

In committee in continuation:

Mr CHAIRMAN: Welcome, minister. We saved the best for last. Could you please introduce the officials accompanying you and if you have an opening statement would you like to make it?

MINISTER MCCARTHY'S PORTFOLIOS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. First, I acknowledge the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Mr Richard Hancock; the Chief Financial Officer, Jasmin Aldenhoven; Transport Services Group, A/Executive Director, Nick Papandonakis; Sustainability Strategic Planning and Policy Group, A/General Manager, Ernie Wanka. I will be joined at the table by other departmental officials as appropriate as we move through the appropriation for the department.

DPI is the key agency in formulating and delivering transport policy and outcomes for the Territory. This encompasses the areas of transport policy and planning, safety, and public transport. The unprecedented \$1.3bn infrastructure budget will see a record \$322m investment in Territory roads. This is great news for Transport and we will see more sealing, upgrades, and new roads projects across the Territory. The Transport Group continue to work to increase safety on our roads, rail, and marine environments. Major road safety initiatives based on the Road Safety Taskforce recommendations are continuing.

Recent work includes the introduction of alcohol ignition locks for repeat drink drivers and work to change the driver training and licensing scheme. DPI also delivers marine and rail safety policy which has included upgrades to several rail crossings across the Territory rail network.

Delivering public transport for Territorians is another task of the department. This year, free public buses for students and seniors have been introduced, as well as new services in Darwin's inner city suburbs. Transit Security Officers on Darwin's public bus network have proven to get good results and boost safety for the travelling public.

Mr Chairman, I look forward to any questions the committee may have with regard to the appropriation for this year.

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

Mr GILES: I have a couple of questions. Where does the air transport link between the Territory and Commonwealth government lie? Is that a question to your opening statement?

Mr McCARTHY: It is Transport Policy.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Output 3.2.

Mr GILES: That is 3.2. That will cover the airfield at Noonamah in 3.2?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr GILES: That is the only – there may be one other. Who was the Transport minister in 2005? Was that the member for Johnston? I need to know so that after this, when someone puts out a media release for Transport, who is it going to come from?

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Chairman! This is no reflection on Dr Burns – we did have some discussions in the PAC before we started – in the unusual situations where we have ministers sitting on both sides of the table, ministers who maybe involved in cross-examining themselves in their own former portfolio areas would be in a position of conflict of interest. Minister Burns pointed out at some

length that it was inappropriate for minister Dunham to sit on the PAC. I am wondering if minister Burns will take this opportunity to absent himself.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The advice from the Clerk, in the memo which was circulated to members, said that only applied to portfolios they have been involved with in the past 12 months of the last financial year, which I do not believe applies in this case.

Mr ELFERINK: I see. It is getting more flexible as time goes on.

Mr CHAIRMAN: No, that was in the memo circulated. I will read it for members' benefit. The conclusion was that the following conditions were part of the government's undertakings:

No more than one minister will be an alternate member at a time. No minister will be an alternate member when direct matters of their portfolio responsibilities are up before the PAC or Estimates Committee. Further to the above undertakings, the following guidelines are submitted for consideration: that no minister be a member or alternate member when matters of their former portfolio responsibilities during the year 2008-09 are before the PAC or Estimates Committee.

Does that help, member for Port Darwin?

Mr ELFERINK: Well, yes and no. At the end of the day, minister, once again we have this extraordinary situation where we have ministers in a position to question their own Cabinet colleagues about things happening in the budget process. Whilst I appreciate they have remained silent, which is why I have not made an issue of it, the fact is ...

A member: You did last night.

Mr ELFERINK: ... or generally silent, I am now informed – from a minister's view and Cabinets asking themselves questions, or being in a position to ask themselves questions, about a budget they would have had direct input into, is really an affront.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can I suggest, member for Port Darwin, that you have missed the final recommendation which was: 'A minister, when a member or alternate member during public hearings, undertake to adopt a non-interrogative role', ie, to only speak of procedural programming issues and points of order and I believe that is what has occurred during this Estimates hearing and therefore that point is redundant and...

Mr ELFERINK: Yes, well, but you misunderstand my point, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I am still speaking, member for Port Darwin. Member for Port Darwin, I ask you to respect the Chair. We have had this debate in parliament. We are currently before the Estimates Committee which has the role to scrutinise the budget. We have a minister here, with a budget and output responsibilities, and it is the job of the opposition at this point to ask questions of the minister with regard to his budget responsibilities. Rather than enter into a debate that we have already had in the Chamber, I suggest the members of the opposition should actually scrutinise the budget.

Mr ELFERINK: For the record, I place my objection to the continued presence of ministers in the Estimates Committee. Let us get on with business now.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We should note it is now 8.40 am. We are 10 minutes into the four and a half hours we have for this minister. We have wasted it on a matter that has already been debated. We should be scrutinising the budget.

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Mr ELFERINK: I will tell you now, Mr Chairman, it is not a waste of time.

Mr WOOD: Can I ask ...

Mr ELFERINK: I have a question in relation to ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: The member for Nelson has the call.

Mr ELFERINK: I have a question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The member for Nelson was speaking before you, member for Port Darwin.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Mr CHAIRMAN: The member for Nelson had the call.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, member for Port Darwin.

Mr ELFERINK: You know that it is opposition shadow minister, then opposition members and then Independents.

Mr CHAIRMAN: But we are not speaking to the debate. You had a point of order and I believe the member for Nelson was speaking to it.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr ELFERINK: Follow the rules.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are following the rules, member for Port Darwin.

Mr ELFERINK: No, you are not. You are trying to prevent me from asking questions to the opening statement.

Mr CHAIRMAN: No, you had a point of order. We have had a debate and member for Nelson has asked to speak to the point of order to the debate we are having.

Mr WOOD: I was not going to speak to the point of order. I was just going to give him a question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Oh, no, in that case, member for Port Darwin, you do have the call.

Mr ELFERINK: Thank you. I heard you mention the alcohol ignition locks. Can you tell me about the planning processes through the budget process last financial year, and how they were introduced?

Mr McCARTHY: The Northern Territory Alcohol Ignition Lock Program commenced on 9 April 2009. In relation to the question, I will refer to Mr Richard Hancock, the CEO of the department.

Mr HANCOCK: The alcohol ignition locks were introduced in this financial year. We endeavoured to absorb the additional minimal amount of expenditure on the department in introducing the alcohol

ignition locks within the existing budget, and that is what we did.

Mr ELFERINK: What was the value of that Cabinet submission? It would have been about \$0.5m at least, I imagine.

Mr HANCOCK: Can we take that question on notice? I will find out and get it back to the committee shortly.

Question on Notice No 10.1

Mr CHAIRMAN: Please repeat the question.

Mr ELFERINK: What was the anticipated cost for the introduction of alcoholic ignition locks in the submission to Cabinet? Assuming it would have been about \$0.5m

Mr CHAIRMAN: For *Hansard*, that is question 10.1, if you are happy to take that on notice, minister.

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Ms WALKER: A point of order, Mr Chairman! With regards to Cabinet documents, are they not confidential and therefore ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: The question went to the cost. I can take advice.

Mr ELFERINK: It is up to the minister. He has the privilege to let that information out.

Mr McCARTHY: We agree to take the question on notice, Mr Chairman. We have taken that question on notice.

Mr ELFERINK: Assuming it was around the \$0.5m figure, across government, in terms of impact, what budget areas was this money to run the alcohol ignition lock system taken from?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Just at that point, if I could remind officials to say their name just before speaking for the benefit of *Hansard*.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: That would be out of the Transport Services portfolio. We will give you some additional information on that when I receive the information that is coming to the committee shortly.

Mr ELFERINK: Where I want to go with this, minister, is specifically the planning processes and how the government puts its budgets together. I am now aware through the process of this budget that any number of such programs - alcohol ignition locks in this instance - are off-budget spends, which means departments are supposed to reach into their own budgets to make them happen. I find it surprising that a policy such as alcohol ignition locks are not part of the budget planning process and they just happen along as the year continues.

It reflects, minister, on the planning processes that go into government as a whole. I would urge you, and other ministers, to be more mindful of this in budget Cabinets because it diminishes the quality of trust we can place in budget papers if budgets are constantly being raided for on-the-run decisions. No further questions, Mr Chair.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you have questions to the opening statement?

Mr WOOD: Minister, under Output Group Transport it says: 'provide transport systems that are safe, efficient and ecologically sustainable'. Has the department a definition of what it means by ecologically sustainable transport?

Mr McCARTHY: Ecologically sustainable transport is exactly what it says. That is, we are looking to the future, we are looking to better, and we are looking to greener.

Mr WOOD: Which, in practical terms, means what in relation to Territory transport?

Mr McCARTHY: From my perspective, the initiatives I am looking at are particularly for public transport. That relates to the common language of getting cars off the road. I am particularly interested in public transport. You may have picked that up from some of the media releases I have, as minister, been behind. In terms of public transport, we have that bigger impact, a whole of Territory impact. We have the impact on society, and then, within public transport. I am also looking at initiatives for better ecologically sustainable public transport in terms of how we can incorporate better green policies, as well.

Mr WOOD: Do you have a program, for instance, looking at alternative fuel types for operating transport systems in the Northern Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: Absolutely. I have started discussions about other jurisdictions within Australia and their public transport modes. We can look at alternatives based on the developments from the scientific community that are coming forward. In the jurisdictions we already have good workable models. You can talk about any of our major cities in terms of public transport. The agency is also looking at what you probably heard called the 'green bus', or a sustainable alternative to our traditional carbon emissions.

Mr WOOD: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes questions for the opening statement.

Agency Specific Whole-of-Government Related Questions

Mr CHAIRMAN: I now call for questions on agency specific whole-of-government related issues.

Mr GILES: Minister, are there any plans for registration and other incentives to encourage the use of cleaner, greener cars, not just hybrid cars, but including hybrid cars, and the cleaner technology in diesel?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the specifics, could you highlight the reference to car registration?

Mr GILES: Sorry?

Mr McCARTHY: Could you highlight the reference to car registration?

Mr GILES: Are there any plans through registration to try to encourage the use of cleaner, greener cars? The question is pretty self-explanatory.

Mr McCARTHY: That is a good question, a good point. I would be particularly interested in looking at that as an initiative.

Mr GILES: I take it from your response that you do not have any plans to encourage the use of cleaner, greener cars through registration?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the Northern Territory climate change strategy, and the Northern Territory participating in the Australian Transport Council Climate Change Energy Environment Working Group, which is focusing on a range of national initiatives, including travel behaviour change, vehicle fuel efficiency, alternative fuels, eco-driving, freight transport, walking strategies, and electric vehicles, then it is not only in my interest, but that is a national perspective you have raised.

Mr GILES: Thank you, minister. I take it from that, the national government is doing something and the Territory government has no incentives for a registration plan.

Mr McCARTHY: Would you like me to ...

Mr GILES: That was not a question.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Braitling, if you make an observation or comment, the minister has the chance to respond. Estimates is, in many respects, a conversational process. If you make a statement like that, the minister does have an opportunity to respond.

Mr McCARTHY: Knowing that the broadcast is going out - and I have encouraged many people to listen to this - would you like me to outline some of the current initiatives I am interested in and the agency is looking at?

Mr GILES: Minister, my question was specific to registration, or incentives that you are doing through registration, particularly in regard to cars. If you have answered the question, I am happy with the answer.

Mr McCARTHY: In response to that, through the Chair, I may say you are not interested in any of the initiatives the Territory is looking at.

Mr GILES: I am quite aware of all the initiatives. I wanted to know whether you are having incentives for registration of cleaner, greener vehicles, and you answered that question.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Chairman, we will move on now, as the member for Braitling is not interested in any of the green initiatives I am looking at.

Mr GILES: What is a cleaner, greener car, minister?

Mr McCARTHY: Sorry, member for Braitling, I missed that question.

Mr GILES: What is a cleaner, greener car, minister?

Mr McCARTHY: The question is: what is a cleaner, greener car. That is a good question. Would you like that from my personal perspective, or would you like that from a ministerial perspective, member for Braitling?

Mr GILES: You being the Minister for Transport, I would prefer it from the Minister for Transport.

Mr McCARTHY: Then, through the Chair, I will start with the car park at Parliament House. I commend the member for Port Darwin on a cleaner, greener car, being a Toyota Prius, as a model of such a vehicle on our roads now. I have taken a great interest in how that vehicle operates. I am very interested in its application to urban areas. However, I have also been looking at its application in the longer haul uses, and the Territory having geographic expanses.

On the example I started with, the cleaner, greener car looks at a combination of energy sources. In the example I have quoted, it is a combination of electricity and fossil fuels, and how fossil fuels can support the production of electricity and the technology that balances out the use of energy in the

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circumstances that you are in - acceleration, under load, low load, sitting stationary, idling and so forth. A cleaner, greener car is on the road and in the car park at the moment. You could ask the member for Port Darwin about that, as well. He could give us some operational perspectives on that.

In the cleaner, greener motor vehicle, I would like to look at a bigger perspective. The member for Nelson has already touched on it regarding fuels and efficiency. I am particularly interested in how this translates to industry. If we are looking at the cleaner, greener motor vehicle, then we are talking about public transport. We are also talking about the operation in industry and, in my case, as the member for Barkly, the operational aspects of the pastoral industry.

I could go on, but I have heard during the week the reference to the time factor. I will cut that now, but thanks for the opportunity to respond as the Minister for Transport. This is an exciting area and, historically, is going to be a very interesting time, particularly for public transport.

Mr GILES: As far as trying to induce cleaner, greener cars through NT government policy goes, can you tell me what car you drive?

Mr McCARTHY: The car I drive is a 1987 Hilux four-cylinder diesel - and it is a cracker.

Mr GILES: Is that your parliamentary car?

Mr McCARTHY: No. You asked me what car I drive. That is the car I own.

Mr GILES: Okay. What car do you drive as a member of parliament?

Mr McCARTHY: The electorate vehicle is a Toyota Land Cruiser 70 Series, diesel.

Mr GILES: Thank you. Minister, how many drivers' licences are issued in the Northern Territory? Can you break down the answer by Motor Vehicle Registry, if that makes it easier, and police stations? Can you also list or detail a geographical breakdown of the home addresses of those licences? In other words, most licences issued; the number of licences issued in the bush; and people who receive their licences in the bush – do they live in the bush, is what I am trying to find out. The geographical path: where they get their licence and where they actually live?

Mr McCARTHY: I commend the Motor Vehicle Registry and the staff who are here today with me. We can provide those details. I am a little concerned about the home address part of the question ...

Mr GILES: I do not want the home address.

Mr McCARTHY: However, what I have noticed in surveys similar to what you are suggesting, post codes could be applicable. I am wondering whether you are prepared to except post codes as identification.

Mr GILES: No, I would not. I am keen on having names of communities and urban centres.

Mr McCARTHY: I defer to the CEO, Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: We can supply information on the number of transactions completed by all of our remote and regional locations. Regarding the actual nature of the transactions, I will just check with Mr Papandonakis, A/Executive Director Transport Services Group, to see if we have that information with us this morning.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: I can advise that a total of 156 035 licences have been issued this year, as of 30 May. They comprise of 97 203 car licences; 34 116 truck licences; and 24 716 motorcycle licences. I have a breakdown of provisional and full licences in those ranges. I do not have the

breakdown of the areas within the Territory. MVR services are provided through a number of police outstations. We also have eight MVRs in the Northern Territory, an additional one in Jabiru, and 47 remote police stations undertake ...

Mr GILES: Minister, will you be happy to take on notice the question about where the licences are issued and the communities of home address for those people, on a population basis.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: Member for Braitling, we will endeavour to get you that information, provided we do not breach privacy requirements that the individuals have.

Question on Notice 10.2

Mr CHAIRMAN: For *Hansard*, member for Braitling, could you please repeat the question?

Mr GILES: Could the minister please provide the number of licences issued by location in the last 12 months, as a total of licences, and provide a breakdown by location of where they were issued and the home town where those people live?

Mr CHAIRMAN: You are happy to take that question on notice, minister, with the privacy condition?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr GILES: I do not want to know people's details.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For *Hansard* that is question No 10.2, member for Braitling.

Mr GILES: Minister, is there a policy that people must have lived in one location for a certain period of time before applying for their licence, and what is it?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: I will refer to Mr Papandonakis.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: No, there is no policy. You must be an NT resident to get an NT licence.

Mr GILES: I thought it was three months.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: Yes, you have three months to change over. However, if you are in Alice Springs, you can apply for a licence in Darwin.

Mr GILES: Minister, it is easier to get a licence out bush? And why is it easier to get a licence out bush?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Braitling, if I could respond to that from a personal perspective, I got my licence out bush. To get a Northern Territory licence in any category is the same everywhere, however, I would like to share more detail. Mr Hancock may choose to direct that question.

Mr HANCOCK: I would be interested to know what 'making it easier' means.

Mr GILES: Minister, the sentiment amongst many people is that when you go for your licence it is much easier to go out bush and get your licence from a police station than it is to go through the Motor Vehicle Registry.

Mr HANCOCK: In terms of?

Mr GILES: In terms of testing and the general process that you have to go through to get your licence. People believe it is easier to go out bush and get your licence and there is less chance of failure rates.

Mr HANCOCK: That is not information I am aware of. I do not know of anything that would change the requirements out bush, compared to being in the urban area. Mr Papandonakis.

Mr GILES: Minister, can you please detail for me, and I am happy to take this on notice or in tabled format, how many licences are suspended in remote locations? What is the process for obtaining a licence, consistent between urban MVRs and bush police stations?

Mr McCARTHY: I will refer this question to our agency experts. The point you are making about getting a licence in the bush, through a remote police station, it is exactly the same as getting a licence anywhere. I will need to refer to the CEO, Mr Hancock, to check about the privacy aspects of the nature of the question.

Mr HANCOCK: I am going to refer it to Mr Papandonakis.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: Practical driving tests are undertaken in various locations in the Territory - at the MVR locations, but also at police outstations. I am advised approximately 604 practical tests were conducted at police outstations last year. My understanding is that the test is the same. It takes approximately 45 minutes and requires the applicant to demonstrate four low speed manoeuvres: reverse parallel parking, angle parking, reversing around corners, move off and U turns, as well as general driving competencies such as changing lanes, turning on and off from busy roads, turning at traffic lights, negotiating roundabouts, stopping at give way signs, their ability to interact with other road users, and car control. That does not take into account that road situations may be different at police outstations, but that is my information.

Mr GILES: Minister, do you pay Northern Territory Police in any way or form to conduct some of the roles of MVR in bush locations?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Brainting, a good, operational question. I will throw that to Nick as well, please.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: No, we do not provide any financial support. We do provide support in terms of cameras and infrastructure and we also provide MVR manuals for assistance. There is an ongoing dialogue between police and MVR should they require assistance.

Mr GILES: In making the announcement about the *A Working Future* policy, minister Anderson, Minister for Indigenous Policy, made reference to the establishment of 20 growth towns in terms of hubs, something I believe is a positive initiative. She spoke about MVRs in those 20 growth towns, something I also believe is a positive initiative. Can you tell me what the cost implications of putting MVRs in those 20 growth towns will be? What communication have you had with the minister about establishing MVRs in those 20 growth towns, and what is the time frame for the roll-out of MVRs in those 20 growth towns?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of costs and roll-out, I will refer that, but the other part of the question: have I had dialogue with the minister – absolutely. This is a very exciting part of my portfolio in Transport. The agency which I have been having extensive dialogue with is on the journey with me. Wherever we go with this incredible new policy development, transport underpins so much of it. The first

discussions I have had cover policy and policy development and all the key stakeholders that will be involved. I can see, member for Braitling, you are really enjoying the response because this is exciting stuff. As a member of parliament ...

Mr GILES: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sorry, minister, there is a point of order.

Mr GILES: Mr Chairman, I want to get some answers; I do not need a diatribe or a ministerial statement or report. I just want answers. They are short, sharp questions and I am happy to get answers and listen to an answer for a short sharp question. I do not need to have a waffle or a statement as we only have a certain amount of time.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I have to say I missed the question and I missed the answer, as I was talking to my Deputy Chair. Obviously, the flow of estimates is questions and answers. I cannot comment on the specifics of this, my apologies, member for Braitling, but if you could repeat the question then we can go again.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Member for Braitling, I am happy with the question and my response was to fill you in on some exciting policy developments and my part in it, which was the middle part of your question. For the operational parts of that question, there were two parts, and that was costs of roll-out, I refer to the CEO of the department, Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: We have been working on increasing MVR services in remote and regional NT for some months now. We have been discussing those proposals with the Department of the Chief Minister and the Office of Indigenous Policy. We are still working on the details, which include the costings, and that information is not ready for any form of public release at this stage. We will keep working with those two parts of government as part of the overall 20 growth towns' services of infrastructure arrangements.

Mr GILES: Thank you for that answer. Minister - you may like to refer again - I know you cannot release the costings, but are there any your department has prepared for the roll-out of MVRs to the 20 growth towns?

Mr McCARTHY: We have answered that. This is a work in progress.

Mr GILES: I do not want to know the figures; I just want to know whether you actually have figures to support that policy?

Mr McCARTHY: I consider we have answered it. This is a developing massive body of work.

Mr GILES: It seems to me that this *A Working Future* policy was just cobbled together and rolled-out, because everyone is stonewalling on questions, every minister I have spoken to.

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman! Can I clarify the standing orders in relation to members' opinions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Standing Order 112:

(2) Questions should not contain –

(a) statements of facts or names of persons unless they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible and can be authenticated;

(b) arguments;

(c) inferences;

(d) imputations;

(e) epithets;

(f) ironical expressions; or

(g) hypothetical matter.

I have been a little lenient in questions asked, and I have also been, by the same token, member for Braitling, lenient in the manner in which answers are given. The Estimates Committee, to date, has been going reasonably well. I believe there was a question or was it an answer - we are in the middle of an answer.

Mr GILES: We will move on to the next question. Minister, how much revenue has been raised by the Stuart Highway fixed traffic camera since its commencement?

Mr McCARTHY: Can I clarify that, the Stuart Highway ...?

Mr WOOD: The red light camera.

Mr GILES: The red light camera.

Mr McCARTHY: I will refer that to Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: When that camera first went operational, we were experiencing an enormous number of infringements each day, up to 250 infringements per day from that particular camera. That has dropped to approximately 60 per day recently. In terms of the exact amount of revenue, I refer that to Mr Papandonakis.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: The infringement process and the revenue is dealt with by the Department of Justice. My advice is that \$1.6m has been levied this financial year, with about \$1.09m being paid.

Mr GILES: Minister, for clarification, would that be from the fixed red light camera? There is only one in the Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Member for Braitling, can I just piggyback off that? Is there another light at the corner of, Amy Johnson and Stuart Highway? There is a new light on a tower, is it a camera – you will see it when you go past – it is an overhead light of some sort, like a dome, at Amy Johnson.

Mr HANCOCK: I do not believe that is a red light camera at all, maybe a traffic counter.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: We have put CCTV cameras on some of the intersections to monitor flows.

Mr WOOD: Not monitoring speed?

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: No.

Mr GILES: Minister, and you can answer this quickly for me - I take it \$1.6m is from this financial year?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr GILES: How many infringements have been issued for speed and red light cameras this financial year to date? Across the Territory, how many people have been caught and how many fines have been issued? Does that make sense?

Mr McCARTHY: It makes sense to me. I will run it past you so it makes sense to you, as well. First of all, you are talking about speed and red light cameras. You mean running a red light, to use a common term?

Mr GILES: That is what a red light camera does.

Mr McCARTHY: Okay, there are two offences in that?

Mr GILES: Yes.

Mr McCARTHY: Okay. You are asking for statistics on those two offences, and how many of those statistics were not prosecuted?

Mr GILES: Yes, that is right. If it makes it easier I can write these questions out and hand them over.

Mr McCARTHY: I believe the dialogue is good and we are making sense. Once again, for an operational procedure, I refer to Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: Some aspects of your question relate to the Department of Justice and others to Police. However, Mr Papadonakis, can probably provide some additional information.

Mr PAPADONAKIS: I can provide information only on the red light and speed camera. My understanding - and this is from police figures - is that this year 621 red light infringements were issued, and 7859 speeding infringements were issued. In respect of hand-held cameras and the like, the mobile cameras, I do not have particular details, and ...

Mr GILES: Thank you very much for the answer. Minister, of that 621 red light and 7859 speed cameras, I take it that covers people who are caught in an image on camera? What is the difference between people who have been caught to date, and actual fines issued? Does that make sense?

Mr McCARTHY: To try to make sense of that; the number of people who have been prosecuted - is that what you are asking?

Mr GILES: What I am trying to get at is the time lag between someone getting caught violating a speed limit or red light and the fine being issued?

Mr McCARTHY: I defer to Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: We are now starting to talk about the adjudication process, which is both the Department of Justice and a police matter - which are both involved in the adjudication and the issuing of the notices. My understanding is that when those infringement notices are issued, it is done approximately 10 days from the time of the infringement. We believe that is a reasonable performance benchmark compared to other jurisdictions.

Mr GILES: Is it not the case, minister, that people are waiting up to three months for their fines to be sent out, when they have gone through a red light or speed camera? There is a problem with the electronic system in your department?

Mr McCARTHY: That is an allegation you are making. No, I am not aware of that. I have great faith in the department. Maybe Mr Hancock might like to respond to that.

Mr HANCOCK: I am not aware of the three-month time frames. We have been working quite strongly with police and with Department of Justice on the processing and the system aspects of speed and red light cameras. Those matters are being progressed quite well. I do not know of those time frames myself.

Mr GILES: Okay. Minister, there is a delay in the processing of these fines, if we can classify it as that. What is the problem with the delay? I understand the department has been working for nearly 12 months in fixing problems with the system. What is the problem with delay in issuing fines?

Mr McCARTHY: Can I ask, in this line of questioning, has your fine been late in the mail?

Mr GILES: Minister, you are responsible for Transport. We went through standing orders before about trying to be funny, in the process.

Mr Elferink: Imputations, I think the word was.

Mr GILES: Imputations, that is right. I am trying to get to the bottom of what your department is doing to fix up a time lag between the issuing of fines and when the offence occurred. I know your department is working on it. I would like an answer.

Mr McCARTHY: You are alleging there are time delays. I am answering the department has very good processes with this issue. Once again, Mr Hancock would like to respond.

Mr HANCOCK: Member for Braitling, we are not aware of a three-month time frame. Regarding the system issues, as you call them, again, I do not believe there are any system issues as such. We have been working with the Department of Justice to ensure the systems can accommodate the number of infringements coming from the speed and red light cameras at this particular location. Mr Papandonakis, can you add to that?

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: My understanding is that the infringements from the current red light and speed camera are being issued within two weeks, for the red light and speed camera. I cannot comment on the hand held or mobile, because that is an issue for police.

Mr GILES: Finally, can you tell me the average time lag for the last 12 months to the end of May, for issuing fines?

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: I can only comment on the red light and the speed camera fines, and they have not increased to more than - it is not more than a month, since the inception. We have been working very hard to have the systems talk to each other, and that work is going very well.

Mr GILES: Thank you very much, I appreciate your answer. Minister, are you aware of any other issuing of fines that have significant time lags?

Mr McCARTHY: No.

Mr GILES: Is your department working on any system changes to improve time lags for any issue of fines, across government, which relate to your portfolio?

Mr McCARTHY: Once again, we are not experiencing any of your alleged time lags, if Mr Hancock would like to comment on that in terms of departmental operations.

Mr HANCOCK: Most of what you are referring to now is issues to do with police and the Department of Justice. I repeat what I have indicated this morning: we have been working with both those agencies in regards to speed and red light camera infringement processing, and those discussions, and that work, is going well. That is the extent of what we can say in response to that question this morning.

Mr GILES: Okay. How long does it take to get an H-endorsement transfer between states? And why does it take so long?

Mr McCARTHY: The question is how long does it take to get an H-endorsement? Is that ...

Mr GILES: It is a pretty clear question; you do not need to read it back to me.

Mr McCARTHY: I would like to get this right, member for Braitling. Once again, a good question, in an operational area, which I will refer to the department for a very good answer.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: There have been some delays recently in H-endorsement applications and transfers because of the requirement for criminal history checks. These have been delayed because of increased workloads. They are working over time to deal with the back log of those criminal history checks. The wait will decrease, I believe, from six or eight weeks to get a criminal history check, down to two weeks. That is an issue for Justice. Once we receive the criminal history check, we act accordingly.

Mr GILES: Thank you. Minister, will the government be adopting the national model of fatigue management? Or will it be developing its own package with a view to similarities with either South Australia and/or Western Australia?

Mr McCARTHY: Having just attended a Transport ministerial council that is a very good question. I have a lot of background information on heavy vehicle driver fatigue reform. I would like to call on agency representative, Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: The Territory has voted in favour of the national heavy vehicle driver fatigue regulations. We are working through a range of issues associated with that, particularly in the tourism industry in the Territory. We are very aware of that. The department has had a number of discussions with various tourism operators to understand the impact. I believe Mr Saunders can probably add to that ...

Mr Tollner: Sorry, can I clarify a point? Did you just say the Territory has been in favour of that? It supports it?

Mr HANCOCK: Yes.

Mr Tollner: What about livestock, or ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Through the minister.

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Fong Lim?

Mr TOLLNER: Yes.

Mr McCARTHY: Could you repeat that?

Mr TOLLNER: I am dismayed the Territory would support that. Given our strong livestock industry

and long-haul live cattle, how could the Territory government back this? To me, the national sleep issue was all about truckies operating between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and major accidents occurring on that road. The National Transport crew were trying to put in place a national system which did not take into account any of the unique conditions we have in the Territory. When was the last time we had a major fatality from hauling cattle on a remote bush road?

Mr McCARTHY: As the Minister for Transport, we will never disadvantage the Territory transport industry, so ...

Mr TOLLNER: Well, that is what you are doing when you are voting in favour of this.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Fong Lim, the minister is answering your question. Standing Order 51: No interruptions.

Mr McCARTHY: We will never disadvantage our industry. Our industry, as you are pointing out, has very specific aspects to its operation and we have very specific aspects to our geography. At the recent ministerial council, it was noted that the Territory is very strong on not disadvantaging our homegrown industry. I can assure you this is progressing. I wanted to supply some good operational details ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Fong Lim, there was an original question from the member for Braiting. The minister was answering the original question before the member for Fong Lim interrupted. If you could ...

Mr McCARTHY: In my original answer I was hoping we could mention operational details about this. In my role as Transport minister I took it upon myself to link up with Queensland, Western Australia, and South Australia to conduct dialogue about this important issue of our specifics and a way forward in terms of the national reform.

Mr TOLLNER: Can I continue?

Mr McCARTHY: No, that is it. Would you like some more details?

Mr CHAIRMAN: There was a request for more details; the minister is passing onto Mr Hancock. Mr Hancock, you have the call.

Mr HANCOCK: In all of the national reforms in transport we are extremely conscious of not wishing to disadvantage the NT operators across that sector. We have made arrangements under the heavy vehicle driver fatigue regulations to make sure that does not occur. I would like Mr Saunders, if you could, to add some additional detail to that, please?

Mr SAUNDERS: Simon Saunders, Road Transport Division. I will fill in where things are at, with fatigue in the Northern Territory. As you are aware, there are some current fatigue regulations applying under OH&S legislation of the NT. Operators are required to have a system in place that manages the fatigue of their drivers to ensure heavy vehicles are safe when operating throughout the NT.

The National Model legislation picks up a three tiered approach, relating to standard hours, basic fatigue management and advanced fatigue management. The requirements under advanced fatigue management do not differ, excessively, from current requirements under NT OH&S legislation. As Richard just expressed, we are very conscious of operators crossing borders, which is one of the reasons why we cannot remain a transport island within the country. Much of our freight comes from Queensland and South Australia, as well as Western Australia.

We have facilitated implementing the accreditation modules for basic and advanced fatigued management in the Territory and providing work diaries for operators who want them, to enable them

to cross borders and not be penalised once they exit the Northern Territory. The legislation is in place in the states surrounding the Territory. As long as operators have to cross borders, we have facilitated that and put that in place. Industry has generally supported fatigue in the NT in the past.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Just at that point, I have allowed some leniency during this Estimates Committee process, but the order of questions is meant to go, as the member for Nelson made the point last night, shadow minister first, which is the member for Braitling, then to core membership. You will be able to return to this, member for Fong Lim.

Mr GILES: What are the cost implications for each industry through the proposed legislation for fatigue management? What are the financial implications for the tourism industry, the cattle industry, and so forth?

Mr McCARTHY: I defer to Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: Regular impact statements are done on any new federal legislation, taking into account the costs and the benefits on participants in the sector or industry involved. Mr Saunders and Mr Papandonakis, is there anything more that you could add to that?

Mr SAUNDERS: The costs associated to industry are part of getting accreditation, which is minimal. It costs about \$80 to become accredited. Other costs incurred by industry, by complying with developing a fatigue management system, would be at their cost, and using a consultant to develop that for them if they wanted to go down that path.

Mr GILES: Have you done any economic analysis about what the additional costs to the tourism, cattle, and the road freight industries will be, aside from the training and so forth?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Richard Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: I would have to ask Mr Saunders to respond to that, minister.

Mr SAUNDERS: We do not believe there will be a specific cost to industry in a big way, providing they are currently complying with current Northern Territory OH&S requirements and meeting those fatigue management requirements under that legislation. Under the current requirements, there would not be a huge shift to get into the national model legislation.

Mr GILES: We have just heard from a chief executive the concerns within the tourism industry about fatigue management. I understand its concerns are economically based and the cost impact of having to change its whole system for fatigue management. From conversations I have had with the cattle and road freight industries the same applies. Surely you have some economic analysis that documents the additional costs this new fatigue management will mean for both business and industry?

Mr McCARTHY: The concerns are shared on a national front. This is a new way forward. There has been a member of the PAC outline the nature of the legislation relating to an east coast model. It is my job to be at the table and to work this forward, defining the very specifics of the Northern Territory. I have already had dialogue with Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, who are also working forward.

In terms of our Northern Territory fatigue management, and in terms of the operational procedures, through Mr Hancock, we may once again like to have Mr Saunders outline some more detail.

Mr HANCOCK: The main areas of concern with the tourism operators are around work and rest requirements under the model regulations. As Mr Saunders already indicated, these are not significantly different to what are required under the current OH&S requirements. However, we are trying to work with the industry to understand the nature of the concerns. We have a list of fatigue

management experts who can assess individual tourism operators' existing fatigue management systems to see how they do comply with the new model regulations. Mr Saunders, is there anything else I need to add to that?

Mr SAUNDERS: No.

Mr GILES: What are the cost implications for the government to implement the fatigue management reforms in terms of infrastructure?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock?

Mr HANCOCK: Cabinet approved some funding for a range of national reforms in March 2007. That also included heavy vehicle fatigue. We had proposed budget expenditure in 2007-08 of \$500 000 for all of those reforms, including the heavy vehicle fatigue, and a further \$300 000 budget provision in each year from 2007-08 on. I do not have the individual components related to this specific issue within those global budget figures, but they have been provided for in budgets since 2007-08.

Mr GILES: It is reasonable to expect there will be additional cost to the government in providing infrastructure to support fatigue management in the Territory. It will be reasonable to expect costs within the tourism, cattle and freight industries to increase. How will the government compensate those industries for those added costs?

Mr McCARTHY: In response to the first part of your question, if you are looking at infrastructure then you will be talking about roadside stops, for instance. The answer to that is, yes. I am already lobbying strongly because that is a very important part of fatigue management in our road transport network. Could you repeat that second part of that question?

Mr GILES: How will the Northern Territory government compensate industry for the additional cost burden for the implementation of fatigue management?

Mr McCARTHY: That is something we are working on developing on a national perspective. There has been no talk of compensation. However, in fatigue management and the implementation of the national agenda, we are working forward.

Mr GILES: Mr Chairman, I understand other members on this panel want to talk about fatigue management. I want to go on to other areas of transport within this output group, but I am happy to share fatigue management with others. Are you happy with that?

Mr CHAIRMAN: I am comfortable with that at this stage.

Mr ELFERINK: Minister, the Northern Territory government has a whole-of-government policy on the war on drugs. What is your part of the policy, under Transport?

Mr McCARTHY: I ask Mr Hancock to respond.

Mr HANCOCK: Drug-driving testing is, I believe, the area that you refer to ...

Mr ELFERINK: Actually, it is not, but go on.

Mr CHAIRMAN: At that point before you go on the member for Braitling asked for discretion for questions from opposition members around fatigue management. We have gone on to drug testing ...

Mr ELFERINK: I am sorry. I missed the rule change. We will come back to it.

Mr Tollner: You can hold off on the drug stuff.

Mr ELFERINK: I can. Thank you.

Answer to Question on Notice 10.1

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Chairman, if I may table the answer to question 10.1.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr TOLLNER: Minister, in relation to the long-haul live cattle transport industry, where many hours will be spent by drivers doing 40 km an hour through bull dust in remote bush roads, you talk about roadside stops. What provision has been made by the Northern Territory government to build cattle yards to provide them with feed and water so that when these truckies are forced to pull over they can offload the cattle and have their eight hours sleep? You cannot, for a second, believe you can leave a road train full of cattle sitting on the side of the road in the blazing sun.

Mr McCARTHY: A subject dear to my heart. I would love to share with you dropping the third trailer to get over the Woollogorang jump-up. However, this issue is a national issue. No way are we going to disadvantage our local industry. You are highlighting not only a wonderful part of the Territory industry, but a very specific part I am jamming home on the national agenda.

The roadside rest stops I spoke about are extremely important for road safety, but long-haul cattle carting through the bull dust is an example of that very specific industry need; a need which is being taken on board as part of the national agenda. Building cattle yards and supplying feed and unloading and loading cattle, I believe is very impractical. That is an example of the very good debate we have on the national agenda.

Mr TOLLNER: Minister, I know the sort of people you are dealing with, I have dealt with this issue since 2001. I know the sort of zealots you are dealing with around the country. As far as I am concerned, they are complete zealots.

The issue of fatigue management, as I said from the outset, has stuff-all to do with the Northern Territory and more to do with the leg between Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne, where they have these horrific accidents because truckies are driving hard and pushing things to the limit. The reality is, and I hate to disagree with you or your minders, but the live cattle haulage industry is absolutely outraged at these reforms because there is no regard being shown to them whatsoever. The response the government has put up is: why not have two-up driving? The industry has said that is just not feasible. For a start, there are not enough people experienced with cattle and road trains. Those people do not just grow on trees. They are a certain type of people. They tend to find it difficult to get along with one another. They like to sit in the cab on their own, and do their business.

The other point is there is no possible provision for these vehicles to pull over on the side of the road. You talked about roadside stops. That might be all right for a bloke dragging a load of cars from Adelaide or a refrigerated container, but when you have a road train full of cattle, you cannot pull over onto the side of the road and go to sleep for eight hours, particularly in the blazing sun. The only way to address the issue is to build a network of strategically located cattle yards, fully provided with feed and water. That would cost the industry greatly in time delays. It would also cost someone, either the government or the industry, in providing these cattle yards.

Minister, the simple question I have for you is: what exemptions have you organised for this extremely important industry? This does not just apply, as you say, to the Northern Territory; this applies to remote parts of western Queensland, eastern and Western Australia, South Australia, and New South Wales; we send cattle there, and we also have cattle coming from there to our port. This industry has

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been shown scant regard by the national bureaucrats and other zealots who seem to be leading this proposal. What are you doing as a government to arrange exemptions for this extremely important industry?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Prior to you answering, minister, a matter of housekeeping. I have received a letter from the Chief Minister to Madam Speaker:

Dear Madam Speaker

Pursuant to sessional orders, providing for alternate membership for the Public Accounts Committee, I nominate the following government member as alternate for Dr Chris Burns, 9:30 am to 1 pm Friday, 18 June, Ms Malarndirri McCarthy, MLA.

Mr ELFERINK: Thank you, Mr Chair, I appreciate it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, you have the call.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, member for Fong Lim. That was a great dissertation on our Territory industry. I can assure you that I will never ...

Mr Tollner: We have been told ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Fong Lim! Standing Order 51: No interruptions.

Mr McCARTHY: I can assure you that I am not going to disadvantage any Territory industry and when you have provided your examples, which are great, I am thinking of a couple of issues. One is the bipartisan issue that keeps coming up in the House. I would really like to work together on this as a lobby from the Northern Territory. You are right; you have experience in the federal scene. There are big players there. We need to be united and we are. Particularly in the states I mentioned. Let us broaden it though, let us talk about the long-haul cartage. Let us talk about livestock and mud crabs coming out of Borroloola. These are issues we need to incorporate as part of the national perspective. I have already introduced myself to this field. I have already stated very strongly the position that we are not debating - that we are sharing - here at the table. Mr Saunders might like to supply some more information for you.

Mr SAUNDERS: There is actually a national group formed and being led by the National Transport Commission for livestock transporters. It has been operating for a number of years in developing a process for livestock transport. You are quite right with the cross-border issues. Many cattle come out of Queensland through Darwin for live export. That group is developing a plan for transport of livestock within Australia, looking at the requirements and the AFM. Those processes should come to light in time. Queensland has been working extensively on this issue and we have been working closely with them.

Mr TOLLNER: To me, that is not a response. The first thing that really caught my ear in this whole debate was that the Northern Territory has agreed to these fatigue management standards that are being promulgated around the country. I know the people involved in this. The bureaucrats running the Queensland argument are all Brisbane-based; not one of them has seen or been in a road train or had anything to do with live cattle. The same applies in New South Wales, they are all Sydney-based, and for Western Australia, they are all Perth-based. There is no effort at all being made on a national basis to ameliorate the concerns of this industry.

I cannot, for the life of me, understand how the Northern Territory could possibly sign up to this, given that so much of our economy relies on live cattle and tourism. Yet we seem to have rolled over, for what, minister? Cooperative federalism, is that it?

Mr McCARTHY: I can assure you we are working forward in this and that your concerns are my

concerns; they are the concerns of the Territory transport industry. Mr Hancock might like to respond as well.

Mr HANCOCK: I add to what the minister has just indicated. Whilst the Territory has agreed to introduce the new regulations on the basis that some of these issues are resolved before that occurs. Until that occurs, the operators will continue to comply with the occupational health and safety requirements which are already in place and are being utilised. We envisage that there is at least a further six months worth of work with industry ...

Mr TOLLNER: It has been at least six years.

Mr HANCOCK: ... and with our federal colleagues to satisfactorily resolve these issues so no part of the Territory is disadvantaged by the Territory becoming part of a national reform process.

Mr GILES: Mr Chairman, I am happy to allow some direction to the member for Nelson if he wants to talk about fatigue management.

Mr WOOD: No, I believe the member for Fong Lim has covered it pretty well. I have concerns, as well. I have been lobbied, as well. It concerns me, that live cattle is our biggest primary industry export. You are saying we are out there battling for the Territory - but I would like someone to say we are also battling for an industry which relies on heavy transport, which relies on long-haul distances, because you have to worry about the welfare of the cattle, as well as the welfare of the drivers.

It is an important industry; one that is a specialist industry to the Northern Territory. For extra costs to be added, especially as there is talk about carbon emission taxes being added to every cow that leaves the Territory, will be a serious burden. It is very important that your government makes sure we do not add extra costs to an industry which is vital for the Territory's economy.

Mr McCARTHY: I take that on board. That is what I have been trying to convey to the Public Estimates Committee. It is a national reform agenda. We are at the table and bringing our home grown perspective, which you have summarised.

In terms of transport and the welfare of animals: from my personal experience in the industry, the welfare of livestock is always at the top of the agenda.

Mr TOLLNER: Minister, what is the cost of not signing onto these reforms? What is the cost to the Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: I will ask for a response from the agency.

Mr SAUNDERS: Those costs would be financial or related to safety. The national model has been developed by fatigue experts based on national and international research. It is based on a fatigue-related, risk-based approach for the safety of people on the road networks.

Mr TOLLNER: Minister, when was the last time we had a major accident on a remote bush road involving a driver hauling cattle and suffering from fatigue? How many people were hurt or killed?

Mr McCARTHY: I cannot tell you on a bush road, but on the Stuart Highway, it was last year. I attended an accident where a third trailer rolled. It was a Tanami Transport trailer. Police, Fire and Emergency Services attended that accident. There were no fatalities, but there were stock losses. It was a good example of an emergency response in terms of that industry and action. I am just throwing it out there as personal experience. It was managed by the police and all the appropriate tests were done.

However, on a bush road, your answer, the last time? No, I cannot provide any details, however I

could get back to you on that and provide statistics.

Mr TOLLNER: No, it would be pointless.

Mr ELFERINK: The research, you could read coronial inquiries, I suspect, to make the determinations of fatigue as a contributing factor. What you just described was a trailer tipping over. It could do that for any number of reasons.

Mr McCARTHY: That is right.

Mr GILES: Minister, we will move on from fatigue management. I gather you are still some time away from coming up with fatigue management legislation. We are a long way from supporting it, because we have no idea about what is included, what the cost implications will be, or what you will be doing for industry to compensate it - building stock yards or otherwise. I move on to the taxi industry.

There are a number of taxis in the Darwin region. We know there are significant problems with getting a taxi at night. We know there are conflicts between taxis, mini-buses, and hire cars competing on the same rank. Getting taxis from the airport in the middle of the night, on Mitchell Street or to the rural area is a problem. Can you explain what your government is doing about the taxi industry? I have read the synopsis; you do not need to go through the synopsis.

Mr McCARTHY: I am glad you have read the synopsis.

Mr GILES: I am not sure what it is a synopsis of; it is not like a synopsis of a report.

Mr McCARTHY: It is a synopsis of an extensive report. As the Minister for Transport I asked that the report's synopsis be released to really highlight the incredible body of work done. We are talking about the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Review.

Mr GILES: Can you table that report?

Mr McCARTHY: I would like to give you details about this, and the incredible work carried out. Mr Hancock might like to ...

Mr GILES: A point of order, Mr Chairman! Did you say you were happy to table the report?

Mr McCARTHY: No, I did not say that. I was talking about the wonderful synopsis that I take credit for. Do not forget that - I take credit for it.

Mr GILES: No worries, minister.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Mr Hancock, you have the call.

Mr HANCOCK: The synopsis, as the minister indicated, was released so the industry and the community in general could access a high-level summary of some of the issues raised in the report. That was followed by some additional consultation, both here and in Alice Springs, with representatives of the taxi industry and others. I might hand over to Mr Scott to go through and add any other details he feels are necessary.

Mr SCOTT: Greg Scott, Economics and Policy. It has been a fairly extensive review. Those issues you raised are pertinent to the industry. The industry is now recognising there are problems with availability of taxis across the network at various times. We are working with the industry and, particularly, with the CPV board to go through those and bring in some service standards.

In the current round of consultation, we have had right across the board, the synopsis has been fairly well accepted. We have now finally turned a corner with the industry recognising these problems exist. They recognise they are having trouble meeting consumer demands. There are a whole range of issues we need to work through with the industry.

Shortage of drivers is one of them. We are putting in place driver training accreditation programs and, bringing in greater accreditation service standards so taxis are on the road for much longer. There are also other ways of doing this through substitute taxi licences. We are also looking at temporary licences to increase that supply on a short-terms basis.

Mr GILES: Minister, through you, when will some of these reforms take place so people can actually get a cab?

Mr McCARTHY: The nature of this reform is massive, and some will be easy to implement quickly, others will take time. I have been on a steep learning curve with commercial passenger vehicles. For finer details, I defer to Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: The department is working on the recommendations in the synopsis. We will present a range of time frames across all the various recommendations that have been made to the minister to consider. Some recommendations will be able to be implemented more quickly than others. This is such a significant issue we should not be rushing into solutions that have not been well thought through and costed. That is the work the department is undertaking now.

Mr GILES: The government has been in for eight long years. We hear in the media - ABC on Monday mornings - about people who have been assaulted walking through the streets trying to find cabs, women who have been attacked. These are people who are trying to find a taxi. I appreciate you need substantial reform in CPV. However, in the short-term, you must have something you can come up with to entice taxis back on the roads - the 900 cabs in Darwin. You must have something you can use to get the cabs back on the road and work on a model to get people home. The streets are not safe at night. People are running around, full of grog, trying to get a cab. When you have tourists coming into Darwin in the middle of the night trying to get a taxi from Darwin airport, to get to their hotel or home or wherever that may be, surely, there is a cost impediment on the Territory economy as far as negative publicity goes. What can you do in the short-term?

Mr McCARTHY: We have some very good initiatives to report to the Estimates Committee. Once again, the agency experts will be the best to provide that information for you.

Mr HANCOCK: There are a number of aspects I will briefly outline, then I am going to ask Mr Papandonakis to talk about some additional information.

There is the secure taxi rank in Mitchell Street which has been in operation for six months. That is one initiative that has been introduced. It is being evaluated at the current time. We have allowed substitute taxi licences in the dry season to put more cabs on the road. We are aware of issues at the airport, particularly with those flights arriving in the early hours of the morning. Mr Papandonakis might like to add some more information.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: The secure taxi rank that commenced in August 2008 runs Saturday and Sunday mornings from midnight to 5 am. There is the provision of a concierge to guide and direct passengers. Security has been provided by the Hoteliers Association and the Darwin City Council. There have been a total of 24 500 passengers who have used the secure taxi rank, and the number of the taxis and minibuses visiting the rank in total since August has been about 9203. Importantly, the patronage and the use by taxis and minibuses has increased steadily since August. We believe the secure taxi rank is working very well.

We have just completed a survey of businesses, the drivers, and people who live in the area. The interim survey results show the rank is perceived as a positive safety outcome for both drivers and passengers.

We have undertaken the Christmas Express over the Christmas period. There were three minibuses from 1 am until 5 am on Saturday and Sunday mornings from the 31 December until the 4 January, which also linked in with our Christmas blitz road safety education campaign. That was a \$20 flat fee. There were a total of about 262 people picked up during that period and taken home.

Also the substitute taxi scheme has been working for a number of dry seasons. This year we have extended it from 4 am to 4 pm on Thursday through to Saturday. This year we will have 14 additional taxis in Darwin, three in Alice Springs, and one in Katherine; a total of 18.

Mr GILES: I believe the rank is a very good idea; who ever came up with the idea of the rank, it is a great idea. I have to say though, if you are at Nightcliff, the Beachfront Hotel or Palmerston in the middle of the night and you want to get a taxi, it does not solve the problem. You have the secure rank in town for those people - which is a good thing - but what if you are in another part of town or the Territory and trying to get a taxi at night. How do you get the taxi drivers to get people home? It is the same problem in Alice Springs and other parts of the Territory. What is the solution?

I know you are going through structural reform through CPV, but what is the solution? There needs to be an immediate solution. If I listen to the radio on Monday morning and hear that someone has been attacked while waiting for a cab; that is a direct result of government inaction.

Mr McCARTHY: Other than the last comment about inaction, I believe you are doing a great job as shadow. I am in the same space. I have been asking the same questions. I am lucky to get to work with all these good people. I would like Mr Scott through Mr Hancock to provide you with some of the details, particularly addressing the concerns you raised.

Mr SCOTT: There are no easy short answers because you are dealing with an industry which is quite diverse in terms of the players in it. You could say it is not a cohesive industry at the best of times. Many of the internal workings have to come from the industry itself, reviewing its practice as a CPV industry, rather than a taxi or a minibus industry or those sorts of industry. We try to maintain the existing licence classes, such as MPTs and the minibuses and things like that, so they can provide the wide range of services people have demanded. It is very difficult, in terms of driver shortages and matters like that. Much of that has to come from the industry. There is anecdotal evidence that some drivers do not want to work the night shifts, for a whole range of reasons. We have to work with them to say, okay, bring in your accreditation standards, your service standards and better training for the drivers so we can establish a career path through the industry.

Mr GILES: I can see there is no short-term solution to these problems on the streets for this weekend. I appreciate you are doing some hard work in trying to reform it.

The Country Liberals' policy is to sell taxi plates. Feedback from some taxi drivers I get is about plates. Because they currently lease them, they believe the Territory government should be responsible for installing security cameras in those taxis. Does your government support, and is it moving to sell plates for commercial passenger vehicles, particularly taxis and mini buses? Do you support the Northern Territory government providing security cameras in cabs, and will your government do so?

Mr McCARTHY: I will provide some background in terms of the research I have been doing. It is a very complex industry and some great work has been done to start tightening it up. For the operational details of moving that forward, particularly the recommendations that have come out of the review, I will go back to an expert I have been working closely with, and then we will lead off that in to the CCTV question. Through Mr Hancock, Mr Scott if you are happy to respond.

Mr SCOTT: That is one of the issues which has been discussed - taxi operators being able to buy back their licences and then sub-lease them out. There are pros and cons in doing that. We have maintained an open aspect into the marketplace so the flexibility in getting people in and out of the industry is maintained. As soon as you start talking about extremely high licence fees and things like

that through an auction process, that works against people being unable to afford to get into the industry; unless they own their own business. That is a question still being discussed.

Mr GILES: Minister, I take it that the Northern Territory government, your government, before you were there, before I was there, you bought the plates back?

Mr McCARTHY: No.

D Burns: The previous government bought the plates back.

Mr GILES: The previous government bought the plates back and now you are considering selling them?

Mr McCARTHY: No, the answer is no.

Mr GILES: It is not part of the consideration to sell them. I thought I heard that was one of the models being thought of at the moment.

Mr McCARTHY: The answer to that is no.

Mr GILES: So you are completely ruling out the selling of them? Okay. Can you answer the question about security cameras?

Mr McCARTHY: The CCTV cameras, first of all there are standards and operating protocols across Australia. The proposal is exploring all options in consultation with the industry and key stakeholders. Those discussions are taking place regularly and I am involved in them.

There is a cost involved, and the taxi industry has previously expressed the view that government should fund the installation of cameras. I am seeking legal advice on that and ways forward to provide those cameras. Security is the important aspect to that question. We will be providing security for this industry. We are all about security for Territorians.

Mr GILES: So you will be installing cameras in the cabs?

Mr McCARTHY: Options are on the table and this is, once again, a big body of work and I am working through it.

Mr GILES: How much would it cost to install a camera in a cab and a minibus?

Mr McCARTHY: The installation of a camera in a cab or a minibus is anywhere between \$6000 and \$2000, it depends. You are in a high tech area and there are very big price variations.

Mr GILES: I will leave it there and hand over to the member for Port Darwin.

Mr ELFERINK: I am patiently waiting. This will take 10 minutes. We were on drugs at one stage ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Port Darwin, you have the call.

Mr ELFERINK: I asked, basically, in terms of the government's whole-of-government approach to drugs policy, what your policy was on drugs. Mr Hancock was about to read something out to me, I believe he slipped it over to you; I do not mind who reads it out, it can even be tabled.

Mr McCARTHY: As the Minister for Transport, the specific area I have been looking into is drug driving testing. First of all, the Road Safety Task Force Report, Safer Road Use - A Territory

Imperative - recommended testing for drugs in two instances: in the event of a crash, and in the circumstances of unexplained driving behaviour. The passage of the *Transport Legislation (Drug Driving) Amendment Act* commenced in 2008-09; 1 July 2009. The road safety initiatives to be implemented as part of this amendment are: to allow for the collection of samples of blood to test for drugs and other substances; to allow police to use roadside saliva screening tests for the presence of certain drugs in the case of dangerous or unexplained driving behaviour not related to the consumption of alcohol; to allow police to use random roadside saliva screening tests for the presence of certain drugs in drivers of heavy vehicles over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass; and to introduce a list of drugs that impair driving by a schedule to the Traffic Regulations.

Mr ELFERINK: How many tests have been conducted? How many prosecutions have commenced, and how many convictions have been secured?

Mr McCARTHY: I believe we are talking about the Police portfolio, but in response to that ...

Mr ELFERINK: Surely it comes under Transport.

Mr McCARTHY: Since July 2008, 554 samples have been sent to South Australia for testing. Of those, 290 were negative, 79 were positive for a prohibited drug, and 185 are pending test results. Of the 79 positive, 30 were for morphine and 34 were for THC cannabis. The remaining were for various other prohibited drugs.

Mr ELFERINK: Thank you for that, and I am glad you mentioned THC. I asked the very same question in May 2002 of the then Minister for Transport, and he gave me a blank look. I am glad we have moved on and there is a policy of sorts. Is there a broader drugs policy in relation to transport? Do you look at other areas, or is that specifically your area of interest?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of, personally?

Mr ELFERINK: No, I am talking about policy. You are the embodiment of the minister, what you believe is what your policy is.

Members interjecting.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I remind members of Standing Order 51, No Interruption -

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.

Mr ELFERINK: We were enjoying the humour of the moment, and no reflection is cast upon the minister.

Mr McCARTHY: It was a serious question. If I could ask, through Mr Hancock, for the agency to respond.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: From a rail enforcement perspective, there are drug testing regimes in the regulations. The onus is upon the rail operator.

Mr ELFERINK: Thank you, I appreciate that, I am not going any further with that.

The reason I raised this issue in May 2002 is because I saw a number plate in circulation called THC 4ME. I raised it with the then Minister for Transport, I wrote a letter to the Minister for Transport and said this is a concern. I got a letter back saying: 'Oh no, we are quite happy with that number plate'. Subsequent to that, the driver of that car was arrested for drug running. What a surprise! I was critical

at the time of the issuing of that particular plate and remain critical. Is that plate still in circulation?

Mr McCARTHY: We can take it on notice.

Question on Notice 10.3

Mr CHAIRMAN: In that case, for the purposes of *Hansard*, member for Port Darwin, can you repeat the question?

Mr ELFERINK: Is the license plate, THC - that is, tango, hotel, charley - numeral 4, ME - mike, echo - still in circulation?

Mr CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of *Hansard*, that is question No 10.3.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I appreciate that the question was asked and the answer taken on notice in good faith. However, I remind members of the test of relevance we are using for this estimates from the 2009 Senate Procedures Committee is:

Any questions going to the operation of financial positions of the departments and agencies who seek funds in the estimates are relevant question for the purposes of estimate hearings.

Mr ELFERINK: Whilst I am interested in how the department expends its money on the issue of plates, there are also some other plates that are a lesser concern to me. There is one that I saw in traffic the other day; I believe the plate was 'LETHAL', it was on some you-beaut, super-fast V8. Bearing in mind the comments from your own government in relation to hooning behaviour, is it appropriate for the issuing of plates like 'LETHAL' for vehicles which are V8s, souped up V6s and those sorts of vehicles?

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, member for Port Darwin. We have a policy around personalised number plates ...

Mr ELFERINK: I understand you have a policy; I am worried about how effective it is.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Papandonakis.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: Anyone applying for a personalised number plate needs to have that put through a process where we assess it - and we assess it frontward and backward.

Mr ELFERINK: It is a committee, is it not?

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: Yes.

Mr ELFERINK: That is my concern. Does that committee operate under rules, minister - a set of guidelines?

Mr McCARTHY: Nick?

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: There are broad guidelines, I expect.

Mr ELFERINK: Per head of population, minister, we have the highest fatality rate in the country. Yet, we are allowing number plates like 'LETHAL' to be placed on fast cars. Do you believe, as a matter of policy, it is time to review the way we process these number plates?

Mr McCARTHY: I believe in road safety - absolutely.

Mr ELFERINK: And? Answering the question?

Mr McCARTHY: Could you repeat the question?

Mr ELFERINK: Do you believe that allowing number plates like 'LETHAL' to be stuck on a vehicle which looks like a very fast car - I do not know, it looked like a Holden Commodore; it could have been a V8 or a V6; it only flashed past me in traffic - I am curious as to whether the policy is being successfully employed when that sort of thing occurs?

Mr McCARTHY: You have raised a good point. I have looked into this area, and I am interested to go back to talk to the agency and look at reviewing that policy and how it operates. If you are happy ...

Mr ELFERINK: I am not trying to - can I be quite ...

Mr McCARTHY: I would like to get back to you on that.

Mr ELFERINK: I am not trying to clamp down on these personalised plates ...

Mr McCARTHY: No, I understand.

Mr ELFERINK: ... they are great gifts and all that. However, there are some that push the boundaries. There was 'FUNKME', I believe that was it. I saw it a few years ago in traffic, and I thought- eeeh, getting pretty close to the edge there. There is also '6ULDV8'. However, I believe that is no longer in circulation. I actually think that is quite funny; I do not mind that one, it is cute. It is no longer in circulation, so you have taken '6ULDV8' out of circulation. Then, you let some of these other ones go through. It strikes me as being inconsistent.

Mr TOLLNER: You have to get a hobby.

Mr ELFERINK: Levity aside, 'LETHAL' on hoons' vehicles - I will not say hoons' vehicle - poor fellow is probably a fine upstanding member of the citizenry. On a souped up car - THC4ME - wrong message, minister.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, member for Port Darwin, I am happy to review that.

Output 3.1 - Road Transport

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are at Output 3.1, Road Transport. Member for Nelson, do you have any questions to Output 3.1, Road Transport.

Mr WOOD: In relation to the commercial passenger vehicle review, minister, you wrote a letter to some of the industry people. Does the industry support the change from three licence categories to nine, and which categories will be dropping off?

Mr McCARTHY: Once again, we have some good experts in this field. I have been working closely with Mr Scott. I will confirm with Mr Hancock – Greg are you happy to ...

Mr SCOTT: At the moment we have nine licence classes, and probably the smallest number of CPVs anywhere in Australia. In terms of the consultant's report, those nine licence classes create much customer confusion in the industry. It confuses the department as well, in terms of complete transparency and how to deal with it. Basically, the recommendations have come down to three licence classes which will be compartmentalised into a minivan class, a bus class, and a chartered

class. (inaudible) market demand. We have decided it makes it very difficult to fit peculiar Northern Territory classes, such as the minibuses and the PHs and since we want them to remain in the industry - because they provide a good service – and a more diversified industry is what we are aiming for.

We are putting forward five licence classes, with some flexibility. One of the things that will come out of it is that in the bus class, we will bring in a subclass for a flexi-bus service. This will suit minibuses trying to run schedules, not on a route bus, but on a more flexible basis.

In the discussions we have had with the industry, there has been no adverse feedback to bringing those licence classes down. When the consultant ran extensive stakeholder consultations, from the outset, that was one of the things that really came out strongly; that the minister is very confused about our standing in terms of licence classes.

Mr WOOD: Who will provide the seed money for creating a long-term industry investment fund and who will manage the services it provides?

Mr McCARTHY: A good and very important question, in terms of developing the industry. We have already talked about the nature of the industry and the need for development. Greg, will you be happy to comment on that?

Mr SCOTT: That is still a question being looked at. The intention, as part of a better CPV strategy for the industry, of which they will take ownership as well, is to have centralised training funds. There needs to be an assessment of how to fund essential infrastructure, such as upgrading other ranks which do not have secure lighting and things like that. I do not have a bucket of money allocated at this stage to do so. But that is one of the recommendations the industry is very keen to get onboard with. The degree of funding between government and industry is still a question mark.

Answer to Question on Notice 10.3

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Chairman, if I could jump in, we have an answer to question 10.3, in regards to the number plate.

Mr WOOD: Minister, could you explain the gradual reduction of the capped ratio, in order to better match demand and supply of taxis?

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Chairman! I was wondering what the answer was.

Mr CHAIRMAN: It has been tabled.

Mr ELFERINK: Okay.

Mr McCARTHY: A graduated reduction means managed and staged, and it relates to responsibility. I have had a number of meetings with the Taxi Council and industry stakeholders and they are very concerned about this issue. I have taken on board their concerns. The agency, in terms of that managed, staged implementation, is looking at the old economics of supply and demand. Once again, Mr Scott could give you some more detail.

Mr SCOTT: The cap has been an issue in the industry for a long time. When the consultant first went out to road test his recommendations there was some hysteria from the industry that we were going to dump 50 taxi licences at the one time and we had to reassure the industry that is not going to happen. The supply and demand is not in balance at the moment. It is a very difficult industry to match supply and demand, because of a whole range of issues. The gradual reduction in the cap - and the Taxi Council has now accepted there is a shortfall at certain times of the year and certain times of the day -

our goal is to get some decent data from the networks and examine some key performance indicators which point to the levels of that supply and demand not being matched, and then work out flexible solutions to do that.

The gradual reduction in the cap ratio is to actually bring more people into the industry and better match the demands, so people are not waiting around at night and being hassled and assaulted.

Alice Springs taxi numbers are now down to 1 in 700. Taxi owners in Alice Springs are close to the target, but they do need more cabs. There needs to be greater flexibility around the 1 in 900 figure, and that is what the gradual reduction is about.

Mr WOOD: If the industry approaches the government and asks for more taxis, and the government agrees, it releases X number of licences, is that right? Is there an auction or are we going back to the system of buying a number plate? It costs a fortune. Are you saying the CLP is going to bring that back, member for ...

Mr GILES: Is that a question to me? Or ...

Mr WOOD: I was wondering whether you were bringing back something you got rid of, which is buying licence plates.

Mr McCARTHY: There is a system, but once again, if we can go to Greg Scott, through Mr Hancock, for a response.

Mr SCOTT: We would still, at this stage of the game, release extra licences through the balance system. The Alice Springs instance was a one-off. It was taking a flexible attitude towards that. There has been no advance from the industry in the top part of the Northern Territory to increase taxi licences, however, with the feedback we have had on the synopsis, they are now readily admitting there is a supply problem.

Whether it is releasing full-time licences - and we have discussed this about temporary licences, substitute licences or peak hour licences - those things are still being looked at. It is a question of balance in terms of supply and demand. It is very difficult to get that mix right because there are parts of the year, particularly during the dry season, and parts of the night time, particularly Friday and Saturday nights, when matching supply to demand is extremely tough. That may not have to be full permanent licences 365 days a year. There are other ways of doing it, and that is what we are investigating.

Mr WOOD: So the licences are at set prices. You are auctioning these licenses as you used to auction the registration plates. Who will administer the accreditation of CPV operators and drivers?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: The department will administer the accreditation scheme. Mr Scott, do you want to add anymore?

Mr SCOTT: Yes, thank you. The department has a CPV area which is a regulator under the CPV under the act. What this is about now is tightening some of our accreditation procedures, particularly in terms of the service side of it, and say: 'Okay, there should be X number of vehicles on the road between the peak time periods'. Those conditions are not there at the moment. It will take some changes in the legislation and regulations. That is why we have already reiterated to the group that it will be a long-term process. Some of the things we will do straight away, and we will do those. Others, such as the legislation change, to bring those things in, and we will be collecting industry-type data to look at supply and demand is going to need longer-term disclosure, the data does not exist.

Mr WOOD: Does that accreditation include the way taxis look and the way drivers look? I remember

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the days of Mr Kennett in Victoria, he said all the taxis will be yellow and drivers will wear a uniform. We have a heavy dependence on the tourism industry. Is that part of what you will be looking at, to see whether we are producing a good quality taxi and minibus industry, that it is giving people a good impression?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes. I have very positive feedback from the industry stakeholders about that. Everyone is moving together on that. It relates to the Territory, our image and industry, and how we want to put out the best work and result. Mr Scott may want to add more.

Mr SCOTT: No, there is not too much more to add to that. We can only do so much as a regulator. As I said before, many of the improvements in the industry are going to be homegrown. This has been recognised in the discussions we have had. How far you go to determining uniforms or not is another matter. Most of the drivers now, when you get into Darwin Radio Taxis, have their red shirts on. There may be uniform standards now there has been a buy-out of City Radio Taxi network; most of those people are now wearing uniforms.

Mr WOOD: Will the CPV Board, which will be restructured, develop a strategic plan for the industry?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: Yes. We see the CPV Board playing a very important role in developing the strategic plan for the industry, in conjunction with all the representatives of the industry. We will be commencing that process with the board in the next six months. Involving the industry in that process, along with the board, is a really important part of making long-term changes to the industry for the benefit of everyone in the Territory.

Mr WOOD: Is there any user representation on that board?

Mr McCARTHY: Consumer? Yes.

Mr WOOD: How many?

Mr McCARTHY: Three, I am advised. I have met with the board once, and the board now is coming to the end of its life. Under the new review, the new board will be initiated.

Mr WOOD: Your synopsis - prepared by your department - mentions the next round of consultation with the industry. Has this already occurred, and what was the outcome on licence values?

Mr McCARTHY: The synopsis initiated another round of consultations with the general public, industry, and stakeholders. There is much interest in it. Greg has done a mountain of work on this. That is why I keep throwing it to Greg.

Mr WOOD: He is not looking well now.

Mr McCARTHY: Oh, he is good.

Mr SCOTT: Yes, the second round of consultations has occurred. Nick and I met with various representative groups in Darwin, including the board. We went to Alice Springs and sat in the Chief Minister's room, from about 10.30 am to 7.30 pm, meeting with nearly everyone who drove a CPV vehicle of whatever sort in Alice Springs. We have had massive consultations.

The question is about the licence fees. At the moment it is \$16 000 for a taxi in Darwin and slightly reduced for Alice Springs. It is a very difficult question to answer because, at the moment, the licence fees have been set in terms of the buy-back, if that makes sense. We monitor that with NT Treasury, as to when that will be finished. Indications are that there is probably another two or three years to run

on it. That is modelled on the number of vehicles coming into the industry, those going out of the industry.

What the new licence fees will be after that is probably one of the most difficult questions we still have to work through. At the moment, the licence fees are, probably, if you put a surrogate around and say it gives access to the market, therefore, you have the greatest access in terms of taxis, and you pay a higher fee. There is no economic rule. We have had consultancies done to death on this, to actually determine - it is very subjective - how much premium you put on a licence for access to the market. The short answer is that we are still trying to work that one out.

Mr WOOD: Through you, minister, the higher the licence fee, there is a requirement by the driver to recover that cost and, therefore, the consumer has to, in the end, pay for that licence fee. Is there a balance between what the licence fee might be, and what effect that would have on meter fees?

Mr McCARTHY: Absolutely. That is the delicate balance in all of this work on the way forward.

Mr WOOD: Minister, just a last question on this area. Any idea how much the review cost?

Mr McCARTHY: I hand that to Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: The cost of the review, in the consultancy we engaged, which is Fivenines Consulting, is \$148 000 to the 31 May. Then there is internal staff time that goes along with that whole project. We felt it was important to have someone independent of the industry in the Territory to come in and facilitate the discussions needed to take place with all the stakeholders involved. That is where we are currently positioned.

Mr WOOD: Minister, is that consultancy still running, because you said up until 31 May.

Mr SCOTT: We have retained the services of Robert Eames to assist with facilitating – for want of a better word - a workshop, to try to get people in a room to boost the skills, and the different types of people to go on the CPV Board. That is about it. He has one small remaining task to do, and that will be the end of it.

The implementation of the plan was discussed with Robert, who was up here two weeks ago and had a day-long session with all involved. The actual implementation, documentation, and plan, is being done in-house. There is a ministerial on its way to the minister with the practical implementation plan for the recommendations made.

Mr GILES: Member for Nelson, do you mind if I ask a question?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you have a last one?

Mr WOOD: I have a question or questions on MVR and, then, I am finished.

Mr CHAIRMAN: This is about the subject of discussion.

Mr GILES: Do you think it is hypocritical when the Chief Minister talks about buying local, that you go and spend that much money on an interstate consultant? Will you table the report so we can look at it? In the interests of what you were talking about before - the exciting component of bipartisanship - if you want us to come on board with this CPV, it is very important for us to have a look at the report so we know exactly what is in there.

Mr McCARTHY: A response to the first part of the question is, no. When I did my research into this, when you go looking for good results, you go looking for experts and, when experts put their hands up, you acknowledge that. This ...

Mr GILES: There were no experts in the Territory who could have done it?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Braitling, the minister has the call.

Mr McCARTHY: ... and this particular review ticked all the boxes. We have a great result. I do not have it with me. It is an agency document, and the synopsis was my work to get it out to the public.

Mr GILES: Minister, the \$150 000 or \$176 000, or whatever it was to the Melbourne-based consultant, was a report paid for by Territory taxpayer's dollars, reviewing the commercial passenger vehicle industry. I have spoken positively about the CPV and the work being undertaken. Why will you not table the report?

Is the minister going to answer the question, Mr Chairman?

Mr CHAIRMAN: The minister is allowed to seek advice.

Mr McCARTHY: There is a commercial-in-confidence issue. If I could get back to you on that, I need to get some more advice in relation to the contract, and then releasing that.

Mr TOLLNER: Minister, it would be great to have that report tabled. As a minimum, could you make that report available to the Public Accounts Committee?

Mr McCARTHY: I would really like to get some more advice around these issues of commercial-in-confidence, but sure, it could be released to the Public Accounts Committee. Once again, I do not have it with me, it is an extensive report. But I can get back to you, if you are happy with that.

Mr TOLLNER: Yes, it would be preferable if it could be tabled in a public way, but if that is not possible, because of commercial-in-confidence reasons, at least make it available to the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, thank you.

Mr GILES: And the shadow.

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Fong Lim, shadow.

Mr Tollner: No, no.

Mr GILES: I am happy to move on to 3.2.

Members interjecting.

Mr CHAIRMAN: To clarify, the member for Nelson still has questions for Output 3.1. We are going to take a five minute break, and when we return, we will return to the member for Nelson and output 3.1.

The committee suspended.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We have a quorum, minister, so we will start again. We were at Output 3.1 and the member for Nelson, but prior to the member for Nelson asking his first question, I want to make an announcement to the public gallery that it is the member for Nhulunbuy's birthday today, and we appreciate her spending it with us. The member for Nelson has the call.

Mr WOOD: Minister, a priority target, in your 2008-09 Annual Report, was to continue research and investigate opportunities to improve MVR customer service. What did this research and investigation identify and what has been developed to ease the line out of the doors in some MVR offices? You have reduced the opening times of the Alice Springs MVR office, due to low numbers attending, so what has your review found?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: Member for Nelson, we have undertaken a range of initiatives for MVR in the 2008-09 financial year. We have had office refits at both Casuarina and Palmerston to help improve the waiting area and the presentation of the office. The two significant activities that will take place in both those will be the introduction of the queue flow queuing system, where by using a process of being able to have the customers identify what sort of transaction they wish to do when they come into the MVR office, we can then direct them to specific counters within the office. The more complex ones can go to the more experienced staff on a particular counter, versus the others that are not as complex and can be dealt with more quickly. We believe the queue flow system, in particular, will improve services. It is due to be implemented very shortly. We are due to see one next week - Casuarina yesterday and Palmerston very shortly.

That is a major improvement, we believe, in being able to offer an improved and quicker service in those two offices. We have queue flow going into Goyder Road. We have done some minor refurbishment at the Goyder Road office to improve the appearance and the ability to have people waiting to access services.

At the call centre, the average wait time for someone phoning into MVR is six minutes. On occasion, I do hear of individual circumstances where it can be longer than six minutes, and we are trying to ensure we reduce those long periods – and they often happen at particular times of the day when it is very busy. We are trying to manage that, as well.

In terms of the Alice Springs office, I will ask Mr Papandonakis if he could comment, or Mr Renshaw, who is our Executive Director based in Alice Springs, if he might light to talk briefly about the situation in Alice Springs.

Mr RENSHAW: I have the privilege of representing the government in Alice Springs on the first level of the Greatorex Building. If I stand up in my office I can see the activities of the MVR operation within a few metres of where I sit. I have a very concrete understanding of the services delivered through the Greatorex Building.

From 1997, the government had an informal arrangement with Power and Water for the MVR services to be delivered in a collaborative manner, and to support each other in the delivery of that service. As Power and Water moved towards incorporation in 2004, Power and Water moved away from the whole-of-government accounting system. This caused the MVR operation in Greatorex to operate independently of Power and Water, but still from the same shopfront.

Earlier this year, Power and Water gave notice to the government that it was moving out of the Greatorex Building, and established an independent operation in the Alice Plaza in Alice Springs. That caused the department, and MVR, in particular, to look at its ongoing operations. In all of those considerations and, in reaching determination to relocate the service to the first level of the Greatorex Building, the most important considerations were the occupational health and safety and the risk management controls of the Northern Territory government employees. Any alternative, other than to relocate them to the first level, would have exposed them to the extremes of isolated workers, and put them at the peril and risk of exposure as an isolated worker. As a consequence, to ensure the government, and the department, maintained the highest level of occupational health and safety, and complied with those standards, and also to deliver the most effective risk management controls, it was determined to provide a temporary service on the first level of the Greatorex Building.

I can also advise the refurbishment of the Greatorex Building is about to commence, and we anticipate a whole-of-government service delivery mechanism will continue on the first floor but,

through the plans and land services, within a couple of months.

Mr McCARTHY: This is a great opportunity to table this. In this job, you are regularly at the call of the public, as you know. I received an e-mail this week from a person who attended Goyder Road MVR. They said they had three transactions – a boat trailer registration renewal, a box trailer registration renewal, and a licence renewal. They were fifth in the line when they entered the building. It took 15 minutes. They were 100% satisfied with the service they received and e-mailed me to tell me that. That response came directly to me. I was honoured. Nick and the staff should know about that.

Mr WOOD: I mentioned Palmerston. You do not want to go to Palmerston on Friday. Has the government considered providing services like the MVR in the rural area? The rural area misses out, when it comes to services. People say you can go to Palmerston. If you live at Humpty Doo, it is nearly a half-hour trip to Palmerston. There are some government facilities at Humpty Doo. There is the Police and Fire Station facility. Has your department looked at putting an MVR office, either shared with an existing government facility or with a local business in the area? That would only offer a limited range of services, especially for renewal and that type of thing. Have they looked at putting a government office or an MVR out in the rural area somewhere?

Mr McCARTHY: One of the bodies of work that I am involved in is looking at the Territory regionally, and the supply of those services into regional and remote areas. It reflects an area that we need to look at. I am particularly interested in looking at it. For an agency perspective, I ask Mr Hancock to respond.

Mr HANCOCK: There has not been a great deal of work done on that just yet. However, as the population does increase in the rural areas, there is going to be a need to examine that kind of option. I am quite comfortable for the department to do that. The other aspect of that is the range of services that can be done over the phone or the internet as well, which is a response to people who find coming in to one of the MVR offices difficult.

In the future, yes, I would envisage we would be looking at co-location, for example with another government agency or whatever combination is best for the rural area.

Mr WOOD: Thank you Mr Chair.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 3.1.

Output 3.2 – Transport Policy and Planning

Mr CHAIRMAN: We move on to Output 3.2, Transport Policy and Planning.

Mr GILES: Minister, can you outline what modelling for increased traffic flows around Bellamack and other suburbs in Palmerston, Johnston, Zuccoli, and Mitchell have been undertaken as a planning exercise for the future release of land?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock, would you be happy to respond?

Mr HANCOCK: Potentially that is a question for the Minister for Planning and Lands. I can indicate - and Mr Wanka may also have some additional information - that traffic management plans, the input of our road networks team into the process of the Bellamack subdivision has been quite extensive. Mr Wanka may like to add to that.

Mr WANKA: In terms of Palmerston, we have a very good planned arterial road network, which we have provided with corridors for any future upgrading work that may come from the Bellamack suburb. In terms of Bellamack, traffic management issues are considered as part of the overall assessment of that subdivisional development. We are well placed in terms of infrastructure planning for that. That has been one of the benefits of the sustainability strategic planning and policy. We work in closely with our land use, land planning people, in terms of the overall traffic systems and the land uses on

those subdivisions.

Mr GILES: Minister, can you please detail to me what the expected increased traffic flows are in and around Palmerston? Where the bus stops will go? Can you detail, in response to concerns people may have about the size of Palmerston streets and traffic and public transport flows, from a policy planning context?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: There are a number of questions, member for Braitling. The one I would like most immediately to respond to is to point out the design of roads within the subdivisions are all subject to the requirements of the Palmerston City Council and relevant Australian design standards. In terms of traffic flows and traffic numbers, I will hand over to Mr Wanka for further information.

Mr WANKA: I do not have any specific numbers with me, but in terms of planning roads and establishing the geometrics of those roads, we have worked with the public transport people in determining where the routes are. As part of the subdivisional development, where there are headworks going in for roadworks, we plan where the bus stops are going and they will be provided, as the extensions to the bus routes occur. The private developers for the subdivisions are determining bus stops and providing bus shelters as the subdivisions come on line.

Mr GILES: Minister, what are you doing to address some of the concerns people have in Palmerston about appropriate access to public transport?

Mr McCARTHY: Good question, member for Braitling. In terms of planning, or in terms of ...?

Mr GILES: In terms of planning.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Richard Hancock may want to ...

Mr WOOD: Mr Chairman, a point of order! Are we dealing with Public Transport? Should that go under that section?

Mr CHAIRMAN: I understand what you are saying, member for Nelson. This is the Transport Policy and Planning area. I do believe the member for Braitling has asked it from a planning point of view about a public transport provision.

Mr HANCOCK: We are aware of some of the concerns in the Palmerston area in terms of availability of bus services, for example, and we have regular contact with Palmerston City Council about those issues, as well.

In terms of the overall planning for that, as new suburbs come on line in Palmerston, there has been a range of working structures such as project control groups consisting of representatives from Palmerston City Council. As we move through the processes of Johnson, Bellamack and Zuccoli in the near term; those types of processes enable those issues to come to the table. We are looking at, on an ongoing basis, the public service bus network to see where the pressure points are and where we may need to tweak services over time, to take into account emerging needs in the community. That is an ongoing process. The critical thing I want to stress to the committee is the planning for the new suburbs in Palmerston is all inclusive, and does definitely take into account the public transport requirements emerging in that area and the rural areas as well. That is something we are very conscious of.

Mr GILES: Is there any planning in stage for potentially setting up a taxi hub in Palmerston?

Mr McCARTHY: I am not sure what you mean by taxi hub.

Mr GILES: Taxis are generally based in Darwin. Has there been any planning work done to set up Palmerston as a base for taxis?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: I am not aware of that. In part, that would be a commercial decision by an operator as to where their base is located. That is the extent to which I would be aware of that; I do not know if any of the other senior staff are aware; I am not.

Mr WANKA: I cannot add more to what Richard said. It is an industry issue. They can operate out of taxi ranks and, in terms of setting up a private sector stay-over, that is an issue for industry.

Mr GILES: I will ask it differently. It is a planning aspect. Has the government been working with industry to try and get a taxi base out at Palmerston, so Palmerston residents are better serviced by the taxi industry, as opposed to the current services of the Palmerston minibuses?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the commercial passenger vehicle review, there is a lot of information. Mr Scott, if you would like to respond.

Mr SCOTT: This is an industry where you have to rely extensively on anecdotal evidence. This is the source we have for understanding that taxis were reluctant to go out to Palmerston for many reasons, probably return fares and things like that. However, in the feedback sessions we have been having on the synopsis, the Palmerston minibus operators notice far more encroachment now into their ranks at the Palmerston shopping centre by taxis. It is very much industry driven. It depends on how hungry you are in the industry to get fares. Taxis seem to be going out to that area now and servicing it a more. In terms of a company, as Ernie and Richard have said, it would be a commercial decision for someone to start another network and base themselves in the rural area.

Mr GILES: There is the potential of a nuclear waste repository being established in the Northern Territory, more than likely Muckaty Station. BHP Billiton has announced it is considering bringing material on the railway line from Olympic Dam. There was a report done in 2007 on the transport of hazardous materials, a report that has not been released as yet. I will be happy if you could answer that part of it. What is the Territory government doing in terms of planning for the potential transport of those hazardous materials in both examples? Does it have contingency plans for potential spills? Does it have policies covering the transit and loading of any hazardous materials coming through the Territory? When did you table that 2007 report which investigated the transport of hazardous materials?

Mr McCARTHY: To answer the first and last part of that, the report does not exist within my agency. I can give you plenty of details on rail safety. We have very strict guidelines and policy around that. Mr Hancock may choose to respond, and have other members respond to our rail safe initiatives.

Mr WOOD: Can I just ask, is this a transport safety issue? We already had the trains.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Output 3.3.

Mr McCARTHY: It was framed under planning, which was very interesting.

Mr WOOD: But we already carry things on the train, like uranium.

Mr CHAIRMAN: It is just as well you planned for it, member for Nelson. I have allowed a degree of leniency. At this stage, I will allow the question. I will then see where we go from there. We have many questions and answers, member for Nelson. At this stage, I am allowing the question and the answer, based off that, any further questions we will make a call about whether we are in the right

output or not. At this stage, I am going to allow the question from the member of Braitling. You have the call, minister.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. As far as the response goes, we are going to respond around national rail safe initiatives.

Mr HANCOCK: It would be best if I asked Mr Alex Rae, Director Transport Safety, to come to the table and give a brief overview of rail safety.

Mr RAE: In relation to the question, the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail is an act that belongs with the Work Health Authority. We deal with rail safety of the operator through the accreditation system. What goes on in the rail is not part of our portfolio.

Mr CHAIRMAN: And we had that output in the Tuesday session, WorkSafe, Output 6.1, Regulation of Occupational Health and Safety, is where it would sit.

Mr GILES: Minister, would it be incorrect for me to say there has been no planning done by the Department of Transport in relation to the transport of hazardous materials going to Muckaty Station, or going to a potential nuclear waste repository?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the responses we have received, that would be a question for another agency. In terms of rail safety, I have an agency representative at the table now, and we can talk about rail safety. I add that I checked the other day and I believe my national rail safe ticket is still current.

Mr GILES: A point of order, Mr Chairman. Just for a clarification of the question, I am not in particular talking about rail, it is a planning question.

Mr McCARTHY: So, if you could reframe that in terms of a planning question.

Mr WOOD: There are national guidelines for transport of hazardous waste, including nuclear materials.

Mr GILES: I am aware of that, member for Nelson. But surely the Northern Territory government has done some planning about that and how it might respond in terms emergency services and all that relating to transport.

Mr WOOD: Well, there has to be an EIS before any of this ever happens.

Mr GILES: You are forgetting he is from Alice Springs. Maybe you and I should be asking the questions.

Mr WOOD: I know that, but there may be a policy statement.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I remind members of Standing Order 51, No Interruptions:

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.

I believe the minister has asked the member for Braitling for a clarification of the question regarding the transport of hazardous materials. Member for Braitling.

Mr GILES: I can repeat the question. Normally, you tell me how good a question it is. I will ask it

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again and you can provide that running commentary. What planning has the Transport department done in regard to the potential transport of hazardous materials in the Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: That is a good question now.

Mr GILES: Thank you very much.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you for rewording that.

Mr GILES: I would be very interested if you participated as a leader, rather than a commentator.

Mr McCARTHY: That is not so good. I will take that on board as well. If that is the level you want to stoop to, then, by all means. Once again, if you ever get to sit in this chair, you will realise that the public servants who do all this work are very valuable people and, therefore ...

Mr GILES: We are talking about you, not the public servants.

Mr McCARTHY: ... I sit here as a very honoured team member. I sit here to give the Estimates Committee the best information it deserves. In relation to planning for the transport of hazardous waste - is the way I would have framed that question - I will refer to the CEO, Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: As we have already indicated, this is the responsibility of another agency. However, I am advised the department did have input into the report you have referenced. I will ask Mr Wanka or Mr Scott to make a couple of brief comments about that.

Mr WANKA: In the transport of dangerous goods on road networks, there are regulations and standard requirements operators have to adhere to. These are set down by the Australian Dangerous Goods Code. Any operations or haulage of dangerous products on the road network has to adhere to those requirements.

Mr GILES: In the interest of time, Mr Chairman, I will not be asking any more questions. I did want to find out more about transporting hazardous materials, but I will not be asking any more questions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Nelson, do you have questions to Output 3.2, Transport Policy and Planning?

Mr WOOD: Minister, what is the travel demand management project in the Darwin region implemented, as noted in 2007-08 annual report?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr SCOTT: The travel demand management has been a national-type project whereby we go down to the grassroots into the workplaces, and determine those who are marginal in their decisions regarding travel to and from work. You get the swingers, if you like, who want to do something different. This facilitates them meeting, talking about car pooling, sharing facilities for bikes, and things like that. It is very big in Western Australia. The federal government is starting to reduce its expenditure into it because there is not a huge amount of gain. It is a very slow process, as it is with changing people's behaviour patterns in the journey to work.

We received some seed funding from the Commonwealth under one of its greenhouse gas initiatives, and we run a very small pilot project. We limited it to three government departments: DPI, Health, and NRETAS, to see how it would work and manage it. That ran for about 12 months. We got some feedback but we have not had the resources to go chasing it. They were regarded as green group work plans. It was very much up to the people in the organisations. The whole program was to facilitate that and get participants talking to each other.

People living in Palmerston were very interested in car sharing, more with the people located in the CBD. It came down to end-of-trip facilities, somewhere you can secure your bike, with showers and stuff like that. We have not progressed that any further. Western Australia is probably the leader in it. It is very much an internal government thing to keep driving, as the Commonwealth is now reducing the funding for it.

Mr WOOD: Minister, would you say it is more about information than having any physical change on the ground, at this stage?

Mr McCARTHY: I believe the information informs the physical changes ...

Mr WOOD: I am not sure anything has happened.

Mr McCARTHY: One of the aspects I have been looking at is bike racks on buses, for instance ...

Mr WOOD: I thought you were going to say bicycle paths for the rural area. That might help.

Mr McCARTHY: I can assure you, I am definitely looking at that, and it crosses over in to another portfolio. There is much work that I am interested in doing. Once again, in terms of the physical nature of that question, Mr Scott would you care to reply?

Mr SCOTT: It is very much up to the individuals to drive it themselves. You can only put so much information in place. Everyone knows it is very difficult to get away from the flexibility of a private vehicle. Car sharing works until such time as you have to drop the kids off here and I have to pick this up and this up. It is very difficult to try to get some consistency in that. It is very much at the grassroots level in small units to be able to do that. There is an information kit and getting people in contact with each other. It ran for 12 months and it has not been rejuvenated. We do have plans to go back and talk to the people who expressed interest, to see how far it went and if there are car poolings still in place. That has not happened yet.

Mr WOOD: This is in relation to heavy road haulage from the Darwin rural area to town. We are getting vehicles on the Arnhem Highway loaded with rocks that are nearly four trailers long. Their first trailer is fixed and then they have three off that. There are also cattle trucks. All these trucks can travel at 100 km/h, on fairly busy roads in the rural area, heading in to town.

Is there any move to restrict the maximum speed limit these trucks can travel in these areas? There were two accidents, a couple of years ago, around the Humpty Doo Hotel area, where two trucks lost their loads of rocks. If someone had been hit by them there would have been some fatalities. Has the government considered reducing the speed limit of heavy haulage vehicles in the Darwin rural area?

Mr McCARTHY: I will get some great advice for you.

Mr WANKA: At this stage, we have not given any consideration to reducing the speed limit on heavy vehicles. We have a road train route planned for the outer Darwin area, where we nominate the particular road train ...

Mr WOOD: You got rid of that sign, Mr Wanka. The rural area will do.

Mr WANKA: That is ageing now. We intend reviewing and updating those road train routes. But at this stage, as far as I am aware, there is no move to reduce the speed limit on those vehicles.

Mr WOOD: Minister, would you at least consider that? I do not know if you have some figures, but I have been told for one of those trucks to pull up - that is the big trucks with boulders on them - requires a fairly long road. When you are travelling amongst many small vehicles, I wonder whether

that mix is safe, especially at speeds of 100 km/h.

Mr McCARTHY: I am willing to look at this and I am sure we will get some people around to brief me.

Mr WOOD: That is the feedback I am receiving. The industry would have to be involved, as well. One other matter, one raised in a letter in the paper today, and raised with me since the fatal accident recently, is that in many places in Australia you cannot take a triple in to a built up area. Has there ever been consideration about a system, where once you get within a certain distance, close to a main centre like Darwin, you would have to break your load? Or will the road Mr Wanka spoke about, mean you would not have to do that? We have to get to the port somehow. I do not know how that would work. Has there been some consideration of breaking the trucks up?

Mr WANKA: There has been no consideration given to breaking down road trains. Berrimah Road is a key industrial area. The Australian government and our government are making sure we keep the transport industry efficient. We need to be keeping those key transport routes open for these high productivity vehicles.

Mr WOOD: Hopefully, Tiger Brennan will take some of those issues off with the changeover, because they will be avoiding the 11 Mile area.

Mr WANKA: That is the benefit of the Tiger Brennan Drive project, which will give a much freer and direct route to the port and industrial areas.

Mr WOOD: In 2007-08 you investigated the use of alternative fuels in public transport, was there an outcome from that investigation? I am hoping to go to Perth early next month, to go to Wesfarmers LNG distribution point where they supply LNG to trucks. Is the government considering - with all the LNG to start coming in to Darwin - running our heavy vehicles off this fuel?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: Yes, we have analysed using bio diesel, for example, in the bus fleet. That was made more difficult when, I believe, the existing bio diesel distributor in Darwin went into receivership, or went into administration at one point. That has added some additional challenge. In terms of environmentally sustainability practices with our bus network, the buses we are purchasing are now at the highest possible environmental standards. We are also making sure our vehicles are maintained in good fashion so they do not become inefficient when they are on the road. We will continue to look at things like LNG, definitely. That is an ongoing process within the department. We are very conscious of this and we want to introduce whatever environmental sustainable practices we can in the bus network.

Mr WOOD: Those are all the questions I have.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Nelson. That concludes consideration of Output 3.2, Transport Policy and Planning.

Output 3.3 – Transport Safety

Mr CHAIRMAN: We now move on to Output 3.3, Transport Safety. Any questions?

Mr TOLLNER: Minister, can you outline what is happening with road works at the Ludmilla School?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: I can give you an update on traffic amelioration works at Ludmilla School, designed for the circulating road within the school grounds to the exit north of the Ludmilla pedestrian crossing and also a protection fence along Bagot Road from Wells Street to Nitmiluk Drive overpass, and was

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completed in April of this year. The tender for the circulating road was advertised in May, works for the circulating road are expected to be completed late this month or early July. The tender for the protection fence was advertised this month and we expect the work for that to be completed in August.

Mr TOLLNER: When you say protection fence, you mean the barrier between the footpath and the road?

Mr HANCOCK: I have it described here as the protection fence. I am assuming we are talking about the same thing.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you have questions for Output 3.3 – Transport Safety?

Mr WOOD: Minister, how many staff work in the Marine Transport Safety Unit?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Rae.

Mr RAE: In Marine Safety, we have 25 full-time in transport safety; in Marine we have five.

Mr WOOD: Where are they based?

Mr RAE: In Darwin.

Mr WOOD: Are they based on a boat or somewhere, or are they all sort of ...

Mr RAE: They are in our office in Energy House.

Mr WOOD: Their role is about marine pollution, is that their main job?

Mr RAE: Marine pollution is one of the roles the department has, in addition to marine survey of vessels.

Mr WOOD: In relation to the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee putting out a plan, would they have had input into that plan?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Rae.

Mr RAE: We have not had input from that group into the Marine Pollution Plan. The Marine Pollution Coordination Plan is developed through DPI. We have a Marine Pollution Coordination Committee, which involves a number of stakeholders, including ConocoPhillips, Darwin Port Authority, the environment people and our departmental staff.

Mr WOOD: When there is a spill, are you involved in that spill, or other departments as well?

Mr RAE: Nationally and in the Territory, each state marine authority is the response agency for all spills.

Mr WOOD: So you are the ...

Mr RAE: The Department of Planning and Infrastructure is the response agency.

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: There is a national plan for oil spill response run by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, AMSA. The jurisdiction is divided at a three nautical mile limit. AMSA is responsible

for anything seaward of the three nautical mile limit. DPI and Marine Safety is the response agency for anything within three nautical miles. Within the Darwin Port, the Darwin Port Corporation is the response agency. There are three tiers of response depending on the severity of the pollution incident. For example, with the incident in Queensland recently, the national response team was immediately brought together and went to Queensland's assistance to deal with that spill. The Northern Territory provided a number of staff to assist in that clean up. It happens that way. Smaller, very small and localised oil spills are dealt with by, for example, the Port Corporation, anything larger, we get involved. With the larger ones, AMSA comes into it.

Mr WOOD: Where do you keep all your equipment? Have you a boat with oil pollution mechanisms?

Mr PAPANDONAKIS: There is national response equipment at the Darwin Port Corporation, including buoys and booms.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, that is all in that area.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That concludes consideration of Output 3.3.

Output 3.4 – Public Transport

Mr CHAIRMAN: We move to Output 3.4, Public Transport. Are there any questions?

Mr WOOD: Can you give us any details of the improved bus service that is going to happen in the rural area, especially in relation to the park/drive system? When can we expect that to happen, and will we get extra bus services?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes. The park and ride, or the kiss and ride, I have read ...

Mr WOOD: Not at the schools.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK: There is \$1m in the 2009-10 for three park-and-ride facilities. As the minister has just indicated, Noonamah, Coolalinga, and Humpty Doo are the locations at this point. We are going through a range of studies to determine the best locations in each of those areas, and to identify what the infrastructure costs will be. They are planned to be completed by June 2010. In the interim period, we will be looking at the rural bus timetables to ensure they integrate effectively with the new park-and-ride facilities as they come on over that period of time. I am happy to give you a briefing in more detail on that at any time.

Mr WOOD: Was any consideration given to one at Howard Springs. I am not saying in Howard Springs, where the village is, but up near the highway, for instance, opposite the transfer station. Was there any consideration to having a parking area for the Howard Springs community?

Mr McCARTHY: That is an area I have been looking at. In terms of locations - and I remember your suggestion from a previous sittings in parliament - I have looked at these. They are great initiatives. All I have said to the department is that I am keen to look at them at central locations that have other opportunities in terms of safety, security, and so forth. However, I am willing to look at that. We can give you some details of the others that are on the roll-out. Mr Hancock?

Mr HANCOCK: Member for Nelson, that has not been on our list of sites just at the moment, but I ...

Mr WOOD: In relation to security, because if they are going to work, you are going to have to convince people they can leave their BMW there. They are going to need to be convinced their car is going to be okay when they come back. What sort of security arrangements will be in place?

Mr McCARTHY: The design is good, the concept is great and, now, we want to maximise the result. That is a very good question, and Mr Wanka will reply.

Mr WANKA: The sites we selected at Humpty Doo, Coolalinga, and Noonamah, have people around them. They are higher profile areas, compared to the Cox Peninsula Road site, which is more isolated. It is identified more as a kiss-and-ride rather than a park-and-ride; there will be safety issues.

However, in terms of the security at those locations, it is something we have to take on board and consider, as we progress down the path of putting these park-and-rides in place.

Mr WOOD: Is there a possibility of putting in mobile CCTV cameras? Some measure that would give people a feeling of security so, if their car was damaged, at least there was a chance of finding the culprits?

Mr McCARTHY: I would be happy to talk to the police about that.

Mr WOOD: If you are going to introduce a park-and-ride system - which is great - will you support it with an advertising campaign? If you cannot convince people to leave their cars there, and that there is an advantage in taking public transport, then it will not succeed. You have to get around that attitude mentioned earlier where people compare the freedom of the car compared to the savings in cost by using public transport. Would there be a good public advertising campaign before this comes into being?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Nelson, a great suggestion. Looking back, our department has conducted some very effective communication campaigns. I believe we do that well, particularly around the road safety area. You are right; that is a very important aspect of a new initiative. The challenge for us to change people's behaviour, which you have touched on.

Mr WOOD: I can get hold of a chicken suit, minister, and I could catch a bus to Darwin. I will not charge you anything, but I would like to promote it. It is not much good to me with my office in Howard Springs, but I believe it is worth promoting.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank member for Nelson. That concludes consideration of Output 3.4.

Non-Output Specific Budget Questions

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there any Non Output Specific Budget Questions?

Members: Pass.

Answer to Question on Notice 10.1

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Chair, I have an answer to a question on notice 10.1. I would like to table that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: You have already tabled that one.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you to the committee. Thank you to everyone for coming.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will commence the process again. If you would introduce the officials accompanying you and, if you have any opening remarks, please make them.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Chairman, I would like to introduce those at the table with me, the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Justice, Mr Greg Shanahan; the Deputy Chief Executive, Policy Coordination, Ms Elizabeth Morris; Deputy Chief Executive, Business Strategy and Performance, Ms Anne Bradford; and Mr Ken Middlebrook, Executive Director, Correctional Services. I will be joined at the table by other departmental officers as appropriate as we move through appropriations for the relevant output group.

The Department of Justice reports to three ministers. Its work with me, as Minister for Correctional Services, is vital to providing a safe, secure, and humane correctional service, both in custody and in the community which supports strategies to reduce re-offending. This is a new era for Correctional Services, which sees a renewed focus on prisoner education and rehabilitation, and includes the commencement of work on the new Doug Owston Correctional Facility and the establishment of a regional prisoner work camp in the Barkly region.

I am responsible for the administration of the Correctional Services Output Group, and as outlined by minister Lawrie, on Tuesday, I will be answering questions relating to the operational aspects of that output. I look forward to answering any questions the committee may have with regard to this year's appropriation and, when necessary, Mr Shanahan and his team will be able to assist in providing further information.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, minister. Are there any questions to the opening statement? No questions.

OUTPUT GROUP 3.0 – CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Output 3.1 – Custodial Services

Mr CHAIRMAN: We move on to Output Group 3.0, Correctional Services, Output 3.1, Custodial Services. Are there any questions?

Ms CARNEY: Minister, we have not very long to get through this important area. I would be most grateful, since I will be trying my best to ask very specific questions, if you would be good enough to give me specific answers. If you do not know, say you do not know.

First, in relation to the new gaol, has there been any consultation between the government and the Litchfield Shire Council or the residents who live in the area of the Litchfield Shire Council?

Mr McCARTHY: In my opening remarks there will be issues which relate particularly to the project of the prison. But that question is one for the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

Ms CARNEY: Do I take it from your answer that you are unwilling to answer any questions in relation to the placement, construction or any matters relating to the new correctional facility?

Mr McCARTHY: If I could do a quick summary: Treasury will be handling all the finances, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure will be handling the project and construction and, as Minister for Correctional Services, my position is the operational capacity of the new correctional facility.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, you are more than happy to put your face on numerous media releases about the new corrections facility. There is one on 3 May which says, and I quote: 'Minister for Correctional Services, Gerry McCarthy, today announced the headworks funding for the new 1000 bed correctional facility.' You are more than happy to put your face on media releases, why do you not, on the basis of your answer, include in your media releases that you are not going to answer any questions in relation to it?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Araluen, that is a good point and I will mention it to my media advisor. However, in terms of releasing media to the Northern Territory community, I am very keen to keep

that communication line open and, in terms of the operational capacity of this facility and that new era in corrections that we talk about, I like to get that information out.

Ms CARNEY: So you are not going to ask any questions at Estimates about the new correctional facility? You remember, I assume, the minister for Planning suggested we ask you questions about the new correctional facility?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the operational capacity, which reflects my ministry, yes, please, I welcome questions.

Ms CARNEY: I note your position with great interest. Does it follow that you are unwilling to answer questions with respect to the awarding of the tender, recently, for the headworks?

Mr McCARTHY: Once again, the tender process is part of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. I am looking forward to the operational nature of my portfolio and the great vision we have for rehabilitation, education and reducing the rates of re-offending.

Ms CARNEY: Do you know who the successful tenderer was, minister, in relation to, and I quote: 'the provision of project leader to coordinate and advise on design and construction for the proposed Doug Owston Correctional Facility'?

Mr McCARTHY: I am not sure, if you could repeat that please.

Ms CARNEY: Did you know who the successful tenderer was in relation to the tender, quote: 'the provision of project leader to coordinate and advise on design and construction for the proposed Doug Owston Correctional Facility'?

Mr McCARTHY: Once again, Treasury are managing that project, and my work is in terms of getting the operational perspectives.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, minister, let us see if you know anything about prisoner numbers. You would be aware that ABS statistics issued yesterday showed a 23% increase over the year in prisoner numbers in the Northern Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: Prisoner numbers yes, and do you have a direct question in relation to that, member for Araluen?

Ms CARNEY: You answered it, thank you. My question was: are you aware? And you said yes, and so I am about to move to another question.

Minister, on the basis of those figures, in the last 12 months, the prison population in the Territory has increased by 209; given that our two gaols are bursting at the seams, where are you going to house the hundreds of extra prisoners likely to be incarcerated during the next 12 months?

Mr McCARTHY: We have talked about prison numbers, and now we will talk about operational procedures within the Correctional Services Department. I would like Mr Ken Middlebrook to respond to that.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We are currently building 240 beds; 100 beds at Alice Springs correctional centre, and 140 beds in Darwin. The first of those beds will come online in about mid-July, so the 140 beds coming online in July will give us a capacity at Darwin prison of around 600. It will increase the capacity of Alice Springs to 500.

Ms CARNEY: Is that by the end of July as well?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: The Alice Springs prison capacity will be by June 2010.

Ms CARNEY: June 2010. In any event, even on those figures, you are still going to pull up short, are you not?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We have the 24 beds on the work camp in the Barkly, which will also assist. There are capacities at both the Darwin and Alice Springs prisons to accommodate those numbers. What we are saying is the additional 240 beds we are putting online will help us manage the prisoner population until the new prison is built.

Ms CARNEY: Do I understand from your answer that you have will have, by the end of July, 600 beds in Darwin and 500 beds in Alice Springs, or is that per head prisoner population, beds or per prisoner?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: That is beds, but the beds in Alice Springs ...

Ms CARNEY: Of course it is, sorry, what a stupid question, my apologies. Because they all have to sleep somewhere, correct?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: I would just clarify the beds, the 500 beds in Alice Springs prison, as a design capacity, will not be complete until June 2010.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Well, 600 plus 500 is 1100. As I understand it, the tender documents for the new prison at Weddell indicate that Stage 1 will open in 2012 with 800 prison beds. When do you anticipate closing down Berrimah?

Mr McCARTHY: The transfer of that from Berrimah to the new correctional facility will be a staged and managed approach. In terms of a direct answer to when, I refer that to Mr Middlebrook.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: The first stage of the new prison, 800 beds, we would move the bulk of the older parts and the more secure parts of Berrimah prison across to the new prisons. It will depend on the prison population at that time. It would be of benefit to us if, in fact, the entire prison of 1000 beds was made available, but we consider we can manage that, and that the bulk of Berrimah ...

Mr SHANAHAN: Can I correct that? The decision has already been made to go straight to 1000.

Ms CARNEY: At the new gaol?

Mr SHANAHAN: At the new gaol, yes. The original plan was 800 initially, and then another 200.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Shanahan.

Ms CARNEY: When was that decision made?

Mr McCARTHY: Through the minister, when was that decision made? If I can ask ...

Ms CARNEY: You do not know, minister? You do not know, after issuing all of your media releases and staring down the barrel of television cameras, you do not know when the decision was made in your department to increase capacity of the new gaol in the Top End?

Mr McCARTHY: That was a good jump, member for Araluen, but what I was saying, and if I could start by saying that I am honoured to be in front a great department of people ...

Ms CARNEY: Do not patronize me. You are making an idiot of yourself.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Standing order 51, member for Araluen.

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman! The minister has the floor, and I understand he is able to finish without interruption of any member.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I would just like to remind members of Standing Order 51, No interruption:

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, I would ask you to let the minister start and finish his remarks.

Mr McCARTHY: As the Minister for Correctional Services, as the minister reporting to the Estimates Committee, I am honoured to front the Department of Correctional Services. I draw on the experts for all sorts of answers and responses. That is my style. If the committee takes offence to that, then that can be tabled through the Chair. In relation to my comment, where it was interjected that: 'I do not know', we were talking about a decision that was made. I was working towards the answer. I was going to call departmental representatives to answer that. Member for Araluen, the decision was made ...

Ms CARNEY: I asked: when was the decision made?

Mr McCARTHY: The decision was made in December and it is a 1000-bed correctional facility.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I remind members of Standing Order 51.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you for answering that question. Let us see if we can try another one, shall we? Minister, current projections, particularly based on the ABS statistics released yesterday, indicate that, if the current rate continues, there will be about 1700 prisoners in custody by 2012. The capacity of Weddell and Alice Springs will be however – even with the extra 200 – would be about 1500. What do you propose to do about what is already regarded as the shortfall of the new Correctional facility in Darwin?

Mr McCARTHY: The first response I make is that the pilot of the prisoner work camp in the Barkly as a way forward is a good alternative, as opposed to a solid mass in the new Correctional facility. I have also been doing much work and exploration in community corrections pathways. We are looking at all our options to reduce prison numbers overall. To have offenders directed down the community corrections pathway would be a great result.

I am doing much in looking at the prisoner work camp pilot and how we can expand that. In addition, I am studying the community corrections pathway, to gain the confidence of the community and the magistrates in looking at the Correctional Services area.

Ms CARNEY: From memory, about 25 prisoners were planned to work in the work camp you have announced? Is that right?

Mr McCARTHY: Twenty-four ...

Ms CARNEY: Twenty-four.

Mr McCARTHY: ... we have looked at for the pilot work camp in the Barkly.

Ms CARNEY: You will still be short, therefore, by about 180. It seems from your answer that, in a sense, you are going to wait and keep your fingers crossed. I suggest that Territorians would want more from you and your government than just a wait-and-see approach. What do you say to that?

Mr McCARTHY: That is an interesting statement. We are looking at a pilot initiative, making it work and, then, expanding on it. One of the links I am looking at closely, with the pilot work camp initiative, is the links to the remote communities and with community correctional pathways. We can start looking at reducing the numbers of those who will reside in our major Correctional facility, and alternatives will provide that.

Ms CARNEY: Thanks, minister. My colleague has just reminded me that in the tender document – the request for tender; I am sure you are familiar with it, that tender has recently been awarded - regarding the tender, you answered that the decision was made in December 2008 to increase capacity of the new Darwin Correctional facility from 800 to 1000.

Mr McCARTHY: That is correct.

Ms CARNEY: And you are quite sure. Minister, I wonder whether you have misled the committee because, on the basis of this tender document I have, it clearly states Stage 1 is 800 prison beds. There are other stages. Do you say the decision made in December was 1000 in relation to Stage 1?

Mr McCARTHY: I say the decision was a recommendation.

Ms CARNEY: Was a recommendation? Oh, I see, okay. That is very interesting, minister. I am most regretful we only have an hour and five minutes left. I might let that one dangle and press on to some other questions.

Mr McCARTHY: Through the Chair ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, you have a ...

Mr McCARTHY: Can you clarify that tender document for me, please?

Ms CARNEY: No, you have the document. I do not table documents, you do, minister. Let us move to another issue. Let us talk about money. \$4.1m, if one looks at the 2008-09 allocation compared to the 2009-10 allocation, there is, a real increase of \$4.1m. With such a relatively insignificant increase, how do you get a 'new era' in Corrections?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the increase, if I can outline it for you. If we look at the overall budget, additional funding through Closing the Gap flows to community justice, offender rehabilitation, prisons based funding, the prisoner work camp and rehabilitation for offenders. I believe the meagre increases you stated will go a long way to the new era in corrections and the work and vision I have.

Ms CARNEY: I have a calculation problem, minister. Compared to 2008-09 and 2009-10, there is an increase of \$4.1m. Then we have in the budget highlights of Budget Paper Number 3, a \$2.5m allocation. You have a media release that talked about a \$1.4m component and a \$2.29m component. They were both described as additional. You might be aware that yesterday, one of your colleagues could not explain why, I believe it was, \$300 000 was allocated in the budget paper and the media release said \$6.2m. My question to you is, how can you get an increase of \$4.1 m in budget papers, yet with media releases and so on, you get \$6.1 m?

Mr McCARTHY: My advice, member for Araluen, would be that we definitely work off the budget

papers.

Ms CARNEY: In the same way that I asked the question yesterday, to your colleague who shares your surname, do you believe it was misleading to issue a media release that had wrong figures in it?

Mr McCARTHY: No, I do not believe it was misleading. The budget papers are definitely what we work off.

Ms CARNEY: That rather beggars the question as to why you put other figures in media releases. I see a member of the media up there and I know there are other media monitoring our proceedings. Is it the policy of your government to actively lie to the media and to Territorians?

Mr McCARTHY: No.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, let us move on shall we? I am very interested in the rehabilitation and education programs. It is not always easy to get details. On page 94 of Budget Paper No 3, under budget highlights, it refers to the \$2.52m, to which I referred earlier, it says and I quote: 'To manage increasing prisoner numbers, including prisoner rehabilitation and education programs'. Minister, what is a rehabilitation program?

Mr McCARTHY: A rehabilitation program is a program to provide education and awareness. It looks at changing human behaviour. This is done through understanding and processing, a process of deconstruction and, therefore, an evaluation and assessment of the person's behaviour by the person. You also have to provide vision and opportunities for breaking the cycle, that is, the reasons for the offence.

Ms CARNEY: What are the rehabilitation programs that operated in both correctional facilities in 2008-09 to date? If you have it in table form that would be good, I suspect you probably do.

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, I am sure we would because I could start going through a list ...

Ms CARNEY: I ask you to table the list. That would be more expedient

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, you can choose to answer the question. If you have it in a tabled form that you are happy to table, that is always welcome. If you do not have the answer with you, you are welcome to take the question on notice.

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Araluen, if you are happy, we can put the education programs ...

Ms CARNEY: I was also coming to the education programs, so great. So that document has rehab and education programs?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, we can get them for you.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, let us go back a bit. That document has rehabilitation programs that operated in the Territory 2008-09. Correct?

Mr McCARTHY: No, we are going to get that one for you.

Question on Notice 10.4

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you want to take that on notice?

Ms CARNEY: I would like it on notice.

Mr CHAIRMAN: In that case, we can read the other one out which has that information.

Ms CARNEY: No, I would like it on notice. The question is: what were the rehabilitation programs that operated in both correctional facilities 2008-09 to date?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That was question on notice No 10.4.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, can you table the document outlining the education programs that operated in Correctional facilities in 2008-09.

Mr SHANAHAN: The document we have here is the plan for 2009-10.

Ms CARNEY: I was getting to that as well, so that is good. So you have 2009-10 plans. How about you table that document and then I will go backwards.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So maybe for *Hansard* we reword question 10.4 on those?

Ms CARNEY: No. Can we do this in a way that is really expedient and easy? For the *Hansard* I am going to ask can you provide in tabled form the education programs that are going to be run in 2009-10? I think the answer is yes. We need to have that done.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you happy to table that document, minister?

Mr McCARTHY: 2009-10? We have that one.

Question on Notice 10.5

Ms CARNEY: My question: can you provide in tabled form a list of the education programs that operated in both correctional facilities in 2008-09?

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is question on notice No 10.5.

Ms CARNEY: I would like to move on to pre-release programs. Minister, is a pre-release program the same as a reintegration program? If not, what is the difference?

Mr McCARTHY: A pre-release program can be a combination. An objective of a pre-release program would contain elements of rehabilitative strategies. As I just witnessed on my recent visit to the South Australian Corrections facility in Adelaide. Mr Middlebrook is happy to provide some information ...

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, but I have the answer, so that is great. Your answer was great.

Mr McCARTHY: Since I have the call, through the Chair, and as I said previously, I have encouraged many people to listen to this broadcast, and I believe that this message is going out to the whole of the Territory as well and it is a very important area ...

Ms CARNEY: Halleluiaah for that ...

Mr McCARTHY: ... and I would like ...

Ms CARNEY: ... but you have answered my question ...

Mr McCARTHY: ... and I would like ...

Ms CARNEY: ... and I am most grateful to you ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Standing order ...

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman! The minister does have the floor.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr McCARTHY: I would go back to saying you do not like my style of doing business, but ...

Ms CARNEY: No, minister ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Araluen, the minister ...

Ms CARNEY: Well, it works both ways. He is rabbiting on now. You are making an idiot of yourself.

Ms McCARTHY: Relevance, Mr Chairman.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I ask you to withdraw the word ...

Ms CARNEY: I withdraw the word 'idiot'.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I have to apologise, I was talking to my Deputy Chair and missed the initial question, so I cannot comment on relevancy. I will remind members of two things, as I am aware of time. Standing Order 112 regarding questions.

(2) Questions should not contain –

(a) statements of facts or names of persons unless they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible and can be authenticated;

(b) arguments;

(c) inferences;

(d) imputations;

(e) epithets;

(f) ironical expressions; or

(g) hypothetical matter.

Standing Order 113, answers should be relevant. I believe that in both instances I have provided a degree of leniency through the Estimates Committee proceedings. I am sorry I have missed the question in this instance, but minister, you have the call at this stage.

Ms CARNEY: If I may Mr Chairman, what you did not read out was clause 25 of the Terms of Reference, 'Questions and explanations should be brief and avoid irrelevance and tedious repetition'.

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman! The member is reflecting on your decision.

Ms CARNEY: No, I am not, I am simply adding to it, minister for Families. Let us get on with it, shall we? Come on sport, move along.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you for the explanations, and I thank the member for Araluen for her explanation. Back to my call. I was hoping to provide some very good operational advice and procedure around that, but the member for Araluen is not interested, so we will go on to the next question.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, you have answered my question, and because I am asking the questions, I will determine, as is my right, whether your answer is satisfactory for my purposes, and it has been. So do not muck me about.

Minister, what is a reintegration program? You have talked about pre-release, what is a reintegration program?

Mr McCARTHY: A reintegration program is where offenders are re-entered into the community.

Ms CARNEY: In relation to pre-release programs, how many pre-release programs operated in 2008-09 in both correctional facilities in the Territory? If you have it in tabled form, would you table it, please?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Chairman, I will take that on notice please.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Member for Araluen, if you could repeat the question, please?

Question on Notice 10.6

Ms CARNEY: How many pre-release programs existed in both correctional facilities in 2008-09?

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

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For *Hansard* purposes, that is question No 10.6.

Ms CARNEY: It is interesting, minister, that you brought with you information relating to education, but nothing on the number of rehabilitation programs or pre-release programs. Why is that?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Araluen, I heard that I have not brought something? Could you rephrase that?

Ms CARNEY: I have asked you to table documents because there is no information at your fingertips or, indeed, those sitting either side of you. Why is that?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Araluen, I can table that information for you, and I can take that on notice.

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Ms CARNEY: Let us try again, minister. What pre-release programs operated in 2008-09 in both correctional facilities in the Northern Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: And I have taken that on notice, member for Araluen.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, you have taken that on notice. Well, you just said you could table it, so no wonder you are confusing yourself. Minister, how about this one? In 2008-09, do you regard the rehabilitation, education, and pre-release programs that have operated in our gaols as successful programs?

Mr McCARTHY: I believe any member of the Northern Territory community in our Correctional Services Department involved in a program, education or rehabilitation, is valuable.

Ms CARNEY: I will ask the question again. Do you believe the programs that operated in our correctional facilities in 2008-09 - rehabilitation, education and pre-release programs were successful?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Araluen, let me add to the answer, as I mentioned valuable, and you are not happy with that. I add that not only are they valuable, that the participation and the opportunities they present deliver a degree of success.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. Are you aware that on 12 February – I believe it was in parliament – the Chief Minister said:

We have a Corrections system that is not tackling repeat offending and is not getting the rehabilitation outcomes we need from a Correctional system in the Northern Territory. This is further feeding into increasing and escalating prisoner numbers.

Why are you at odds with your Chief Minister as to the success or failure of rehabilitation outcomes in the Northern Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: On the contrary, I would say the Chief Minister has shown great leadership. Our Caucus and Cabinet have full confidence in me, as the new Correctional Services Minister, to address those issues the Chief Minister commented on. Consequently – and I know that you do not like the term –there is a new era in Corrections. That reflects a new minister, and a whole body of work taking place, including a new Correctional facility, and a great team to go with it.

Ms CARNEY: All right. Are you troubled by the fact the Chief Minister has said we have a Corrections system that is not tackling repeat offending and is not getting the rehabilitation outcomes we need?

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman! I believe the question has already been answered.

Ms CARNEY: No, it is a different question. Put your ears back on.

Ms McCARTHY: Standing Order 114: A repetition of question.

Ms CARNEY: Mr Chairman, my question was: is he troubled?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sorry, speaking to the point of order. Thank you, member for Arnhem. In this instance, I am going to allow the question. I believe there was a degree of difference.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Araluen, in response to that, I am challenged - and that is my job. Let me tell you – no, I am sorry, you do not like my anecdotes as a Territorian, but ...

Ms CARNEY: No, because we have more important things to do.

Mr McCARTHY: ... when I visit our Correctional Services facilities I know young people in there, and that challenge grows. I am determined to do something about it.

Ms CARNEY: Good on you. Minister, in the media release you jointly issued on budget day with the Chief Minister, with whom you are at odds, and the Treasurer, you said ...

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman! I believe the minister answered that question and is not at odds.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Arnhem.

Ms CARNEY: Anyway, the jointly issued media release with the Chief Minister, with whom you are at odds, and the Treasurer, said ...

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Ms CARNEY: ... 'The NT government continues to ...'

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sorry, member for Araluen, there is a point of order. Member for Arnhem.

Ms McCARTHY: The same point of order in terms of relevance.

Ms CARNEY: There is no point of order and you know it. A third and final time. In the media release you jointly issued on budget day with the Chief Minister, with whom you are at odds, and the Treasurer ...

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman!

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sorry, member for Araluen. Yes, member for Arnhem?

Ms CARNEY: You ruled on it.

Ms McCARTHY: The minister has responded to the question.

Ms CARNEY: You have ruled on it.

Ms McCARTHY: He is not at odds with the Chief Minister.

Ms CARNEY: You have ruled that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Arnhem.

Ms CARNEY: Well, I will speak to the point of order. You know there is no point of order. In any event, the answer – it is quote from the Chief Minister - anyone would know they are at odds.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Sorry, on that point of order, I believe the minister provided an answer to the question regarding ...

Ms CARNEY: But it was a rubbish response, was it not, minister?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Well, that is a subjective opinion which the member for Araluen is welcome to hold.

Ms CARNEY: I will reword the question just so that you are not as prickly as you might otherwise be. Minister, in the jointly issued media release on budget day, you and your colleagues said:

The Northern Territory continues to focus on improving rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes to break the cycle of crime.

Since 2001, crime, particularly assaults, has risen steadily and significantly. Do you admit your government has, in fact, not been focused on rehabilitation and reintegration at all or, alternatively, if the government has been focused, it has simply failed to break the cycle of crime?

Mr McCARTHY: I do not believe my government has failed. I believe – and in terms of my appointment to this ministry – we are serious about breaking the cycle of re-offending.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. There is \$1m allocated in the budget for providing expanded education courses. How many expanded education courses do you get for \$1m? Will those expanded education courses be implemented in 2009-10?

Mr McCARTHY: The expansion of education courses is exactly what it says. My discussions with the department have been to start to investigate the area of accredited trade training.

Ms CARNEY: Will it mean more people employed in our Correctional Services facilities to administer, for want of a better word, the education program?

Mr McCARTHY: We already have education personnel capable, and the department is an RTO. We have a great base point to start building on with that additional funding to increase educational opportunities for offenders and prisoners.

Ms CARNEY: Do I understand from your answer that the \$1m allocated will not employ additional people to execute the education programs in the facilities?

Mr McCARTHY: I have looked at our facilities and we have much capacity. However, in terms of accredited trained training, I have asked the option to be explored where we bring in Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute lecturers, as well.

Ms CARNEY: I believe you are saying, yes, that \$1m will be for more people to go in to the gaols to administer the education programs ...

Ms McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Chairman, repetition of question, Standing Order 114 ...

Ms CARNEY: I seek clarification. I do not understand.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I believe, in this instance, it was not so much as a follow up question as a clarification of the original question.

Ms CARNEY: Yes.

Mr McCARTHY: I talked about our capacity. I talked about partnerships with education providers. In relation to your comment about 'into our gaols', one of the great responses I am working on at the moment from the prison officers is that some of this training can be conducted outside of the wire.

Ms CARNEY: You will appreciate why I am seeking further clarification. What is the \$1m going to be

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spent on? I do not understand from your answers. What does it do? What do you do with that \$1m that you have allocated?

Mr McCARTHY: Education opportunities.

Ms CARNEY: Right, but how? Explain to me how. What do you mean? You just cannot say \$1m will materialise into educational opportunities. Join some dots for me please, minister.

Mr McCARTHY: I could give you two, three hours, on that answer, but I would rather refer to Mr Middlebrook who will give you a very succinct response.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, great.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: There will be additional lecturers at Alice Springs, additional lecturers at Darwin, plus we will be buying additional services from CDU and Batchelor Institute.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you so much. Let us talk about sex offender treatment programs. How many sex offender treatment programs operated in the correctional facilities in 2008-09, and if you have them in tabled form, can you table them? Can you also include, based on a document you tabled earlier, the anticipated sexual offender programs for 2009-10?

Mr McCARTHY: First part of that question, and I can refer to my notes in 2008-09 ...

Ms CARNEY: Sorry, minister, I was distracted by ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: My apologies.

Ms CARNEY: No, that is okay. So you have them in tabled form for 2008-09?

Mr McCARTHY: I said 'in my notes' here in 2008-09.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, stopping you there, do you also have figures for 2009-10?

Mr McCARTHY: No.

Ms CARNEY: You have figures for 2009-10 for some things but not others. Okay. You are not prepared to table that document?

Mr McCARTHY: These are my notes I have been working off.

Ms CARNEY: So you do not have – like this one, for instance - you do not have something like that?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Just to clarify, minister, in response to a question you have three ways of answering it. You can either answer it verbally now; you can table it if you have a form that is capable of being tabled; or you can take it on notice. It is up to you once a question is asked.

Mr McCARTHY: So, in terms of participants?

Ms CARNEY: No. How many programs operated in 2008-09 in our correctional facilities? That was my question.

Mr McCARTHY: How many programs?

Ms CARNEY: How many sex offender treatment programs operated in 2008-09?

Mr McCARTHY: I will need to take that on one notice, my notes are broken down in a different way.

Ms CARNEY: Because it is good information and we really need to have it. I believe many people would be interested. How can I assist you to give me the information you have? How can I make your life easier, minister?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you want to take it on notice, minister?

Ms CARNEY: No, I am dealing with the minister, please.

Mr McCARTHY: Participant numbers?

Ms CARNEY: Participant numbers, okay, because I was then going to ask what sort of participation you had. So you can give me that information?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Middlebrook.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: In 2008-09, in Darwin prison there were 15 participants; Alice Springs, nine; making a total of 24. In 2007-08 ...

Ms CARNEY: Sorry. Four in Alice Springs you said?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Nine. A total of 24.

Ms CARNEY: Nine, and that is for 2008-09?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, that is 2008-09.

Ms CARNEY: And the year before?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: 2007-08? Zero, Darwin; six in Alice Springs.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: There were individual programs which were one-on-one with the treatment staff. In 2007-08, there was one in Darwin, and none in Alice Springs, but there were 18 in the community. In 2008-09, there were two in Darwin, five in Alice Springs, and 26 in the community, and two in the Don Dale Centre, two juveniles.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, that is an appalling number of participants in sex offender programs in 2007-08 and 2008-09. You and I know that both facilities have a significantly high rate of sex offenders in our jails. Why is it that so few participated in programs in 2008-09?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Middlebrook.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: One of the problems in delivering these is getting access to professional services that can run the programs. That is a real difficulty for us in the Territory, especially in some isolated areas. In June 2008, we engaged Professor Steven Smallbone, a very experienced PhD academic in this area who has completed a study for us. He delivered his report in January 2009. We are in the process now of putting a system into place. We have attracted some very good quality staff to fill that structure. That will improve what we are able to do. Whilst we do not apologise or make excuses for not delivering, the reality is it is very difficult to get the specialised staff to run those

programs.

Ms CARNEY: It has been very difficult to get those staff for years, minister. I remember Peter Toyne, when he was Attorney-General, talking proudly about getting sex offender treatment programs into our gaols. It seems to me, to use that well-known Australian expression, bugger all has happened. Are you going to improve the situation significantly in 2009-10?

Mr McCARTHY: That is my ambition. As I have said many times, education and rehabilitation is my focus and the pathway I am moving down.

Ms CARNEY: I note in your budget reply, minister, on the 9 June, you said that the government, and I quote: 'Is allocating \$900 000 for rehabilitation programs for sex offenders to break the cycle of offending'. How much was allocated in 2007-08?

Mr McCARTHY: I defer to Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: In 2007-08, under *Closing the Gap*, there was \$221 000 for sex offender rehabilitation for personnel, and \$225 000 for operational.

Ms CARNEY: For both facilities?

Mr SHANAHAN: Yes, and for victims who become offenders, there was \$104 000.

Ms CARNEY: That is more than \$0.5m, so there has been a reasonable increase in the allocation for 2009-10 for sex offender programs. Is that a fair call?

Mr SHANAHAN: Next year will increase again, yes.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, okay.

Mr SHANAHAN: Last year the figure doubled from the year before in terms of the offenders going through.

Ms CARNEY: You gave me some information on the number of people who completed the courses. I understand there is one course that operated in the year. On the basis of previous briefings I have had, that was my understanding. I probably have some documents somewhere to show that, but was it the case that, in 2008-09, there was one sex offender treatment program in Alice Springs and one in Darwin? Just the one program?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: There was definitely one in Alice Springs and, from memory, there were two in Darwin.

Ms CARNEY: The report into sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities, otherwise known as the *Little Children Are Sacred Report*, recommended that the government provide more sex offender rehabilitation programs with adequate resourcing. That report came out close to two years ago. Why has that recommendation not been taken up, namely, to provide more sex offender treatment programs?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We have, in fact. We engaged Professor Smallbone to look at the best practice of delivering sex offender treatment in the Territory. His report was tabled in January 2009. We have created a Director of Clinical Service position, which has overall responsibility across the Territory for monitoring and delivering these programs, both in custody, the community, and the juvenile centre. We have attracted national and international leaders in the field. We had people out from Canada, who offered a national conference and workshops for most jurisdictions. We had them in the Northern Territory last year to deliver for many of our staff. We will be integrating the new sexual offender

services with the recently created clinical stream with that director. In 2009-10, we are putting much effort into running the sexual offender programs. The Deputy CEO recently signed off on the appointment of a number of very qualified practitioners, some from interstate. They are due to come on board very soon.

Ms CARNEY: The report to which I referred recommended Correctional Services provide 'ongoing sex offender rehabilitation programs'. Why have you not been able to provide ongoing programs?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We were using a Western Australian program initially, and by engaging Professor Smallbone, we wanted to have a look at a program that was going to be relevant to the Territory and something we could sustain for the future.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, was it a recommendation of the 2004 CAYA review that the sex offender program at the Darwin Correctional facility be commenced?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Middlebrook.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: I am not sure whether there was a recommendation from the CAYA review, but I am aware we have been running sex offender programs for the two years I have been in the Territory. I cannot confirm whether that was one of the CAYA recommendations.

Ms CARNEY: I am pretty certain it was. My concern, of course, is that the years roll on and the buck stops with government. It seems government ministers, particularly Attorneys-General, have stood proudly and said, in and out of the parliament, 'We are going to do sex offender treatment programs' but, in fact, the reality is very different. I will move on to another question shortly, but I would like to think, minister, that when we are sitting here in 12 months time, you will be able to give me more than just two programs in Darwin and one program in Alice Springs, with 15 participants in Darwin and nine participants in Alice Springs. That is shocking. I look forward to next year.

I have one question on this, which is relevant as well. Do you have figures on the number of people who complete the program and, subsequently, re-offend?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Middlebrook.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: No, I do not have that with me.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, why does your not government collate figures of the number of people who complete sex offender treatment programs and, subsequently, reoffend and return to gaol?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Shanahan.

Mr SHANAHAN: As I understand it, part of Professor Smallbone's recommendations was to fund and set up proper systems so we can monitor that. That will be happening.

Ms CARNEY: Therefore, it follows that proper systems, as you put it, have not been implemented in the last four or five years?

Mr SHANAHAN: I have to say this has been an area we have been trying to focus on. There is much difficulty in getting everything up and running because we have not had the funding for it. It was part of the push to ensure we did it properly, and to overcome some of the issues we had, to appoint Professor Smallbone.

There were small numbers going through early in the piece. That information can be retrieved if we need it. However, the way we have gone about it now is the proper way to go forward. I am confident we will be having a much closer look at this and receive much better information.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, the budget papers say there has been an allocation for: 'Rehabilitation programs for sex offenders to break the cycle of offending'. That is your mantra and, indeed, has been the government mantra over the years. Does it strike you as absurd in the extreme to not have had any measure of the extent to which these people who completed the programs re-offend?

Mr McCARTHY: I feel Mr Shanahan has responded to that. My position, as the minister, is to make sure we get these systems right.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, do you accept your government has failed to provide effective sex offender treatment programs to sex offenders incarcerated in the Northern Territory?

Mr McCARTHY: I do not accept our government has failed.

Ms CARNEY: I am very conscious of the time. I am not ruling myself out of the game, because I might come back to it. I am giving over as a matter of courtesy to the member for Nelson.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Just before you ask your first question, member for Nelson, as a matter of housekeeping, the member for Nhulunbuy will be chairing for the next five minutes.

Mr WOOD: Minister, from an operational point of view, surely your department has input into the possible siting of the prison, would that be true?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Nelson, the department was part of a working group that was established.

Mr WOOD: Did your department have input into things like having a prison further away from the existing prison and the effect on travel by Correctional Service officers?

Mr McCARTHY: I have Mrs Anne Bradford here, who might like to respond to that.

Ms BRADFORD: Yes, we did have input into it. We worked with the other agencies including DPI and Treasury, to identify those things that were most relevant to us as the customer at the end.

Mr WOOD: Did you also have input into the conditions prisoners and Correctional Services Officers may come up against in relation to sand flies and mosquitoes? I gather there has been no report done on how many sand flies and mosquitoes there are at the Bennet Creek site.

Ms BRADFORD: During the initial discussions of the site selections, that Corrections were involved in, there was a report tabled regarding the entomology of that region.

Mr WOOD: Thank you. Madam Deputy Chair, my understanding is that the report may be out of date. I am wondering was there a date put on that report or was it recent?

Ms BRADFORD: I cannot recall the exact date, but I know that it was topical at the time. My recollection is the study was done very close to the date the report was given to us.

Mr WOOD: My understanding, minister, is that the report is old, it may have been updated - I am not sure. It is a concern to me because originally that area was to be dammed as part of the Elizabeth River Dam project. When it was not to be dammed, it was actually a buffer area to the Weddell suburb. It is now in that buffer area. I do not know whether you know any more than that. It is not only the prisoners that will get eaten; it will be Correctional Services Officers that will be affected if the sand flies and mosquitoes are in plague proportions.

Ms BRADFORD: It is my understanding that, as late as last week, there has been additional requests given to seek further entomological reporting for that, prior to commencement of the earthworks.

Mr WOOD: Minister, if there is a report, would I be able to get a copy of that?

Ms BRADFORD: That would not be for us to release.

Question on Notice 10.7

Mr WOOD: Shall I ask the minister for NRETAS? I do not expect you to have all the figures in front of you now, but over the last five years, could you supply a list for the following: all the prisoners in our correctional facilities, their gender; convictions; ages; classifications - maximum security verses minimal security; average length of stay; numbers of people in home detention; numbers on parole - average number of people on parole per year; and recidivism rates - for each of those years. I do not know whether that could be classified according to their offence - is there more recidivism for a sex offender versus someone who is in there for violence or car theft?

Would you also have figures for - over that five years - the number of people in work parties in both Alice Springs and Darwin, whether that is increasing or not? How many people work in gaol? What are those industries? I have visited gaols, but I would be interested to see how many people you can employ. I know that is a lot of figures, but I need - if I am to understand where we are going in these areas - to have a long-term perspective.

The \$7.6m structure outside the main prison, is that called the low security prison, or has it a special name?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, low security prison – unit, LSU.

Mr WOOD: Could you give us an idea how many prisoners are in that section? I will not go to juveniles because they are in another section. Could you give us an idea how you will select the 25 people and where will they come from for the pilot work camp? I probably should leave that out of the question, because ...

Mr McCARTHY: That is a good separate question.

Mr WOOD: All right, I will leave it at that one first, and would you be able to take that on notice?

Mr McCARTHY: In terms of the first request, they are great statistics and will provide much insight into the Correctional Services area. However, I have just been advised that the enormity of that work going back five years will be extensive.

Mr WOOD: What is a reasonable length of time for me to get an idea of a trend? Statistically, I need something because we know there are large numbers of prisoners now; we have record numbers of prisoners in gaol, why are we getting record numbers? Where are they coming from? Are they coming from violent offenders? Are they coming from domestic violence, because the government is saying we are tracking more domestic violent offenders? How will I know, unless I have a reasonable time span, what is happening in this regard?

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Nelson, I am advised three years would ...

Mr WOOD: All right, I will go for three.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Nelson, you have just asked a whole series of questions on notice there?

Mr WOOD: You are going to ask me to ask them again, are you not you?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Mr Secretary advises that *Hansard* will have captured that series of questions. The minister has indicated he is prepared to take them on notice and, for *Hansard*, we will put that block of questions to 10.7.

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Nelson, for the second part of that?

Mr WOOD: I do not know whether this is part of that first question, but are you able to give us an idea how many people are on pre-release programs, or should I put that as a separate question? And maybe not do it over three years, just for the present time. How many people have you got on pre-release programs?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, we can provide that separately.

Question on Notice 10.8

Mr WOOD: I will put that as a separate question, Madam Deputy Chair.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Sorry, what was that separate question?

Mr WOOD: How many prisoners, and I am including both prisons here, are on pre-release programs?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: For the purposes of *Hansard*, I allocate that question No 10.8.

Question on Notice 10.9

Mr WOOD: The third question would be how many people do you have working or training outside the prison? That is either educational or doing a VET course or apprenticeship courses – how many people have you got working outside the prison, and what they are doing?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: Are you happy to take that on notice, minister?

Mr McCARTHY: My request is for a reasonable time frame to provide this response. Offenders in training and involved in work parties.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: The question on notice with regard to how many people training outside of the prison, for *Hansard* is No 10.9.

Mr WOOD: What selection criteria will you have for the pilot work camp in Tennant Creek?

Mr McCARTHY: If I could clarify the previous question, it was people involved in training?

Mr WOOD: You must have some people going outside the prison for educational programs or community work. Where do you send prisoners outside? Not counting your day work camps.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR: And your current question, member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: In relation to the Tennant Creek pilot work camp, what will be the criteria for selecting the 25 people who will be working there?

Mr McCARTHY: That relates to the classification system. I will ask Mr Middlebrook to provide the details for you.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Those people will need to be from the minimum security classification. Primarily, we will be looking at prisoners who come from the Barkly region, to relocate back there. All prisoners will be received in Alice Springs. Then, once they are assessed, their medical needs seen to, their program needs met and they meet the classification requirements, they will be transferred back to the work camp.

Mr WOOD: Do you have any indication of where the work camp will be situated in Tennant Creek?

Mr McCARTHY: That is part of the process. We have called for expressions of interest in that.

Mr WOOD: In the 2007-08 Annual Report, you had an Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program for community-based offenders delivering to over 100 participants in remote communities. The program is a sentencing alternative to prison. Of the 100-odd participants, how many re-offended? Who delivered the program, was it men or women, Indigenous or non-Indigenous?

Mr McCARTHY: That is a question I will take on notice.

Question on Notice 10.11

Mr WOOD: Minister, the Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program for community-based offenders delivered to over 100 participants in remote communities. The program is a sentencing alternative to imprisonment. Of the 100-odd participants, how many re-offended? And, who delivered these programs?

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

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For *Hansard*, I have resumed the Chair, and it is question No 10.11.

Mr WOOD: How many communities are now involved in the Elders Visiting Program? Does it involve both men and women elders, or men and women prisoners, respectively? How often do the elders visit the prisoners? How do they travel to the prisons, and what is the cost? How many visited prisoners re-offended?

Mr McCARTHY: I will ask Mr Middlebrook to respond.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We have two in Tiwi, two male elders and one female. One male and one female in Katherine region. Three males at Groote. One male and one female at Hermannsburg. In Tennant Creek, we have a pool of elders we draw from. At Lajamanu, we have four males, and a female there, if required. At Kalkarindji and Yuendumu we have pools of elders.

Mr WOOD: How often do they visit, how do they travel, at what cost, and is there any idea this program is helping prisoners not re-offend?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Middlebrook.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We pay the elders travelling expenses to travel to the prisons. In the 2008-09 budget, there was \$265 000, \$215 000 was under *Closing the Gap*, and \$50 000 recurrent. We pay travel, accommodation, and the elders. We also have an annual Elders Forum, where we talk to the

elders about how we can strengthen the process. The elders do a magnificent job working with countrymen in the institutions, dispelling many rumours and helping us manage those problems. They are also involved in helping us relocate and repatriate offenders when they are released from custody.

Mr WOOD: Is there any way you can gauge if this program is successful? Is there a chance this is stopping recidivism to some extent, or it is not evaluated that way?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: We currently have a program running. Batchelor Institute is evaluating the program for us, working with the elders, and with the division to evaluate the elders' program.

Mr WOOD: Will they eventually release a report?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, we are expecting a report from Batchelor on that evaluation.

Mr McCARTHY: When I have looked at this, you have to think of the fusion as well with other initiatives we are offering. That is hard to report on, as you would know from your experience.

Mr WOOD: Thank you Mr Chairman. Member for Araluen ...

Ms CARNEY: No, on output 3.1, thank you.

Minister, Mr Middlebrook provided some answers on sex offender treatment programs, and those who have completed the course for 2008-09 and 2007-08. I wonder whether he would be good enough to do the same regarding the alcohol rehabilitation programs undertaken in both Correctional facilities for those periods?

Answer to Question on Notice 10.7

Mr McCARTHY: I will table answer to question No 10.7. This is a table for how many sex offender treatment programs operated in 2008-09.

Mr McCARTHY: We will do the same for the alcohol rehabilitation program.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, great.

Mr McCARTHY: We have to get it.

Mr CHAIRMAN: If you could just repeat that question then for *Hansard*.

Ms CARNEY: Can I just back up. You said you will do the same; namely table, and then we have gone to a question on notice. Which one is it?

Mr McCARTHY: Sorry for the semantics. We will take it on notice so I can get it prepared for you.

Ms CARNEY: So, you do not have it now?

Mr McCARTHY: No, we will prepare it for you, member for Araluen.

Ms CARNEY: Okay, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Please restate the question for *Hansard*.

Question on Notice 10.12

Ms CARNEY: How many prisoners completed alcohol rehabilitation programs in both the Correctional facilities in 2007-08 and 2008-09? I add a follow-up of how many programs were offered? One is participants, and the other is programs.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are you happy to have that on notice, Minister?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Middlebrook would like to respond to that.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: On alcohol programs, there were 13 programs, with 111 participants ...

Ms CARNEY: I am sorry to interrupt. I do not know whether you are doing this deliberately, but I have asked you the question. We have said now it is on notice and, then, you say that someone sitting next to you has the answers.

Mr McCARTHY: Would you like both?

Ms CARNEY: Well, one form of answer is fine.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: There were 13 programs, 111 participants, and we had three withdrawals.

Ms CARNEY: Thirteen programs? That is in both facilities?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Both facilities.

Ms CARNEY: How many participants?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: One hundred and eleven.

Ms CARNEY: That is 2008-09?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, correct.

Ms CARNEY: And 2007-08?

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: I am sorry, I do not have those figures.

Mr CHAIRMAN: To modify the question on notice. The question on notice had two financial years, so we will remove the 2008-09 financial year. It is just 2007-08, and you are happy to take that on notice, minister?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: For *Hansard*, that is question No 10.12.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. According to the ABS statistics released yesterday, we have well in excess of 1000 prisoners in our gaols. Members of government repeatedly talk about the number of prisoners who have been affected by alcohol. They refer to that number as being extremely high. Do you think it is anywhere near good enough to have only 111 participants, in a gaol population of 1100, completing

an alcohol rehabilitation course?

Mr McCARTHY: I plan on doing lots of work in that area.

Ms CARNEY: Minister, do you think it is appropriate for a prison population that exceeds 1000, where many of the inmates are there as a result of alcohol-related offences, for there only to have been 111 participate in alcohol rehabilitation programs?

Mr McCARTHY: I take that point and I plan to do lots of work in this area.

Ms CARNEY: That is good. Let us talk about what your former minister for Justice wanted to do, and I go back to sex offender treatment programs. Picking up from some of the answers I have received this morning. By a letter, dated 28 April 2008, I received from Minister Chris Burns an answer to a letter I wrote in relation to sex offender treatment programs. He wrote in April 2008, of a program that 'is still very new to the Territory and is under constant assessment and review to test its applicability to the target group'.

My question is, in evidence given this morning you said that an expert is being brought in from somewhere to provide you with more information. Why did you not get it right from the start, rather than have a hotch-potch go every year or so, when it comes to implementing successful sexual offender treatment programs?

Mr McCARTHY: I will make it my personal, professional and community responsibility to get it right and we will get it right.

Ms CARNEY: Okay. Minister, in February, you announced a new era in Corrections and you talked about many things. One of them was the prisoner work camp – the government announced what it was going to do. Then by media release on 19 May, you advised you would travel, that day, to South Australia to examine 'work camp and pre-release facilities for prisoners'.

Minister, would it not have been wise to have undertaken the trip before you made your announcement?

Mr McCARTHY: Coming in to the position with a 30 year apprenticeship in education, I had a very good understanding and vision of what I wanted to do with remote opportunities. I dialogued that extensively and I brought that vision with me. We are building on that vision. We have some expert people in this department who have provided a professional side to that.

I went to South Australia, I sent agency staff to Western Australia, and next I am looking at Queensland, to put a professional edge on that information. I am a politician now and I need to take very solid information from experts in the field. I feel the chronology of that does not really have an impact, however the knowledge I have gained will.

Ms CARNEY: I agree, particularly as a minister, it is important to gain information and talk to experts. I wonder at the wisdom of doing it after a series of announcements. In any event, we will move on, because we really only have a couple of minutes left.

Women in Prisons. Have you read this report?

Mr McCARTHY: After you mentioned it in parliament last year, I went to that report and I have been reading it extensively. You did alert me to the detail in the report. I have been working with the agency on the report and I would like to share some of the great developments we have achieved, but we probably do not have time.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you, no. My question was: have you read the report? I believe you are saying

pretty much or basically, I will give you the benefit of the doubt ...

Mr McCARTHY: I have been working on that regularly.

Ms CARNEY: Yes, good. To refresh your memory, in case you did not get past page four, it says and I quote: 'It also found', that is the inquiry, 'lack of resources, poor planning, outdated and inappropriate procedures and a failure to consider women as a distinct group with specific needs. This had resulted in a profound lack of services, discriminatory practices, inadequate safeguards against abuse and very little in the way of opportunities to assist women to escape cycles of crime, poverty, substance abuse and family violence.'

The Ombudsman came up with 67 recommendations. How many of those recommendations have been implemented? I believe some have not. How many have been implemented? How many have not? I accept they are probably work in progress, but can you give me the figure, please?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, member for Araluen. And may I say, well after page 4. I started conducting visits to women in prison in the Northern Territory. I asked specifically to have a response for you about the good things, but we will go numerically, we will talk numbers. Mr Middlebrook will be able to supply that response.

Mr MIDDLEBROOK: Of the 67 recommendations, 31 have now been completed; five are partially completed or ongoing; 21 have either been supported and unable to be completed because of infrastructure, so we have added some infrastructure at J Block to the best we can with an old facility; and there are a number of recommendations that went to Health and Families which were beyond our scope. I can say the vast majority of recommendations which impacted on the day-to-day operation of J Block have been implemented. That report was for Darwin, but we have taken that further and implemented the same process for Alice Springs. In fact, we are currently building 25 beds in purpose-built cottages with facilities for mothers with children, in Alice Springs, which should be completed about August.

Ms CARNEY: Thank you. This was tabled in June 2008 and it was written in, I believe, April 2008. I accept what you say. My question to the minister is: do you think it is good enough, 15 months or so after receiving such a significant and damning report into women in our prisons, that less than half the recommendations have been completed?

Mr McCARTHY: I thank you for bringing that to my attention. I commend the department for what they are doing; and may I invite you to come with me to visit J Block, particularly, when you are in Darwin.

Ms CARNEY: I look forward to the invitation. I have been there before, but if you would be good enough to invite me, and that remains to be seen, I will take up your invitation, minister.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, member for Araluen. Mr Chair, I have a point of clarification in relation to a matter that was raised which relates back to December 2008, regarding the change in numbers from 800 to 1000 in the phased approach. The tender released in March 2009 regarding the consultancy services, that Cabinet was approached and approved the increase to 1000 beds.

Mr ELFERINK: What date?

Mr McCARTHY: The tender was released in March 2009.

Mr ELFERINK: When was the Cabinet decision?

Mr McCARTHY: The Cabinet decision, I will need to get you an exact date on that one.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS – 19 JUNE 2009

Mr ELFERINK: Last I heard it was actually ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: We have actually concluded the estimates process. We have two tabled documents here; I thought three had come back?

Ms CARNEY: To make it easier, we have one on education; one on sex offender treatment programs in 2008-09; I have lost track, is that ...

Mr McCARTHY: And the other was rehabilitation programs.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We can check the *Hansard* with the questions on notice.

Mr SHANAHAN: The flip side of that, you want the 2009-10 or the reverse numbers, so there is more to come.

Ms CARNEY: More to come, that have been tabled today, or that are questions on notice? Because they are quite separate.

Mr SHANAHAN: No, questions on notice.

Ms CARNEY: Oh, two documents, thank you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That now concludes the Estimates Committee public hearing process. I take this opportunity to thank the members of the Public Accounts Committee, who formed the core membership of the Estimates Committee, and for the overall manner in which these public hearings have been conducted.

I place on the record the appreciation from the committee to all other members who participated in the public hearing process. Thank you also to the Legislative Assembly staff who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the whole process ran smoothly throughout the extended process of the past four days, with particular reference to the Table Office and Hansard.

With the finalisation of the scrutiny of ministerial portfolios, I thank the ministers appearing before the committee, and the many officials who attended the hearings. I commend them on their professionalism. I take this opportunity to place on the public record my appreciation of the effort put in by agency officers who, prior to the public hearings, have worked behind the scenes over many weeks preparing briefing papers to assist their ministers throughout the Estimates Committee questioning.

I now formally close the public hearings of the Estimates Committee 2009. Thank you.

The committee concluded.
