colleagues, will not restrict the use of this magnificent water sports and recreational area?

**Mr WOOD:** Power and Water.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Oh, no, that is what they keep saying.

**Mr WOOD:** It controls the water.

**Mr BOHLIN:** It is also a Parks and Wildlife thing, because they have got big signs up.

**Mr WOOD:** No, Power and Water, I can tell you now.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Are you going to go into bat for it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, that is under a different output group area.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Well, my question to you then is: do you see it as a very important sporting and recreational area? Do you see it is important for you to go in and bat and help protect it for Northern Territory residents to use?

**Mr WOOD:** Can I address through the Chair, minister? I had a briefing with Power and Water. There is no intention by Power and Water to stop the existing sporting use of that dam.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. Excellent.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Nelson, I have heard this question three times and ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** And finally I get the answer from you? Thank you.

**Mr WOOD:** We will have to wait for Friday afternoon, so I will just save it.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Your next question, member for Drysdale.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Yes. There is \$5m listed in capital new works for the Palmerston water park, where will it be located, minister?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, it is an election commitment from us; \$5m allocated in the 2009-10 Budget. We are committed to developing a water park in Palmerston for the people of Palmerston. DPI, with Sport and Recreation, is in the process of identifying site options to ensure the park is in the best location to cater for Palmerston now, and for its continuing growth.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, minister. What consultations have you done with the Palmerston City Council to develop these plans? I will cut some of it out by saying there are concerns from the Palmerston City Council that if the facility is created near or alongside without taking into consideration the existing pool, it will become unviable to continue to maintain that pool as a stand-alone object. Minister, what consultations have you had with the Palmerston City Council, and have any of those consultations, or in your mind, given consideration to make it one joint facility, even perhaps on the current land mass that is there, so this pool does not become another unviable pool, similar to the Casuarina Pool?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will be going out and consulting with groups in Palmerston, particularly the city council. DPI is currently in the process of identifying that site.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Good, because, I support Palmerston too, and I would love to see a water park there, but I also want to see that the pool itself does not stand-alone and running at such a terrible nett loss that they cannot sustain it.

**A member:** It is an election commitment.

**Mr BOHLIN:** It is, but it has to be delivered. I have many other questions, but we need to get on to some other stuff, so I will forego any further questions at this stage.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output Group 8.3.

#### **Non-Output Specific Budget Related Questions**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Are there any non-output specific budget questions. Member for Nelson?

**Mr WOOD:** Yes. Minister, do you consider horse related disciplines as sport, such as dressage, rodeo, polocrosse, bull riding? Yes, because some of our ministers need practice.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Through Sport and Recreation we do provide support to that particular sport, yes.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, in the government's wonderful plan to turn the Berrimah Farm into a housing

estate, what happens to the rodeo grounds at Robbie Robbins Reserve?

**Mr KNIGHT:** As a matter of relevance, that has to be a matter for the minister for Planning.

**Mr WOOD:** Hang on, it is not output specific, and it is a question about sporting facilities that are funded by the government.

**Mr BOHLIN:** And it is an event.

**Mr WOOD:** There is also polocrosse.

**Mr HAMPTON:** The issue about the Berrimah Farm, I believe was asked to a previous minister.

**Mr WOOD:** No. I mean, are there plans to relocate those rodeo grounds and polocrosse grounds if the area is used for housing?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have not heard of any plans.

**Mr WOOD:** I know you might not have heard of anything, things happen in government that no one hears about sometimes.

Minister, the grants that your department allocates, I imagine you have NT government grants, but do you also distribute federal government grants, or are they distributed directly from the Commonwealth government?

**Mr ROSSINGH:** We are not a clearing house for any federal government grants. We have received various Commonwealth grants to deliver programs. The three which come to mind, one we mentioned before through the Australian Sports Commission, we deliver a number of programs there, we received \$75 000, but we actually do the delivery. We receive about \$532 000 per year to fund our Indigenous sports program officers, which I mentioned in a previous response. Last year, we also received \$950 000 from the federal government to build sporting facilities in remote areas.

We do not funnel them through, we receive the funds, and we deliver programs.

**Mr WOOD:** Do you have grass on Canteen Creek's football oval yet, minister?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have not been there.

**Mr WOOD:** You should. It is the Canteen Creek Blues. It has the Carlton colours and everything.

Minister, this question has been around before. It relates to the funding of teams interstate, especially schoolboys' teams. I am approached by parents on a reasonably regular basis who have to raise money to send their kids off on an interstate representative team tour, and they find that Indigenous children can obtain some funding to do that. I do not know whether your department is part of that funding. The difficulty I have is that in the community there are fairly well-to-do families who are Indigenous who can apply for that funding, and there are some quite poor non-Indigenous families who cannot get that funding. Do you believe it is time we got away from that and had a system which was based on means testing according to the ability of the parents to pay?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I understand what you are saying, member for Nelson. That could partly be picked up in the review of the NT Schools Sports Policy because, often, the levies they ask for from parents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are very high. I hope those types of things get picked up in the review; as well as our review for the Sport and Active Recreation Policy.

**Mr WOOD:** In this day and age, we have to be realistic and say some of those things work against good relationships between black and white; we should be funding people on their ability to pay. If you are poor, you are poor; it does not matter who you are. If you have the ability to pay, then you do not get that extra funding. I ask the government whether we could look at that program, rather than just basing it on whether you are of Aboriginal descent - or any other descent - if you want to fund it in that direction.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, much of that Indigenous-specific assistance is through the Australian Sports Commission. Through the Northern Territory government's grassroots or special assistance grants, we support Territorian young people who are going away representing at a national/international level. That is open to everyone. In terms of Indigenous specific ...

**Mr WOOD:** There must be extra funding because people come to me and say: 'I have to raise this money; I do not know how I am going to do it'. Then they see another kid in the same team receiving extra money - it is not a good way to do things. That is all the questions I have on this output.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, I thank the officers who have provided advice to the minister today. Thank you very much.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Minister, I note that Dr Burns made a statement on Wednesday about budget issues as they relate to Information, Communication and Technology Services. You are here to address matters that relate to the policy issues of Information, Communication and Technology Services.

Minister, I invite you to introduce the accompanying officials.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Madam Deputy Chair, I would like to welcome the CEO from the Department of Business and Employment, Mr Dennis Bree, to my left; the Deputy CEO, Mr Graham Symons, to my right; and the Executive Director of ICT to my second right, Mr Les Hodgson.

I would like to briefly outline the responsibilities of the ICT policy portfolio. These include strategic IT policy for the Northern Territory government, telecommunications infrastructure policy and funding, electronic service development, and broadcasting policy.

Dr Burns, my colleague, the Minister for Business, is responsible for operational ICT matters including whole-of-government ICT sourcing and contract management, ICT security, data centre services, and government IT services. In the interest of time, I will keep my introductory statement fairly short.

One of the highlights of the 2008-09 year was the NT government's partnership with Telstra, Rio Tinto Alcan, and the Northern Land Council to build a \$34m optic fibre link across Arnhem Land. The link will deliver high-speed broadband to Nhulunbuy and to seven of the Territory's 20 growth towns along the way. The fibre to mainland communities has been completed and is operational, and the high-powered radio links to Minjilang, Waruwi, and Galiwinku will be completed this Dry Season.

The Department of Business and Employment is already engaged in further discussions with the Commonwealth and with industry, regarding extending the high-speed broadband access to other remote communities, especially to all 20 growth towns nominated by the Northern Territory government. One of the key priorities of this portfolio is the development of electronic service delivery in the Northern Territory, especially in the areas of eHealth, eLearning, and eGovernment support to business.

Such development can only take place in close partnership with the relevant portfolio agencies. I am proud to say the Northern Territory leads the country in the development of eHealth records. DBE

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currently has a consultancy managed jointly with the Department of Health and Families to provide an eHealth roadmap, review implementation of PCIS, assessed options for tele-help applications, strategies and applications for e-support, and training for remote clinical staff. DBE is also working with Education and Training regarding the further development of eLearning, including the potential of virtual classroom technology in remote and regional areas.

Madam Deputy Chair, I look forward to the committee's questions.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. Before we call for questions, can I remind the officers to introduce themselves by name for the benefit of *Hansard*. Questions?

**Mr BOHLIN:** No questions on the opening statement. Is that the first question you were going to ask?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** No, we are going straight to the consideration of ...

**Mr BOHLIN:** Output 1.5.

**Mr WOOD:** Can I ask a general question?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** A general question, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, why has the government decided to put one small section of this portfolio – policy - in your hands, and the rest in another minister's hands?

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is a very good question, member for Nelson. In terms of my portfolio responsibility I believe they fit quite well within my other areas of Regional Development, particularly relating to developing our regions and creating jobs. ICT policy, in the areas of eServices and infrastructure in our regions are two fields to be linked. From my perspective they fit very well.

**Mr WOOD:** To me it makes life a little complicated.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I had some interesting questions about the Nhulunbuy fibre optic link and our direct involvement with that. I believe it is a good joint partnership, and I would like to see more similar partnerships. But we will move on.

What is your understanding of the NBN and its service and delivery to the NT, and in what time frame do you believe it is going to occur?

**Mr HAMPTON:** The NBN represents one of the biggest building projects in Australia's history. Senator Conroy is pushing that agenda. For me it will be a key enabler, particularly for businesses in the Northern Territory to reach more markets, and households to access better home-based help and learning. I have lobbied Senator Conroy on a number of occasions; I have been to Melbourne to talk to him about getting the best deal I can for the Northern Territory. As I mentioned earlier, that is just one example of what we can do through partnerships with the federal government, and with other partners, in terms of the East Arnhem Fibre Optic Project.

The value of the NBN proposal for the Northern Territory is twofold. There is obviously the possible immediate build-up of a competitive fibre optic link, which will see a reduction in prices and an increase in services, if we are successful in getting the second backhaul competitive line through the Northern Territory. In terms of other details, I will ask Graham Symons to add further to that.

**Mr SYMONS:** Yes, it is a Commonwealth program, but the period of time that the Prime Minister announced for NBN, the second version of NBN, is eight years, and it is proposing to invest about \$47m over that eight year period.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, minister. Unfortunately the last part was predominantly about what the federal government is doing, and I asked particularly about your understanding and the time frames for the NT. We hope we get it before eight years, and if you ever need help to battle with Senator Conroy, I will come and join you any day to make sure we get the best deal for Northern Territory people. What plans do you have for integration and linkage with the NBN for the NT?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, you know I have been on the front foot, I believe, in terms of getting the best deal from the federal government for Territorians through the NBN. Obviously, there have been the expressions of interest that have gone out in relation to the NBN proposal, and we will put our best foot forward in terms of that. I see it is vitally important to get a second competitive backhaul line through the Northern Territory, it is going to open up competition and bring down prices for Territorians. I see that as one of the positives of getting a second backhaul competitive line through the Northern Territory.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, can I ask a question? In the Infrastructure Australia bid, there is a bid of \$70m for fibre optic cable from South Australia to Darwin, and a \$200m bid for extending broadband to Northern Territory remote communities. We have heard tonight the possibility of \$47m coming through NBN - who is going to miss out? Maybe I heard something wrong. I thought I heard there was \$47m potentially coming to the Northern Territory from NBN.

**Mr SYMONS:** Sorry, I probably was not clear. It is \$47m nationally over eight years. The particular amount that is to be spent in any state or territory has not been announced or concluded at this point.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, my question before was what plans do you have? There is more than the NBN; the NBN will only deliver so much. What plans do you have for integration to link in with the NBN for the NT? There is the NBN, but then we still have to tie into it better, because the NBN will not supply everything. What plans do you have or are you looking at now?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will ask Mr Graham Symons to detail that.

**Mr SYMONS:** Basically the NBN is delivering 100 megabits capacity to the home, as I am sure you know, for 90% of the population, and then the other 10% up to 12 megabits. The Northern Territory has already taken a number of initiatives in this direction and this will complement what is happening with the NBN, the Arnhem fibre was a major initiative. There is already quite a significant fibre network in the Northern Territory, which has been developed over the years. Of the 20 growth towns announced by the NT government, most of them are already on a fibre path and most of them will be complete with high-speed broadband connections with the Arnhem fibre. Minjilang, which is not growth town, Warrawi, Milingimbi, and Galiwinku will all be connected as part of that project.

There are about seven communities on the fibre path which, at this point in time, do not have the infrastructure at the community to be able to tap into the fibre and utilise the sort of capacity. We have been in discussions with both the Commonwealth and the industry about the possibility of upgrading that. The Northern Territory is already quite advanced, for a population of 220 000 people, in the remote areas we cover, we are relatively quite advanced in terms of access to high-speed broadband. There are number of initiatives in place. It will be very much complementary with the national broadband network.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you. Minister, and you can table this as a document to save some time, which are the towns that will miss out under the current federal government NBN plan, and taking into consideration towns like Adelaide River, Daly Waters Inn, etcetera, there are many towns on the highway that the fibre optic network already goes past, but because of the thousand person threshold, essentially, they will miss out on the fibre optic to the home, as per the federal government's plan. Do you have a list of towns which will be missing out in the Northern Territory under the current existing brief outline of the NBN plan?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, my understanding is that the NBN is going to cover 90% of the Australian population. Obviously, there are people in remote areas who do not have access to optic

fibre. There has been the Glasson review done of the other people who may miss out in those regions, and that is something that will come later on. In terms of the NBN, you are right, there are many places already connected or close to fibre links.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, minister. Are you currently in battle with Senor Conroy to ensure towns such as Adelaide River which has the fibre optic going through its main street will get connected to the homes? It is ridiculous that there are so many great, little towns that have the fibre optic running through the town, but do not have a node jumping off to deliver the fibre optic requirements for the NBN. You could see the despair of those people, if they know that it is tracking past them, and they cannot jump on the train. Are you in battle with the minister to ensure those towns are included, especially seeing the cost really will be quite low at that close a link?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have a very positive relationship with Senator Conroy, as we should with our federal colleagues. The fibre to the premises is just one part of the NBN project, as well as the competitive backhaul line. There are no battles. Mr Symons, would you like to add to that?

**Mr SYMONS:** Yes, just briefly. Our understanding from the Commonwealth, in fact directly from Senator Conroy, is that the 1000 mentioned is purely indicative and cannot be taken as understanding that any town under 1000 will not get access. There are two parts to the NBN. There is the 90% with 100 megabits to the home. The other 10%, which I imagine will cover a not insignificant part of the remote parts of the Northern Territory, is proposed to get 12 megabits, and there is a range of ways that can be done.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Yes, we know that. Thank you.

**Mr SYMONS:** It is not necessarily dependent on fibre optic.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I believe you answered the question rather well. It is good to see that it is not a clear cut 1000, and there is some adjustment. That is probably very important to many of our very fine towns.

**Mr Giles:** Which of the growth towns will miss out?

**Mr SYMONS:** We do not know yet. To be honest, I do not think Senator Conroy knows either. The Commonwealth is not yet at that stage of roll-out of NBN that they have made those sorts of decisions.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am aware that there are growth towns, such as Yuendumu and Papunya, which already have fibre out to those particular communities. I believe Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Kalkarindji, and Lajamanu, are some of the growth towns that already have fibre.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, you should be able to already identify, generally, with the knowledge of where our network already is and the further distance to each town beyond that, which ones are the most likely - particularly of the major towns that are proposed - which will miss out? With that in mind, can you consider that? Are you not going to chip in some extra money to try to include some of them yourself?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes, our goal is to ensure they are all connected. That is part of our discussions with our expressions of interest and submission into the NBN process.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I know it is not the cheapest option - \$25 000/km, I believe for fibre optic - so it does add up rather quickly.

We are going to keep moving because there are many time restrictions. I will even skip that one. I was going to discuss what your plans are for better services to business, because it is fibre optic to the home, not the business.



You do not seem to have allocated any money in this budget to further expand the mobile phone network along our highways.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I am not sure if that is relevant to this output.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Very much so. I am sure you are the Minister for Information, Communications and Technology, which includes the phone network system. We have fibre optic. There is a methodology, you can tap into that and expand that. Both Telstra and Optus will tell you that, and you know that. Is there a plan to continue to slowly expand it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Mobile phone coverage is not our responsibility, member for Drysdale. I am sure there have been promises made by particular members of parliament in the past about getting coverage. My priority as minister for ICT is getting infrastructure such as broadband and fibre optic to as many places as we can.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Information, Communications and Technology: minister, that includes the telephone system. When we lost our telephone systems the other day, you are the minister who has the responsibility for that. It is something that should be considered - you know it is. And you know that, broadly speaking, you have some control over the mobile phone system. If you have control over the fibre optic, the fibre optic system will be doing both telecommunications and broadband, will it not?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have clearly identified where our focus is in the Northern Territory; that is, getting major infrastructure out there, like the East Arnhem Fibre Optic Project. That is more strategic. That is my focus as the minister for ICT, and that is what I will continue to focus on.

Through the NBN, or through the Glasston report, we have significant infrastructure that we need to put into our regions and that is, clearly, where I am going to be focused. Mobile phone coverage is a federal government responsibility; it has the money for that. I am not going to make promises that have not been delivered before by members of parliament.

**Mr BOHLIN:** At the end of the day, it is eight years before many other things will happen. You have been here for eight years - I know you personally have not. You are talking about \$34m in a joint venture for Nhulunbuy. Surely, there are other options for joint ventures. One of these could be - and I say mobile phone - but, as far as I am concerned, it could be an emergency phone on the side of the highway every 50 km. We have many tourists, many Territory people and business people - trucking, transport, cattle industry - who use this highway. We are the one highway left and, unfortunately for you, whatever the jokes are coming from the side gallery, you are the man who is in charge. You have the governance of the Northern Territory at the moment, so you bear that responsibility. We are the only state or territory left in Australia that does not have significant coverage on our major arterial highways. Do you have any plan? Even Queensland has good coverage on their arterials.

**Mr HAMPTON:** As I said, I am focused on the strategic infrastructure, particularly rolling out the fibre optic. I will ask Mr Symons to add some comments.

**Mr SYMONS:** Yes, mobile phone services do often follow when you invest in the strategic infrastructure, and that has happened on a number of remote communities. There are some significant gaps along the highway. The bottom line really is that the provision of mobile services is a commercial decision by the major carriers.

**Mr BOHLIN:** As you know, minister, these agencies are willing to go into partnership, as they did with Nhulunbuy. That is why Nhulunbuy was done. It made it affordable to do it, because commercially, on an individual basis, Nhulunbuy was not feasible. That is why you have entered into a joint agreement. I am suggesting the same. Why can't you? Why don't you have that vision to look at that and see the fact that by doing this we are now protecting Territorians and our visitors - whether they are overseas or otherwise, they are tourists, our business people, our trucking companies - so that if something

happens they have that support network. Not everyone carries a satellite phone, do they? There is a great expanse between the top and the bottom. If you do not think it is your responsibility, I believe you are being irresponsible and we need to move on.

What is your understanding of the digital television roll-out?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am aware of the issues. I have talked to my federal counterpart, Senator Conroy. I have met with Alistair Feehan from Imparja Television to discuss a range of issues it has with the switch over to digital television. My understanding is that the current analogue broadcasting system is legislated to stop in Australia no later than 31 December 2013. I am also aware that ABC and SBS started digital transmission in Alice Springs during 2005 and are due to start test broadcasts in Nhulunbuy in August 2009.

Commercial broadcasters, Southern Cross and Imparja, are yet to finalise their transition strategies. Broadcasting is an Australian government responsibility but, as I have said, I have raised these issues with Senator Conroy on a couple of occasions, as well as writing to him about the concerns I have had presented to me from Territorians.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Minister, yes, it is a federal thing, but I will not ask the question on notice of how many Territorians watch TV, because it would honestly be quite a common guess that nearly everyone in the Territory watches TV. Therefore, the roll-out to digital TV is important to every single Territorian, who you represent as part of the government. That is why it is important for you to have a full understanding and push hard on this matter.

There are - internationally and nationally - significant problems with rolling over to digital. There is significant black spotting. There is - from what I can see and also from within your government - no plan to deal with the roll-out of digital into communities, because they are under the self-help and there are another couple of names that go with the self-help sites in remote communities.

We have enough problems when we roll-out in regional centres. What is your plan when we roll-out - or is there no plan - to help the communities of the Northern Territory to come online with digital TV? Because when that switch flicks in 2013 their current analogue system - unless they are a high tech analogue system, which there are only a couple sufficient enough to do it - will not be able to handle the digital TV signal. It will be black out or, as we like to say, 'lights out' for TV in remote communities. Isn't that going to be a problem for us all?

**Mr HAMPTON:** As I said, broadcasting is an Australian government responsibility, but I have not walked away from my responsibility as a local member of a large bush electorate. As the minister for ICT in the Territory I have been proactive in representing these views to the Senator; I have written to him and I have met with him twice and raised the issue with him.

An implementation plan for regional and remote areas has not yet been finalised by the Commonwealth department for broadband communications and the digital economy. However, it is expected the Commonwealth will respond to feedback from industry consultations - which it has been undertaking - in the last quarter of this year.

**Mr BOHLIN:** Thank you, minister. One last aspect, unlike some of the counterparts over to my right, who laughed at various things to do with mobile phone coverage on highways and also the digital stuff, this is very serious. Every Territorian relies upon mobile or telephone communications, fax, data, etcetera. Every Territorian I know, in some part, watches some form of television. It is a very important responsibility that you currently hold, minister. Again, what do you have planned to help out all these communities which will have to find extra funds to switch over to digital television?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Drysdale, I believe I have answered that question. Broadcasting is a federal government responsibility. I have represented Territorians with their issues; I have met with Imparja Television, I have met with people in my electorate, particularly the Pintubi, Anmatjere, Walpiri media people, who have raised concerns with me as a local member. I have represented

those concerns directly to the Senator, both in face-to-face meetings and in writing. I will do my best to represent those issues to the Australian government.

**Mr BOHLIN:** I know you are probably doing a very good job of that, but I have to wind it up. It is a shame you do not have a better understanding of that.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** Mobile telephone reception is important, minister. There are areas in the rural area that have black spots. I know you are saying that it is a private matter, but to some extent, it would be good if the government could lobby for an expansion of these services. I can give you Berry Springs as an example. Parts of Berry Springs have very poor reception and it is not very far from Darwin. I believe, even though the laughter about down the track mobile telephone system was more about a certain promise that was given some years ago by one of the then federal members, it is something we should be looking at simply from a road safety point of view. I am interested to know whether you, as minister, could lobby with private telephone companies to see if they are willing to expand their mobile telephone coverage further, not only the highway, but the rural area of Darwin.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will take those concerns on board. I am happy to represent Territorians' views. As a bush member, I travel around a lot. Often with the Next-G, the telephone will pop out of range and pop back in. I am fortunate to have a satellite telephone available, but I drive extensively through all parts of the Territory. I am more than happy to take on that role, as the ICT minister, to lobby, or to represent those views to the federal minister.

**Mr WOOD:** The other one was with broadband. I am not sure how this is all going to work because there are areas within my electorate that still cannot get high speed broadband because the on-the-ground facilities are simply not there; Telstra will not upgrade them. There are parts of McMinns, which is one of my areas, and there have been parts of Knuckeyes Lagoon, although that might have been fixed, mainly because the Defence forces wanted an upgrade. How are those areas that are close to town going to benefit from NBN? Are they going to be looked at as well?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I believe it pushes the case for competition. In terms of the second backhaul line, competitiveness is very important in terms of prices and fibre to the premises. As Mr Symons indicated, it is an infinite, it is not a definite thing, but in terms of what we have been talking to the federal minister about, they are issues I have raised. Darwin is the largest capital city in Australia which does not have a competitive backhaul line to it. We have a very strong case.

**Mr WOOD:** Has there been an identification of those areas in the Northern Territory which will be included in the 10% that are not receiving the high-speed?

**Mr HAMPTON:** As I said, member for Nelson, there is the Glasson Review that was done. The federal government and Senator Conroy are focused on the roll-out of NBN, but I have represented those views to Senator Conroy regarding the 10% of remote Australia that will not necessarily be covered by the roll-out of NBN. That is through the Glasson Report, and I have already represented those views at my meetings with Senator Conroy.

**Mr WOOD:** Finally, on the issue the member for Drysdale raised, which is a good issue in relation to digital television. I believe I have digital television at my place, people stop all of a sudden and their eyes are glued down or something, but the voice still continues. I was told recently, by a fairly high up member of Channel Nine in Darwin that one of the reasons I have a problem is that I have not spent the right amount of money on, not only the aerial, but you need new coaxial cable as well, and you will probably need someone to fit it. While the government is promoting digital TV as the new thing, has anyone looked at the actual cost of the changeover for the ordinary person, whether out bush or anywhere? What is this going to cost if you want high quality digital reception?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will ask Mr Les Hodgson to answer that.

**Mr HODGSON:** For digital TV broadcast, in most cases, a simple set top box that you can buy will convert your existing TV set into a digital TV unit. I know we have looked at the Northern Suburbs in particular - that is not where you are, I appreciate that - but we did have a look at that area quite considerably a couple of years ago, and there is sometimes a need for an upgrade of antennas. Some people have a coat hanger on the end of a piece of wire. It is a situation that some people have old equipment and old TV sets, and some people will be required to do some infrastructure or aerial installations themselves. In the main, most of that is solved. We have something like more than 51% of Darwin now has digital TV coverage, and a further 20%-odd has satellite TV. Over 70% of people in Darwin now have digital TV, so the conversion is larger. As you indicated, there are still some places which will need to be upgraded to get TV reception.

I believe the question was: what has been looked at in terms of costs for that? As I said, in the main, many people are moving to replace their TV sets every three to five years, and are moving to much larger screens, and high quality TV sets. In most cases, those people who wish to retain their TV sets, as long as they are not 20 years old, can still convert with a low cost digital conversion box.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay, I will chop down a few trees, that might be the problem, thank you.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** That concludes consideration of Output Group 1.4. Minister, I note that you are available to take questions on Output Group 3.0, Regional Development.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes. I would like to thank the staff.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**Mr WOOD:** Thank you, gentlemen and one lady.

**DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PRIMARY INDUSTRY, FISHERIES AND RESOURCES**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Minister, I invite you to introduce officers of the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. I would like to introduce the senior officials from the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources, who are joining us this evening. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Richard Galton, to my right; the Chief Financial Officer, Mr Bernard Ho, to my left; and Ms Lorraine Corowa to my second right. I would also like to put in notices that my Executive Director, Ms Fran Kilgariff, is not available due to family circumstances.

Madam Deputy Chair, I will start by providing a brief overview of the outlook for regional development in the Northern Territory. The ongoing development of our regions is one of the highest priorities of this government. Last year, it was decided that Regional Development would be incorporated with Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources. By bringing together these important development functions, a greater focus is placed on achieving results for all Territorians, especially those living in our regions. This move was supported by the relocation of the department headquarters to Alice Springs. The Chief Executives and the Executive Directors of both Regional Development and Primary Industry are now located in the Alice Springs community, ensuring that decisions about the regions are made in the regions. There is a total of 29 staff in Regional Development, with nine in Alice Springs, three in Tennant Creek, two in Katherine, one in Nhulunbuy, one allocated to Borroloola, and 13 in Darwin. This spread of staff ensures that Territorians have access to development offices in their region.

There are also nine Economic Development Committees throughout the Territory: in Alice Springs, the West MacDonnells, the Anmatjere, Tennant Creek, the Gulf, Katherine, Timber Creek, the Tiwi Islands, and East Arnhem. These committees are formed around communities of interest and are the voices of the community to the government on priorities for regional development.

Indigenous economic development is vital to regional and remote economic development. A review of the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy was carried out last year, with a new strategy to be released for public comment shortly.

This new strategy sits within the overall policy framework of the recently announced *A Working Future* policy. The thrust of this new strategy is about achieving economic development in response to the aspirations of Indigenous people on a place-basis, not a one-size-fits all basis. The vision is for new enterprises in all of the Territory growth towns and beyond.

The Maningrida study, which we released this year, provides us with an indication of the opportunities which exist in that region. The study showed that only 4% of the businesses operating in a similar sized mainstream town are present in Maningrida. This study identified the gap in which opportunities exist for private sector businesses to partner with Indigenous people to build successful businesses and strengthen regional economies.

The production of an economic profile for each region is an excellent way of building our strengths and tackling our weaknesses. The Alice Springs and Katherine profiles are complete. The EDCs are working on the projects that deal with some of the issues identified in the profiles. Tennant Creek's profile is currently being prepared, and early indications are of a positive economic outlook in the Barkly. As the Minister for Regional Development, I travel to all parts of the Territory, and the message I receive loud and clear is that Territorians want to move forward and develop their local economies. Strong, safe, and vibrant regional centres benefit all Territorians. I am proud of the work of my department in delivering professional support services to regional Territorians.

Madam Deputy Chair, I am pleased to take questions from the committee.

**OUTPUT GROUP 3.0 - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**Output 3.1 - Regional Development**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. Are there any questions on Output Group 3.0, Regional Development, Output 3.1, Regional Development?

**Mr WOOD:** I want to ask one general question?

**Mr GILES:** I do not know if we have output points, or we have general questions, anyway.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** It is only one Output. You can ask a quick question, member for Nelson.

**Mr WOOD:** It is a general question. Why do the regional area boundaries not match the super shire boundaries?

**Mr HAMPTON:** What regional?

**Mr WOOD:** You have areas that you cover as regions. It was in the Territory, for Regional Development.

**Mr HAMPTON:** I have the Economic Development Committees. Is that what you mean, member for Nelson?

**Mr WOOD:** No. You have areas mapped out in the Territory that signify the regions. What does a region signify? What are the regions?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Everywhere south of Berrimah.

**Mr WOOD:** Right. I did not know whether you had ...

**Mr HAMPTON:** No, we do not. We have the Economic Development Committees, but they are based on places of common interest.

**Mr WOOD:** That is a region?

**Mr HAMPTON:** No. Alice Springs has its own Economic Development Committee.

**Mr WOOD:** Did they used to be regions? Has that all dropped off now?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes.

**Mr WOOD:** Okay, thank you.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Braitling.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. Minister, this portfolio - and we are down to 25 minutes; we do not have long - represents the greatest opportunity in the Northern Territory to make a difference and an opportunity for you to be a real kahuna in Cabinet. I am surprised that, being the Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Major Projects, you do not have an output group to answer to in this area. Especially considering that I understand you have had some involvement with the spur line in Tennant Creek in terms of Major Projects, to try to get some materials on to the railway line, into the port and do some export work. It has something to do with the mine makers project that has recently been announced by the Treasurer, minister for Planning. I would have liked to ask you some questions about that, and how you see the port as a vital role in regional development, and how any inhibitions with the port may constrain regional development. I would like to know what you are doing in Cabinet to ensure that the port is working to support regional development.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Major Projects is the proper output group. Those questions should have been asked of the Chief Minister.

**Mr GILES:** Are you the minister assisting the minister for Major Projects?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am, but I do not have direct output group responsibility to answer questions in terms of the ...

**Mr GILES:** It is a good name but provides no opportunity to be responsible. Minister, living in the regions there are high expenses in many areas, whether that is grocery prices or rents or land affordability. One of the areas of concern that creates inflationary pressures across the Territory is fuel prices. The fuel price in Alice Springs, as at Sunday, 14 June, was \$1.46 as opposed to \$1.20 in Darwin. What are you doing to lower fuel prices in the regions and lower the cost of living?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Fuel prices are not in my output group or my responsibility. It is an independent body that sets fuel prices, along with the federal government.

**Mr GILES:** An independent body sets fuel prices?

**Mr HAMPTON:** No, the federal government does.

**Mr GILES:** The federal government sets fuel prices.

**Mr HAMPTON:** It is not in my output group.

**Mr GILES:** All right. I will get that clear. You said the federal government sets fuel prices.

**Mr KNIGHT:** No, he did not.

**Mr GILES:** I am pretty sure he did, member for Daly. Thank you very much.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Member for Braitling!

**Mr GILES:** The housing prices in the urban centres of the regions - Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, and so forth - are at levels that are very difficult for first homebuyers to get into. People are finding it hard, with land release, to enter the new home market and the rental market. What are you doing as the Minister for Regional Development to make it easier for people to access the housing market in urban settings in the regions?

**Mr KNIGHT:** A point of relevance. The opposition is all over the place not knowing which output they are in. This was handled last night by the minister for Housing in the areas that he is responsible for, the minister for Planning, and also the minister for Business regarding the Land Development Corporation.

**Mr GILES:** Speaking to the point of order.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Can I just say to the point of order, as our Chair announced at the start at the Estimates Committee process, in terms of relevance, we are following the lead of the Senate which adopted a report of their procedural committal 1999. The following test of relevance was determined: 'any questions going to the operations or financial position of the departments and agencies which seek funds in the Estimates are relevant questions for the purpose of Estimates hearings'. I suggest to you, member for Braitling, that your question is ...

**Mr GILES:** Minister, I did not go to any of those areas in terms ...

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** ... beyond ...

**Mr GILES:** ... of financial commitments. He is the Minister for Regional Development, Madam Deputy Chair. He has responsibility to advocate on behalf of the regions in terms of fuel prices, housing, access to roads, telephone, Internet and so forth. I thought he would have had an answer or at least have been able to explain how he represents people of the regions in terms of a regional growth capacity within his Cabinet.

Can you detail, minister - and I am happy for you to table the papers - the list of organisations you provided grants to in the financial year to 31 May 2009?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am happy to table that list. It includes the Regional Economic Development Fund and the Indigenous Business Development program within my department that I have responsibility for. I have a list of those two grants and the recipients.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that being tabled. Terry, if you could grab that for me I would appreciate that. We do not have very much time.

Minister, can you tell me how many businesses have been created, in the current financial year to 31 May 2009, from the Indigenous Business Development Fund?

**Mr HAMPTON:** In the period 1 July 2008 to 31 May 2009, the Indigenous Business Development Program has supported 45 Indigenous businesses and organisations.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, my question was: how many businesses has it helped start?

**Mr HAMPTON:** That is it; 45.

**Mr GILES:** It has helped 45 start.

**Mr HAMPTON:** There are 31 new businesses.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, are those businesses all submitting BAS statements now?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Submitting what, sorry?

**Mr GILES:** Are those businesses all up and running and submitting BAS Statements? I know that tax is not in your portfolio but ...

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will ask my Chief Executive Officer, Mr Richard Galton, to answer.

**Mr GALTON:** We do not hold that sort of information. We are establishing, mentoring, and assisting businesses to get legs and up and running. As soon as they have done that and acquitted the funds, they are on their own. We mentor them, if that is the assistance they are after.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, are these businesses you have assisted through this program all up and running independent businesses now?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Mr Richard Galton.

**Mr GALTON:** There are two programs. You have the Indigenous Business Economic Development Program, which is the last two sheets, and they are the actual businesses. You also see in the final column the number of employees that each of those businesses has.

**Mr GILES:** Okay, so would it be fair to say that all, bar two of them, are sole traders?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Sorry, member for Braintree, could you ...

**Mr GILES:** Is it true that all, bar two of them, are sole traders?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Mr Galton.

**Mr GALTON:** Yes, the majority of those businesses are sole traders.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you very much. Minister, the Batchelor Institute Student Representative Council, which has two employees, received \$21 894. What business is that, as a matter of interest?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** That was to assist them to start up a canteen that was in operation at the Batchelor College. It was a new business that started. They told us they could employ two people with this money.

**Mr GILES:** I cannot tell when the grant was given to start, but are these businesses all continuing to run? Are they generating enough income to pay salaries of the sole trader?

**Mr HAMPTON:** My understanding is that they are. This is from the period 1 July 2008 to 31 May 2009.



**Mr GALTON:** To the best of my knowledge, all of those businesses are up and running.

**Mr GILES:** Was there a grant paid to any organisations in Barkly? That might be under the Regional Economic Development Fund, sorry. Minister, Battery Hill Mining Centre received operational assistance of \$73 657. Is there money going towards Nyinkka Nyunyu?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** There is money going into the Tennant Creek Foundation, which is the new company being formed in order to oversee the facilities of both Battery Hill and Nyinkka Nyunyu. There is a commitment in the budget for \$258 000.

**Mr GILES:** So that is not on this at the moment?

**Ms COROWA:** No, that is right.

**Mr GILES:** So \$258 000 and they received \$200 000 last year, too?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** The Tennant Creek Foundation received \$100 000 last financial year.

**Mr GILES:** Okay. Can you explain to me, minister, what those two sums of \$250 000 were used for? What the money went to?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Yes. Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** The \$258 000 will be for operational expenses of the Tennant Creek Foundation. It will be for salaries, product development, operational expenses, electricity, insurance, telephone, all of the running expenses of both Battery Hill and Nyinkka Nyunyu.

**Mr GILES:** What is the benefit of providing this money? I have been to Battery Hill Mine, it is a good spot and Nyinkka Nyunyu, I appreciate it, but what is the benefit of providing this money to this organisation?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, it is to provide businesses such as the Tennant Creek Foundation start up fees to get them up and running and established.

**Mr GILES:** All right. Battery Hill Mine is a great centre, and I would love to see more people visiting there in a tourism capacity, it is great; I really like it, and also Nyinkka Nyunyu. I have taken many of my colleagues there. The problem is, it is a ghost town. There is no one there. We have pumped \$258 000 in to date. This is the Labor government that likes to put money in and not achieve outcomes. What are you achieving, apart from trying to get it up and running? What are you actually getting out of \$258 000?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, the whole reasoning behind establishing the Tennant Creek Foundation is to provide both enterprises with a sound commercial base. You have the Tennant Creek Battery Hill and Nyinkka Nyunyu, which have both struggled over the years. This is why Regional Development has become involved and we are supporting the Tennant Creek Foundation to flourish, so they can set up a proper business plan, a proper commercial venture, and to make sure that they do not go under.

**Mr KNIGHT:** A point of order, Madam Deputy Chair! I am aware that we have 15 minutes left and I

know that the member for Nelson has questions. I would like to flag that.

**Mr GILES:** I am quite mindful, thank you. Would it be fair to say that \$258 000 is the largest grant you will provide out of this fund this financial year?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Mr Galton.

**Mr GALTON:** Yes.

**Mr GILES:** Can you tell me what comes in second?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** The second biggest grant that Regional Development administers is to the Aboriginal Resource Development Service.

**Mr GILES:** Right, is that on here?

**Ms COROWA:** No.

**Mr GILES:** Right, so this is not really conclusive, then? There are two that we have not heard of.

**Ms COROWA:** All of the ARDS has not yet been drawn down for the year.

**Mr GILES:** All right, sorry for cutting you off. Minister, is there any way that I can get a comprehensive list of who has received money or who will receive money this financial year?

**Ms COROWA:** All the grants are published in our annual report. Those lists were for the Regional Economic Development Fund, plus the Indigenous Business Development Fund. We do have a budget for those other items separate to those funds.

**Mr GILES:** Can I get the budgets for the ones that are not included in this?

**Ms COROWA:** Yes.

**Mr HAMPTON:** We will take that on notice.

#### **Question on Notice 9.12**

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** We will take that as a question on notice. Can you repeat that question for *Hansard*, please, member for Braitling?

**Mr GILES:** Will the minister please provide a detailed list of all funding that is to be provided by the Department of Regional Development, through both the Regional Economic Development Fund and Indigenous Business Develop Fund in the financial year 2009-10?

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** For *Hansard*, that is question No 9.12.

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**Mr GILES:** Minister, can you please advise how much in consultancy fees were paid out of the \$100 000 to Tennant Creek Foundation last financial year, and how much will be paid out of the \$258 000 this financial year to Tennant Creek Foundation?

**Ms COROWA:** The consultancy fees that will be paid out by the Tennant Creek Foundation will be a decision made by the directors of the Tennant Creek Foundation. It is not a decision for the

government.

**Mr GILES:** I imagine they would have put that in their application. Minister, let us get straight to the point. This is a government that is about jobs for the boys. You see James Burke sitting in Palmerston, John Gaynor sitting in Alice Springs, Sharon - what is her last name – Hillen, or whatever, in Katherine, George – what is his name? – Addison, or something, working for Gerry McCarthy. Who else do we have? There is Len Kiely in Maningrida. There are Labor people all over the place. Is it not a fact ...

**Dr BURNS:** A point of order, Madam Deputy Chair! I am not aware that the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation is an offshoot of the Northern Territory government. Employment matters ...

**Mr GILES:** I did not say it was.

**Dr BURNS:** ... determined by the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation are determined by its own board ...

**Mr GILES:** Speaking to the point of order, Madam Deputy Chair.

**Dr BURNS:** It is okay to come in and run your political lines, but get them right and make sure that you are not slagging off people who are not here to defend themselves. That is a cowardly thing to do.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** If I can speak to the point of order. Under freedom of speech, where we have individuals mentioned by name who do not have their right of reply, you are incorrect, member for Braitling, with regard to Mr Kiely.

**Mr GILES:** I did not say he worked for the Northern Territory government, Madam Deputy Chair.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** You prefaced it by talking about people ...

**Dr Burns:** You intimidated jobs for the boys.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You did, indeed.

**Mr KNIGHT:** Speaking to the point of order, also, Madam Deputy Chair, if the member would like to talk about former political candidates or members ...

**Mr GILES:** Madam Deputy Chair, there is no need for a point of order.

**Mr KNIGHT:** ... he needs to mention Gary Lambert, Sue Carter - both fine people - who both have jobs with the Northern Territory government. There are other people who have also been candidates, who are all public servants. They all do a great job and you should not hold it against them if they have run or served in a political office, and are serving back in the Northern Territory public service.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Can we move forward? Member for Braitling, if you can exercise caution, please, with references to individuals and inference about any particular ...

**Mr GILES:** Madam Deputy Chair, in no way am I denigrating these people. I am not saying that Len Kiely works for the Northern Territory government. There are plenty of other people who have been bank-rolled into those jobs.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Your question to the minister is?

**Mr GILES:** Is it not just another slush fund to employ an old Labor mate? \$358 000 is going into the

Tennant Creek Foundation. We are not seeing the outcomes. How is that money benefiting Territorians? If we could see the outcomes in increased tourism numbers, and see benefits in Tennant Creek, you could justify it. However, this money, compared to everything else ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr GILES:** This money is going to all the other organisations which are employing people. Surely, instead of bank-rolling an ex-Labor colleague of yours, and two organisations in Tennant Creek, rather than getting them off the ground, the money could be spent better?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, that is not true. Elliot McAdam is a fantastic Territorian with a wealth of experience. It is people like that we should be keeping in the Territory ...

**Mr GILES:** Bank-rolling them with Territory government dollars?

**Mr HAMPTON:** We should be keeping these people with this experience in the Northern Territory. Under the direction of the board, member for Braitling, I have every respect for Elliot and the board, and I am sure they are going to do a fantastic job. The Tennant Creek Foundation is about providing a commercial base for the Nyinkka Nyunyu and the Battery Hill enterprises to flourish. As Minister for Regional Development, that is what I want to see happen. I do not want see these things shut down, Indigenous people lose out, once again, on jobs. What I am about is jobs, jobs, jobs. The Tennant Creek Foundation and these two iconic enterprises in the Northern Territory are going to provide those job opportunities for Indigenous people and for the Tennant Creek community. I disagree with you and I believe you are wrong.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, can you tell me how you are about jobs, jobs, jobs - apart from the old Labor crew? How can you be about jobs, jobs, jobs? You have a list of the organisations that you have assisted. The money that you put into all these organisation, surely, has not created the jobs in those organisations? You have provided assistance, and I recognise that. However, I have asked you questions about fuel prices and major projects. I have spoken about IT and telephones and I have talked to you about house prices. These are all important matters in the regions, and you cannot answer a question on that. How are you the Minister for Regional Development? Is it not a big name with no ticker at the end of it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Braitling, you are absolutely wrong again. You continue to get these things wrong. The Indigenous Business Development Program - as you have in front of you - I can see Central Australia, number of employees, 12; Darwin, number of employees, 19; East Arnhem, number of employees, four; Katherine, number of employees, two; West Arnhem, number of employees, nine; and the Victoria Daly Region, number of employees, seven. That is a total of 47 jobs that have been assisted through the Indigenous Business Development Program. I am the Minister for Regional Development who believes in jobs and assisting Indigenous businesses to flourish.

**Mr GILES:** Minister, those are 47 jobs which include the ones that are existing jobs. Going back to the \$358 000 you have given to the Tennant Creek Foundation. Can you tell me how much money Elliot McAdam has been paid in salaries, consultancy fees or expenses out of that money in the last financial year and estimated in this financial year?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I will give that to Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** Elliot McAdam is employed under an employment contract with the Tennant Creek Foundation. His salary and the decision about his hiring was a decision made by the directors of the Tennant Creek Foundation. It was not a government decision.

**Mr GILES:** Jeez, you covered it well, minister. You have hid that well. Madam Deputy Chair, I believe I have proved a point that this is the minister for nothing - he cannot talk on major projects, or in terms of regional development. He can run a slush fund for his Labor buddies. I mean this is ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Please, if we could cease interjecting. I remind you, member for Braitling again under freedom of speech that there are limited opportunities for persons other than members of parliament to respond to allegations made in parliament. I would like you to be mindful of that. I would also like you to be mindful, member for Braitling, that we will be finishing at 11 pm, and we have a colleague, the member for Nelson, who will be awaiting questions, who is also a member of the PAC.

**Mr GILES:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. I am not making any defamatory remarks against Elliot McAdam. I have much time for him. I have known him a long time before I got into parliament. What I am talking about is a slush fund the Territory government has to bankroll jobs for the boys.

**Dr Burns:** At least he could get votes in the bush. You never could.

**Mr GILES:** Jobs for the boys. Mate, you get out there and do it.

**Dr Burns:** In 2007, you were an absolute failure in the bush.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** Cease interjecting. We are talking about Regional Development and outputs in that area. Do you have a question, member for Braitling?

**Mr GILES:** Minister, why did Imanpa Community Council receive \$19 941 for retail?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** That is a commitment from the Northern Territory government to the Imanpa Community Store. That is to assist the Imanpa Store to establish. It has been - as you are aware - a priority for a number of years. It is a partnership agreement between our commitment and the federal government putting money towards the Imanpa Store.

**Mr GILES:** As I understand it, minister, the Central Land Council is a partner of that, as well?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I am not aware of that.

**Mr GILES:** I will not ask any more questions. I will leave that for the member for Nelson; I know he does not have long.

**Mr WOOD:** Minister, can you give me some sort of understanding as to your department's role in the Indigenous Pastoral Program? Do you provide funds for that program and, if so, could you give us some idea of whether that program is still going and how many people it employs?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** The department has the Indigenous Pastoral Program. Under that program there has been an increase in cattle numbers, in excess of 90 000 since 2003. As a subset of the Indigenous Pastoral Program there is an Indigenous Trainees Scheme. Currently there are 39 people employed on full wages within the pastoral industry under this program. This is in addition to 118 seasonal and short-term jobs created through the life of the program so far.

**Mr WOOD:** That is good. That is specifically because of the Indigenous Pastoral Program?

**Ms COROWA:** Yes.

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS – 18 JUNE 2009

**Mr WOOD:** Another program you were commencing in 2007-08, and which was a priority in 2008-09 - something close to my heart - you were going to commence the Box of Veg Project in two Top End Indigenous communities. Has that started, and could you give us some understanding of how many people are employed, and how many people are in training?

**Mr HAMPTON:** Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** The Box of Veg Project was a project that started in our Planned Industries Group and that has recently been transferred to the Regional Development Group. We are currently working through which communities have so far expressed an interest in starting market gardens, and how we may assist them. We work with a number of communities, for example Ulpanyali, in Central Australia; we have provided a grant through our Indigenous Business Program to support it with irrigation, fencing and planting and growing market gardens. The technical backup comes from the Plant Industries Group, and the regional development and cross-cultural work comes from the Regional Development Group.

**Mr WOOD:** That is my old job. Maybe when I retire, I will give them a hand. One last question: developing an integrated transport network proposal for consideration by the new shires, what is that about? It is on page 49 of your annual report.

**Mr HAMPTON:** Member for Nelson, my colleague the member for Barkly is also working on a regional transport strategy, under the *A Working Future* policy. I am aware of the issues. Particularly around the Katherine East and West parts of my electorate, transport is a critical issue. I will ask Lorraine Corowa.

**Ms COROWA:** We have been in discussions with a gentleman who started up a Bodhi Bus in Katherine. We have also, in the past, assisted Centre Bush Bus with putting on some additional services. We are currently looking at a bus service in Yirrkala. Regional integrated transport is something that we would partner with our colleagues in Transport, in order to achieve.

**Mr WOOD:** As free range egg producer, is it successful, and where is it?

**Mr HAMPTON:** I do not know what comes first, the chicken or the egg, member for Nelson, but I will hand that to Lorraine.

**Mr KNIGHT:** Is it in Tennant Creek?

**Ms COROWA:** The Blue Bush Egg Farm is about 20 km west of Alice Springs; it is an Indigenous business, and the farmer learned his skills from a guy at Barunga who was a hatchery man. That business is selling to local hotels and the local community. It has had varying success, but at the moment it is up and running and doing well.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR:** It is after 11 pm. On behalf of the committee I thank the minister for attending, and the officers advising him. We will reconvene at 8.30 am tomorrow.

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The committee suspended.

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