

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

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

23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

20 February 1990

114. Liquor Licence Applications

Mr EDE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

1. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
2. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications for renewals of liquor licences have been rejected by the Liquor Commission.
3. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
4. For each year 1985 to 1988, how many applications for -
 - (a) new;
 - (b) renewal; and
 - (c) changes,to licence conditions were opposed by commercial or community interests.
5. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted.

115. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

116. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

117. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

118. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.

2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

119. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

120. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

121. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

122. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

123. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

1 May 1990

127. Tourist Commission's Advertising Budget

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What was the Tourist Commission's budget for -
 - (a) television advertising,
 - (b) print advertising;
 - (c) international marketing, and
 - (d) trade shows, during -
 - (i) 1987-88;
 - (ii) 1988-89; and
 - (iii) 1989-90.
2. Which advertising agency(ies) is/are retained or have been retained.
3. On what basis is/are the agency(ies) chosen.

4. Is there a tendering process.
5. If there is no tendering process, why not.
6. What is the nature of the tendering process.
7. Are tender documents public.
8. If there is a tendering process and that tender documents are prepared, is the amount of air time thus prescribed.
9. What amount of air time was prescribed during each of the years listed above.
10. If air time was not prescribed during these years, why not.
11. What was the value of that air time.

128. Registration of Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

With reference to your answer to Written Question No 102, relating to Aboriginal Health Workers employed in certain Aboriginal communities, how many of those health workers were -

- (a) registered under the Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act; and
- (b) not registered under that act.

14 August 1990

133. Bovine Tuberculosis in Confirmed Free Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many outbreaks of Bovine Tuberculosis occurred within the Confirmed Free area in the Northern Territory since 1987.
2. In how many of these cases has a total or partial de-stocking been the preferred method of cleaning up the infestation.
3. How many of these cattle were shipped out.
4. How many of these cattle were shot to waste or used as pet meat.
5. What was the cost to the BTEC program for outbreaks within the Confirmed Free area for -
 - (a) compensation; and
 - (b) other associated costs,during the financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

135. Conversion of Pastoral Properties to Perpetual Leasehold

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. Upon which properties have recommendations under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act, relating to the Director of Conservation's power to recommend the reservation of areas for public interest, been made.
2. Which of the above properties encompassing or bordering major waterways, estuaries or coastline have been -
 - (a) the subject of recommendations; and
 - (b) not the subject of recommendations.
3. What was the result in terms of section 48(5) of the Crown Lands Act in each of the above cases where a recommendation was made.
4. What is the percentage of lands converted to perpetual leasehold retained as a reservation in the public interest under section 48(5) of the Crown Lands Act.

136. Maintenance Contract for Radiological Equipment at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In your debate in the committee stages of the 1989-90 Appropriation Bill you referred to the purchase of radiological equipment for the Royal Darwin Hospital and a maintenance contract with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd which would give 'total savings in that area of \$120 000 per year or \$600 000 for 5 years, which represents a savings in the order of \$350 000 over that period'.

1. To which heads of expenditure detailed in the budget speech do Toshiba invoices Nos 695089, 695090 and 695091 relate.
2. Is it correct, as these invoices indicate, that the government has paid this service contract in advance.
3. Will the 'comprehensive 5-year service contract' with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd be tabled.
4. How is the saving on parts of \$50 000 calculated.

14 August 1990

129. **Botulism in Cattle in the Katherine Region**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. According to departmental estimates, what proportion of cattle in the Katherine region are inoculated on an annual basis against Type C and Type D Botulism.
2. How many cattle are estimated to be grazing on areas where Botulism spores are endemic.
3. How many cattle in the region are carrying the Botulism organism and are not vaccinated against Type C and Type D Botulism.

ANSWER

1. According to departmental estimates, botulism vaccination is practised on 50-60% of Katherine region properties. Many properties only vaccinate weaners, so cattle on these properties are not inoculated on an annual basis. Other properties, including several of the larger property groups (eg Newcastle Waters) use regular annual vaccinations. An estimated 25-30% of cattle in the region are inoculated on an annual basis. Of these, approximately 75% are vaccinated with Type C, and 25% with both C and D.
2. The botulism organism is probably present on most properties in the Katherine region. The cattle population of the region is around 500 000 head. The incidence of botulism varies due to seasonal conditions, and management factors including vaccination coverage.
3. The botulism organism is a common inhabitant of the alimentary tract of cattle. However, botulism is not caused by organisms in the cattle; it is caused by ingestion of toxin formed by the organism. The main sources of toxin are bones and decomposing carcasses. There is no accurate estimate of the proportion of cattle carrying the organism. This statistic is irrelevant to the incidence of botulism.

The proportion of cattle in the region being vaccinated has increased in recent years, largely due to BTEC: the bringing of more cattle behind wire, with regular musters has increased the visibility of the disease and provided the facility to adopt planned vaccination programs.

130. Unresolved Police Charges

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

As a result of police attendance at a party at the home of Richard Setter at 38 Bayfield Street, Malak, on the night of Sunday 30 April 1989 and the early hours of Monday 1 May 1989, the following charges were laid against the 4 people named below -

- (a) Dean Sullivan (who gave his name as Ian Smith) - undue noise;
- (b) Peter Coughlan - undue noise, assault and resisting arrest;
- (c) Mark Woodhams - undue noise; and
- (d) Clifford Purser - undue noise, resisting arrest and assaulting police.

1. Why were these charges not proceeded with.
2. Will the Minister table the prosecution files in respect of these charges.

ANSWER

Question redirected to Attorney-General as question 134.

131. Power Interruptions in Alice Springs Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How many power interruptions caused by -
 - (a) failures of generation equipment; and/or
 - (b) failures of distribution equipment,
have affected -
 - (i) all of Alice Springs; or
 - (ii) part of the Alice Springs area,during the period from 1 May 1989 to 30 April 1990.
2. What was the duration of each of these interruptions.
3. How does the frequency and length of the breakdown period compare with those of the previous 2 years.
4. What is proposed to be done about this situation.

ANSWER

1. (a) Generating equipment has caused 16 interruptions.

(b) Distribution equipment has caused 3 interruptions.

Total 19 interruptions due to equipment failures.

Three other interruptions were due to nature.

One interruption due to contractor.

Total = 23.

(i) All of Alice Springs was affected 6 times.

(ii) Part of Alice Springs was affected 17 times.

2. See Annexure 1 on following page.

Annexure 1.

			<u>Feeders Affected</u> T/F = Town Feeder(s) 11/22 = Rural Feeder(s)	<u>Generation/ Distribution</u>
1.	13.05.89	8 minutes	T/F 3	G
2.	14.05.89	8 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4 & 6	G
3.	17.05.89	66 minutes	Total shutdown	G
4.	29.05.89	49 minutes	Total shutdown	G
5.	13.07.89	186 minutes	Section of 1 Feeder only	D
6.	09.08.89	53 minutes	Section of 1 Feeder only	D
7.	12.10.89	11 minutes	T/F 5 11.22 F 1	G
8.	28.10.89	8 minutes	T/F 4 11.22 F 1	G
9.	29.10.89	9 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5 & 6 11/22 F 1	G
10.	30.11.89	26 minutes	Single consumer	D
11.	01.12.89	-	Total shutdown Power supply rotated around Alice. Total duration 7.5 hrs.	G
12.	09.12.89	46 minutes	Total shutdown External fault caused generation equipment to fail.	External
13.	23.12.89	10 minutes	11/22 F 1 External fault caused distribution equipment to fail.	External
14.	05.01.90	24 minutes	Total shutdown Contractor caused shutdown.	External
15.	08.01.90	2 minutes	11/22 F 2	G
16.	10.01.90	12 minutes	T/Fs 6 & 7	G
17.	18.01.90	19 minutes	T/Fs 4 & 5	G
18.	13.02.90	19 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5 & 7 11/22 F 1	G
19.	08.04.90	-	Total shutdown Severe storms in area caused generation equipment to fail. Progressive restoration over 2 hours.	External

Annexure 1.

			<u>Feeders Affected</u> T/F = Town Feeder(s) 11/22 = Rural Feeder(s)	<u>Generation/ Distribution</u>
20.	12.04.90	8 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5, 6 & 7 11/22 F 3	G
21.	13.04.90	9 minutes	T/Fs 4 & 6	G
22.	23.04.90	4 minutes	T/Fs 6, 11/22 F 3	G
23.	28.04.90	16 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5 & 6 1122 F 2 & 3	G

3.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total No. of Interruptions</u>	<u>Total Unserved Energy (kWh)</u>
May 87 - April 88	29	116 000 kWh
May 88 - April 89	33	574 000 kWh
May 89 - April 90	23	162 000 kWh

4. (a) Equipment is on order to improve the reliability and flexibility of Under Frequency Load Shedding (see Note 1) in the power station.

(b) Equipment is on order to improve the sensitivity of protection (see Note 2) on high voltage feeders serving Alice Springs from the power station.

(c) Existing power station control and monitoring equipment has been modified to give a more reliable performance.

(d) The No 9 gas turbine control equipment will be upgraded by the addition of a computer memory backup. Equipment is on order.

(e) Additional protection (see Note 2) has been added to the 11/22kV transformers supplying the rural feeders.

(f) An alternative supply system is being installed to give greater flexibility to the Lovegrove High Voltage switching station.

(g) Specifications are now being prepared for a new 22kV high voltage switchboard at the power station to provide improved reliability in the short term and capacity for expansion in the longer term.

Note 1.

Under Frequency Load Shedding is a system which progressively sheds load by tripping feeders in a situation where there is insufficient capacity to meet instantaneous load demands. The system normally comes into action after the automatic tripping of a generation unit leaves a generation shortfall. The system must decide on appropriate action and give instructions within a few milliseconds to avoid a total station shutdown.

Note 2.

The term 'protection' as used here described automatic monitoring systems which disconnect sections of a system which has developed a fault of some kind or is operating outside its specified operating criteria. Examples would be -

- excessive current flowing
- high temperature
- low fuel pressure
- low level of lubricating oil.

132. Accuracy of Scales used in Territory Abattoirs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. During the period from July 1985 to March 1990, when were checks carried out by departmental officers on the accuracy of the scales used to weigh carcasses of cattle purchased 'over the hooks' at each Territory abattoir.
2. Did any of these checks identify broken seals or inaccuracies.
3. If so, when, where and what action was taken to ensure that the scales were fixed before further cattle were put through.
4. Where the inaccuracies resulted in pastoralists being underpaid, what action was taken to ensure they received compensation.

ANSWER

1. The total of instruments tested and their dates of test is listed below -

<u>Location of Instrument</u>	<u>Date Tested</u>	<u>Condition of Same</u>
Angliss & Co	12.11.86	Verified
10 Mile Abattoirs	10.12.87	Verified
Berrimah NT	23.06.89	Verified
Point Stuart Station	22.04.86	Verified
Point Stuart NT	15.05.87	Rejected for inaccuracies
	10.06.87	Verified
	20.05.88	Rejected for inaccuracies
Mudginberri Station	02.06.86	Verified
Arnhem Highway	11.05.87	Verified
Mudginberri NT	16.05.88	Verified
Meneling Meats Pty Ltd	19.03.87	Verified
Batchelor NT	01.03.89	Verified
	20.03.90	Verified
Northern Meat Exporters	01.05.87	Verified
Victoria Highway	03.05.88	Verified
Katherine NT	21.03.89	Verified
	13.03.90	Verified
Victoria Valley Beef	14.04.86	Verified
Victoria Highway	02.04.87	Verified
Victoria River NT	16.03.88	Verified
	15.05.89	Verified
Kimberg Meats	13.03.86	Verified
16 Kilometre	10.03.87	Verified
Stuart Highway	30.03.89	Verified
Tennant Creek NT		

Marshall's Quality Butchers	24.09.87	Verified
Paterson St	31.03.89	Verified
Tennant Creek NT		
Alice Springs Abattoirs	04.10.85	Verified
Smith St	03.03.87	Verified
Alice Springs NT	11.08.88	Verified
Centralian Beef Abattoirs	22.10.85	Verified
Bond Springs	17.11.86	Verified
via Alice Springs NT	20.03.87	Verified
	13.11.87	Verified
	18.03.89	Verified

2. There is no legislative requirement throughout Australia for such instruments to be sealed. Inaccuracies were found at Point Stuart Station on 15 May 1987 and 20 May 1988.
3. In each instance at Point Stuart Station, the Inspector left with the owner of that scale a notice requiring the owner to have the scale corrected within a 28-day period, in accordance with legislative requirements. Section 17 of the Weights and Measures Act prohibits people from using in trade any measuring instrument which is incorrect or unjust.
4. There is no legislative requirement in the Weights and Measures Act to record such information, and compensation is a matter of civil remedy between parties. There is no record of any such action taking place during the period.

134. Unresolved Police Charges

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

As a result of police attendance at a party at the home of Richard Setter at 38 Bayfield Street, Malak, on the night of Sunday 30 April 1989 and the early hours of Monday 1 May 1989, the following charges were laid against the 4 people named below -

- (a) Dean Sullivan (who gave his name as Ian Smith) - undue noise;
- (b) Peter Coughlan - undue noise, assault and resisting arrest;
- (c) Mark Woodhams - undue noise; and
- (d) Clifford Purser - undue noise, resisting arrest and assaulting police.

1. Why were these charges not proceeded with.
2. Will the Attorney-General table the prosecution files in respect of these charges.

ANSWER

1. On the advice of the Senior Crown Prosecutor, the Commissioner of Police in the exercise of his discretion did not proceed with the charges.

2. No. For 2 reasons -

Firstly: in this particular case there is an issue akin to double jeopardy. The civilians have had their charges withdrawn against them and a police officer has been convicted and dealt with for disciplinary offences arising out of this incident. The tabling of the prosecution file could lead to these people being tried in the Assembly.

Secondly: as a matter of general principle, prosecution files contain statements from persons who provide them to the police in good faith and may not wish them to be tabled in the Assembly, eg on a sexual assault case the tabling of statements could cause severe embarrassment.

Mulholland Brief

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

When will the investigations being oversighted by Mr Mulholland QC be completed, and when will his report be received?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has given indications of interest in this matter lately. Mr Mulholland QC was engaged on 11 April 1990 to oversight certain police investigations. These investigations have been dealt with in this Assembly. I am advised that investigations in relation to all matters are proceeding and I am further advised that it is anticipated that investigations may be completed within the next couple of months. I understand that some of the investigations are, in fact, quite close to being concluded. Mr Speaker, one should bear in mind that the time at which investigations will be concluded will be determined by Mr Mulholland because he is the person who can decide what further action, if any, needs to be taken.

I have no knowledge of the outcome of investigations so far. I am advised that no firm conclusions have been reached in relation to the various matters being investigated, although investigating officers are in the process of preparing final reports. I am advised that a vast number of witnesses have been interviewed already, both in the Territory and interstate, to ensure that any allegations that have been made or any other matters warranting examination have been investigated properly. Notwithstanding the work already done, I am advised that there remain some persons to be interviewed or re-interviewed, although not a large number, and some further investigations, not necessarily involving interviews - for example, financial analysis - must be finalised.

I do not know and have not been advised of the exact timing of any report by Mr Mulholland QC. Neither I nor any minister has sought in any way to interfere with the process, nor is it the intention that interferences should occur in any way. As is well known, Mr Mulholland QC and his assistant were in Darwin between 13 and 15 June 1990 and Mr Mulholland QC was again in Darwin for an Australian Bar Association Conference in July, during which time he again carried out work on this matter. As has been stated, Mr Mulholland QC has the widest of briefs, extending to the reporting of any interference as regards his oversighting role. I am totally satisfied as to the competence and capability of Mr Mulholland QC to fulfil his task. It may seem that some time has elapsed since these matters were raised and referred to Mr Mulholland QC. Whilst that is so, the size of the task and extent of investigations required to ensure this matter is dealt with properly is significant, as is the importance of the task. I do not intend that the investigation or Mr Mulholland's work will be rushed in any way. That would be wrong.

In summary, the status is as follows. Investigations are still being carried out, although it would appear matters are reaching some finality. Following completion of investigations, Mr Mulholland QC and Ms Atkinson, his assistant, will prepare a report. Subject to any views that Mr Mulholland QC might express to the contrary, I anticipate that I will place that report before this Assembly. I want to make it clear that Mr Mulholland's role is to oversight investigations being carried out by police, to ensure that the manner and effectiveness of the investigations is beyond question and to report in relation to their tasks, including to

report on any inadequacies in respect of the manner and effectiveness of the investigations themselves.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

In the answer he has given this morning, the Chief Minister said that Bob Mulholland had 'the widest brief'. He said that he would not interfere with Mr Mulholland. He reiterated undertakings that he gave in this House some months ago when he said that Mr Mulholland 'would have complete authority over the conduct of this inquiry'. He said that 'Mr Mulholland could seek that the police follow up other leads, other avenues, talk to other people or whatever'. These are my questions. Why have people with evidence for this inquiry been refused the right to approach Mr Mulholland directly? Why is it that Mr Mulholland can examine such evidence only after it has been reviewed by the Department of Law? How does Mr Mulholland have 'complete authority', when it is the Department of Law which decides what evidence will or will not be referred to him? Finally, is this the reason why, after 3 months, Mr Mulholland has still not been able to interview an essential witness to this inquiry, and I refer to Sergeant Andy Wrenn?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the honourable member mentioned, at the end of his last question, the person to whom he was referring, because that gives me the opportunity to respond using the same name. I am advised that Mr Wrenn's requests for direct talks with Mr Mulholland QC have been noted. I am further advised that Mr Mulholland QC is aware of Mr Wrenn's request. I am advised that, as might be expected, Mr Mulholland QC has been fully briefed in relation to allegations made by Mr Wrenn and, as part of his brief, has received copies of all statements made by Mr Wrenn as well as other relevant background material. I am advised also that, if Mr Mulholland QC considers it appropriate to have direct discussions with Mr Wrenn, he will no doubt so request. Naturally, that request will be complied with. I understand that Mr Mulholland QC has made no such request to date.

Mr Bell: Why can't people approach Mr Mulholland directly? That is the question.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am not sure what stops anyone writing to Mr Mulholland directly, but it is entirely up to Mr Mulholland how he goes about the task that he has been given.

Mr Bell: No, it is not. Your government has directed him.

Mr PERRON: In responding to the honourable member's interjection, I have indicated that, if Mr Mulholland considers it appropriate to speak with any person in relation to his investigations, he has a charter which requires him to carry out those investigations properly and thoroughly, and he can carry out that charter in any way he sees fit.

Mr Bell: Any way?

Mr PERRON: Any way.

Kaytej and Warlmanpa Land Claims

Mr POOLE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What consultation, if any, with the Territory government occurred before June, when the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs granted the Kaytej and Warlmanpa land claims, which include areas of the Tennant Creek water control district, and what difficulties does the grant pose in terms of resolving issues associated with the future use of the areas concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, when Hon Robert Tickner was appointed Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, he made great play of the need to return to a bipartisan approach to Aboriginal affairs in this country. On 26 June, the areas of the Kaytej and Warlmanpa land claims still remained to be granted. The land claimed covered areas of the Tennant Creek water control district. They were handed over to Aboriginal claimants, and the only consultation with the Territory government was a letter from Mr Tickner which was faxed to the Chief Minister's office on the evening of 26 June. The letter informed the Chief Minister that Mr Tickner intended to proceed with the grants. Of course, what he meant was that the land had already been granted on that day and that it was too late for the Territory government to do or say anything about it. If that is an example of Mr Tickner's idea of a bipartisan approach to Aboriginal affairs, I would hate to see him acting unilaterally. However, he may have been working on the basis that Territorians are already pretty well aware of the Commonwealth's concept of bipartisanship which basically comes down to: 'We will tell you what to do and you can like it or lump it'.

The provision of adequate water supplies is vital to the future development of Tennant Creek. It is expected that the areas of the water control district covered by the Kaytej and Warlmanpa claims will be needed to service the town in about 10 to 15 years time. In the meantime, it is necessary to protect the water catchment from pollution and to monitor the bore fields regularly. Unfortunately, under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, once land has been granted to a land trust, there is no legal obligation on the traditional owners to enter into any agreements at all for the use of that land or its resources. I am aware that the Aboriginal claimants and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs all say there will be no difficulty in achieving this agreement. However, this certainly has not proved to be the case to date. The Territory government has been negotiating with the Central Land Council since 1986 to reach agreement, and without success. The only compulsion on the claimants to negotiate was the hope that the Commonwealth would not grant the land until a completed agreement was in place. Now that the land has been granted, even this compulsion to negotiate has disappeared.

In the Ti Tree land claim, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner made it clear that such a situation was totally unsatisfactory in view of the responsibility of governments to put in place services for their constituents. He said:

A government that has all of the responsibilities of a state, so far as meeting the diverse needs of the entire community is concerned, yet lacks the power of compulsory acquisition which the states enjoy, is at the mercy of those with whom it must negotiate. Counsel for the applicants made the submission that

Aboriginal people could be expected to behave reasonably and responsibly in such negotiations. There is, however, no reason to believe that they are any more reasonable or responsible than the rest of the community might be expected to be had they had advantage in a negotiating situation.

That is from the Aboriginal Land Commissioner. The government has a responsibility to meet the needs of the community, yet lacks the power of compulsory acquisition that the states enjoy. It was for those reasons that the Territory government sought to reach an agreement with the Central Land Council after the areas of the claims outside the water control district were granted in 1986. In July 1988, the government sent a draft agreement to the Central Land Council, which agreed to take the matter back to the traditional owners to get instructions. A copy of the draft agreement was forwarded to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that the Commonwealth was aware of the negotiations and that the Commonwealth did not proceed to grant any land until an agreement was in place. The Central Land Council did not respond to the draft agreement and, in October 1989, following inquiries made by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the government again approached the CLC to enter into negotiations. A copy of this correspondence was also sent to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Following that correspondence, the negotiations became part of the Tennant Creek town boundary negotiations, and those negotiations included talks on both the present water supply and the future Kaytej production area. Meetings were held with the Central Land Council in January, March and May this year, and officers from ATSIC attended all of those meetings. A further meeting was scheduled for July but it was cancelled by the Central Land Council, presumably because the land had already been granted.

It can certainly be seen that the Territory government was committed to negotiating an agreement over the water control district, and those negotiations have now been jeopardised by the unilateral action of the Commonwealth minister. This approach is of even greater concern when consideration is given to the Territory government's efforts to ensure that the Commonwealth was fully across the processes of negotiation. I have written to Mr Tickner to express my extreme concern at his pre-emptive action on this and his failure to consult the Territory government about it. I have advised Mr Tickner that, in 'Seven Years On', Mr Justice Toohey recognised this problem, and he recommended that the Territory be empowered to acquire easements or other interests, short of an estate in fee simple, in Aboriginal land for a public purpose. Justice Toohey discussed the particular problems of water supply and stressed the need for the Territory to have the power to obtain water and the ability to transport it to nearby towns.

The Commonwealth has done nothing to resolve this issue. I have urged Mr Tickner to reconsider and to make appropriate amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. In the meantime, the Territory government will continue its efforts to negotiate a suitable resolution to the problem of guaranteeing the future water supply to Tennant Creek. Equality and equal opportunity is a catch-cry of members opposite. Here we have a situation where legislation provides for unequal or different treatment to different people on the basis of race. We cannot help but have division in our community while the Aboriginal Land Rights Act remains as it is.

Self-government Celebration Costs

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw the attention of the Chief Minister to public disgust over the waste of taxpayers' money for a media campaign to commemorate 12 years of self-government. Did the government state that the cost of the self-government celebrations was \$200 000, is it a fact that the quoted cost did not include the cost of air time on commercial television or the cost of rulers, stickers and other throwaways, and was the all-up cost closer to \$500 000? If so, why did he seek to conceal the true cost from the public of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member ought first to obtain the answer to his question before making the unfounded allegation with which he concluded. I am looking at the notes that I have received in regard to this matter. I am not surprised that the honourable member has raised the question. Of course, the ALP opposed self-government itself at the time and therefore it is not surprising that it should oppose Territorians celebrating self-government as well.

Mr Smith: I hope you keep playing your advertisements in the picture theatres. They are getting a really interesting response.

Mr Bailey: We pay for ours with our funds, not with public funds.

Mr Coulter: If you are running short, let us know. We will help you out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, again this year, the anniversary was marked by advertised flag-raising ceremonies, the issue of bumper stickers throughout the Territory through insertion in newspapers, the issue of anniversary rulers to Territory schoolchildren, the production and telecast on NTD8 and Imparja Television of a commercial and the letterbox distribution to households of a brochure. Both the commercial and the brochure depicted the achievements of Territorians since the grant of self-government in 1978.

I point out to honourable members the achievements of Territorians were depicted, not simply those of government because it was not the government alone that brought the Territory from the doldrums in 1978 to what we see today through the phenomenal advances that have been achieved, both socially and materially over that period. Nevertheless, honourable members opposite seem to cast aside any suggestion that Territorians themselves - those people who have worked damn hard for what has been achieved in the Territory - have any right to celebrate what has been achieved over the 12 years.

The target budget for these exercises, the flag-raising ceremonies, the distribution of bumper stickers, the rulers for schoolchildren, the television commercial and the brochure was \$200 000.

Mr Smith: What about advertising?

Mr Ede: The commercial cost more than that.

Mr PERRON: The commercial did not cost in excess of that. I may have to come back to the honourable member on the cost of the broadcast time for the commercial.

Mr Smith: That was on top of the \$200 000.

Mr Ede: What was the total cost?

Mr PERRON: I do not have it in the figures before me at present, but I am sure that members of my staff, who will be listening to this broadcast, will have the information to me very shortly.

Crude Oil Refinery for Darwin

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Given the deteriorating political crisis in the Middle East and the subsequent rise in crude oil prices throughout the world and given that the Timor Sea area is currently producing some 100 000 barrels of crude oil per day, is there now any greater prospect of the establishment of a crude oil refinery in Darwin with a view to the Northern Territory becoming totally self-sufficient in its fuel requirements?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. I will state at the outset that I am being cautious with my answer. There is excess capacity in refineries throughout Australia. Some rationalisation has taken place to try to absorb the excess capacity that exists within oil refineries within Australia. The question is indeed timely. It is ironic that the price of oil has risen in Australia even though Australia supplies up to 85% of its own domestic requirements. The answer to that is pretty simple. It is because Australian oil is linked to Singapore prices. Some time ago, Australian crude was linked to Singapore prices and, of course, Singapore has to import virtually all its requirements. It is a matter of further irony that the Territory oil industry is growing rapidly and yet all that we produce, which is an impressive figure of 100 000 barrels a day and about one-third of the production of Bass Strait, is exported, some going to Singapore itself. That is the mess that oil pricing in Australia is in today.

I hope that, next Tuesday, the honourable Treasurer will announce the results of the petroleum tax review which I called for at the special ministers meeting in Canberra. Indeed, I am chairman of that meeting for this year. I hope that we will get some sensible reform of the oil industry in Australia today and that BHP, for example, which is paying up to 80% in taxes on some wells that it operates in Bass Strait, obtains some relief so that we can find some new reserves. One can only hope that the honourable Treasurer will bring down that decision next Tuesday evening before we all sink under the stupidity of the situation in which Australia now finds itself in relation to oil prices. Fancy our being linked to the Singapore price, when Singapore imports all its oil! At a time when Australia is 85% self-sufficient in oil production, our prices have to rise because the Singapore price rises. It is ludicrous! It is typical of the financial disgrace and mess that Australia finds itself in at present.

Some of the oil that we produce in the Northern Territory goes to Singapore to be refined so that its price is increased before it comes back

to Darwin. That is what happens, and the member for Nhulunbuy should be well aware of that. Does he support that sort of lunacy?

Mr Leo: Where are we supposed to send it at the moment?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the first oil from the Jabiru oilfield went to Hawaii, and then it came back here. In the meantime, Australia is importing oil at an ever-increasing rate because the oil companies operating in Bass Strait are being taxed out of existence. They are paying 80% in tax.

It would be highly desirable to refine Territory oil in the Territory. However, if that is to happen, somebody needs to build a refinery here. Honourable members will not need to be told that such a project requires very big dollars. The government has made such inquiries in the national and international marketplaces previously without being overwhelmed by willing participants. Therefore, I am happy to report that the climate may have changed for the better. Officers of the Department of Mines and Energy attended conferences in Singapore in May and June on the outlook for refineries and downstream petroleum processing. They confirm a rapid growth in demand for refined petroleum products in the Asia Pacific region and the need for new regional refineries. The need has risen quite dramatically because of recent events in the Middle East. That does not mean that prospective refinery operators are rushing us with proposals. This is a highly competitive field. While Darwin has advantages in terms of proximity to oil production, a politically stable environment, availability of land and reasonable proximity to Asian markets, we have too the disadvantage of not being a major international shipping centre and not being located on a busy regional shipping route.

Certainly, interest has re-awakened. As a consequence, I have commissioned a consultancy to establish the parameters under which an oil refinery could be established in Darwin. I am being deliberately cautious about prospects but, at the same time, I have to advise honourable members that 2 groups are currently actively considering Darwin among other locations within the western Pacific region.

The current situation raises for discussion the question of a synthetic fuel plant, a possibility which I spoke about some 2 years ago. Australia has huge reserves of natural gas - trillions of cubic metres. With oil at \$25 a barrel, the synthetic fuel business becomes a whole new ball game. Although I am talking about the process of converting gas to gasoline, I hasten to point out that I am not talking about the technology used in the New Zealand plant. There have been many technological developments in projects converting gas to gasoline throughout the world since the New Zealand plant was built.

The time is now ripe for meaningful taxation reform. Federal governments of both political persuasions have taken \$30 000m from the oil industry, including Bass Strait. Where is that money today? It has gone. Today, oilfields in Australia are being taxed at 80%. They are fast drying up. Bass Strait is on its way out. We have to find new reserves or we will be up for \$4000m-worth of import replacement. That is almost the equivalent of a national wool cheque - not that they are any good these days anyway because you cannot sell wool or, if you can, nobody will pay you adequately.

There will be a disastrous effect on our balance of payments if we do not find some oil pretty soon. The amounts of oil we are talking about are nothing compared to those produced in the Middle East. Kuwait alone produces 1000 million barrels a year. That is equivalent to the total

production from Bass Strait in almost 20 years. We have to get out and start looking for more oil. We have to get the federal government off the neck of the oil companies. BHP is off to Quebec and Vietnam, that great communist country which offers tax-free incentives for the first 5 years. When will this federal government learn? It has to get off the necks of the oil companies so that they can get into exploration, otherwise we will be even further down the tube than we are today.

Dog Control by Local Government

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I have sighted letters written by the honourable minister dealing with the repeal of the Dog Act, with the object of putting the onus of dog control on local governments. It is unclear whether local governments will be able to choose whether or not to undertake dog control. When the Dog Act is repealed, will local governments be required to include the current provisions of the Dog Act in their by-laws or will it be possible for them to refrain from doing so for local reasons?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, clearly the member for Koolpinyah has sighted a letter that I have written to all councils in the Northern Territory indicating the intention of the Northern Territory government to repeal the Dog Act.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I have sighted 2 letters.

Mr MCCARTHY: I am little surprised to learn that some councils are continuing to promote the line that my letter indicates that regulations by councils will be mandatory. In that letter, it is made very clear ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It was not.

Mr MCCARTHY: If it is read in context, it is very clear that regulation is the prerogative of councils. The government has done exactly what the Northern Territory Local Government Association and most councils have asked it to do for years - that is, to get out of the control of dogs in their areas. Councils have a responsibility for the control of dogs, and the Rationalisation of Functions Working Party, which has been in place now for about 2 years, has made it quite clear that there are areas of responsibility that clearly should rest with councils, and there are other areas of responsibility that equally clearly should rest with government. The working party believes that the control of dogs should be with councils, and I have made that clear in writing to all councils.

I have followed that letter with a clarification to the President of the Litchfield Shire Council because he sought that clarification from me. In a phone discussion with the President of the Litchfield Shire Council on Saturday, I pointed out that the letter is quite clear if it is read in context. If the first page is read as well as the second, it is made very clear.

We were progressing down a path of remodelling the Dog Act in the Northern Territory, but it became very obvious that that would stand further in the way of the ability of local governments to control dogs. The government has no intention of handling dog control itself and therefore there is no reason for us to legislate. Clearly, it is something that

councils do and are responsible for. Therefore, regulation that is in place should be theirs. However, I make it clear again to the member for Koolpinyah that I will not be imposing, via legislation, any mandatory provisions on councils to take up that responsibility. It is their responsibility. If they wish to undertake that responsibility, they may do so and, if they wish to ignore it, they may do so. It will be entirely up to their constituents.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Bruce Jefferey MLA

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of Mr Bruce Jefferey MLA, the member for Port Macquarie in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. On behalf of honourable members, I extend to Mr Jefferey a warm welcome, and hope his stay in the Northern Territory will be a pleasant and informative one.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hengyang Workers

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I remind the minister of the promise he has made in the last couple of weeks that Hengyang workers would not suffer through the government's determination to close down and evict Hengyang from the Trade Development Zone. No doubt he is aware that a number of Chinese guest workers have been left destitute by the closure of the company. I understand that the company has even withdrawn their rental bonds, making their continued stay at their present location highly unlikely. What arrangements have been made to protect the Hengyang workers, particularly the affected Chinese workers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the outset, a large number of people are working on this problem as we speak. It would serve no purpose to draw the Hengyang affair out in this Chamber, merely for the sake of drawing it out, whilst there are people across Australia at the moment trying to resolve this issue. I will be brief, but I am happy to sit down with the Leader of the Opposition, if he so wishes, and inform him of all the people who are working on this issue and how we are trying to get it back together. Honourable members will be aware of the efforts that I have made in recent months to ensure that all parties are firing in the same direction on this issue, and that is for the ultimate success of the Northern Territory's Trade Development Zone.

Representatives of the ACTU have been in Darwin recently and representatives of the Clothing and Allied Trades Union are in Darwin at the moment. Officers of the Department of Education, Employment and Training and the Department of Immigration are involved. There are people in Hong Kong working on a resolution. Other people returned from Hong Kong at 5 o'clock this morning and they are also working on the problem. We are committed to getting the Trade Development Zone up and going again, and we are committed to getting the Hengyang workers back to work under a new identity. We have had some offers from people and we are discussing those with the liquidator who has been appointed to try to resolve that as soon as possible.

My statement about looking after the Hengyang workers and getting them back to work was made on the grounds that we can find a new operator and

that we can accelerate that operator through the system to enter the zone, preferably on a walk-in walk-out basis on vacant possession. That is the ultimate aim that we are trying to achieve at the moment. The Hengyang Darwin workers have been given 4-year visas. They do not have to return to China. If they so wish, they can remain in Australia for 4 years. I understand that that applies to some 25 workers.

The Hengyang Holding Chinese workers are in a different situation. They do not have the same advantage as the Hengyang Darwin workers because they arrived a little later than the Hengyang Darwin workers. People are being very lenient, and are very sensitive to their plight at the moment and there are 4 or 5 weeks in which to reassess their case. I have had discussions with the liquidator regarding their accommodation. I am very sensitive to the fact that they have very little to do at present. We are trying to organise English-in-the-workplace courses to provide them with some activities during the day. The Commonwealth Employment Service is working on the matter as well.

The real answer is for everybody to return to work under a new banner, and that is our ultimate aim. Things are happening very quickly and I am confident that we will have an answer in the very near future. Whether that answer is the answer we want is largely out of my hands. It is up to the Commonwealth departments and other people involved to provide us with that answer. I would like to pay full tribute to all those Commonwealth officers who have been working on this matter and, in particular, to all the union representatives from the Miscellaneous Workers Union, the Clothing and Allied Trades Union, the ACTU and the Northern Territory Trades and Labor Council. Many people here might look suspiciously on my congratulating those people. I can see the Chief Minister questioning my attitude there. However, there has been a remarkable turnaround from the last time we were in this Assembly and, in particular, from the sittings before that. I believe we have come a long way ...

Mr Smith: Yes, you have turned around remarkably.

Mr COULTER: It has been on both sides. In times of crisis, we realise that we are all Territorians. We all realise the opportunities that the Trade Development Zone presents to us. We all know the Trade Development Zone is bigger than Hengyang, and we will get on with the job. I am extremely impressed by the commitment of those whom I have mentioned and I indicate my gratitude to all those organisations for their support.

General Aviation Costs in the Territory

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I believe that we have a crisis on our hands in another industry in Darwin at the moment. I refer to a question that I asked in May 1989 of the Minister for Transport and Works. I indicated that a great deal of concern had been expressed by general aviation operators in the Territory about the cost recovery system put in place following the creation of the CAA in the Federal Airports Corporation. Given the importance of general aviation to the Territory, particularly in isolated communities, I asked the minister what was being done to address concern about general aviation costs as a result of the new cost recovery system. Nothing has changed. There is a crisis in that industry at the moment.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I realise that you give members of this House an extreme amount of latitude when asking questions, but I have heard a speech so far and absolutely no question at all.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member for Ludmilla to direct his question as concisely and as quickly as possible.

Mr FIRMIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The opposition must be very sensitive about this. Were those fears justified at the time and are they justified now, a year and a half later?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his request for an update on the fears of the general aviation industry. Certainly, the member for Nhulunbuy, whose constituency would be vitally interested in this matter, would be concerned about the outcome. The member for Ludmilla, and those people who were talking to him 18 months ago, could not have possibly known the full potential consequences, adverse as they now appear to be, of the introduction of the FAC and the constraints and demands that the federal government has placed on it for the operation of Darwin Airport.

Darwin Airport is a major airport without a secondary airport to back it up. In the states, it is usual for light aircraft to have access to a minor airfield. However, of course, the Territory is stuck with the one major airport, and we all expressed concerns at the time about a number of matters. One matter raised by the member for Ludmilla at that time was that the fuel levy placed on the light aircraft industry was put in place initially to cover landing fees. With the introduction of the FAC, its landing fees were a double up. We received no satisfactory answer about that double-dipping from our federal members at that time, and now we are faced with the reality of the move of the general aviation operation from the southern side of the airstrip to the north.

As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, Darwin is a defence strip and the Department of Defence requires that the general aviation industry move to the north side of the airstrip. That has not happened anywhere else in Australia, except possibly at Townsville where the FAC has taken over an airport. People who have built hangars, offices and facilities, and built their businesses on those facilities, are now faced with the same dilemma that Darwin general aviation people are looking at. At the time when the member for Ludmilla raised his question, they were given 3 years notice to vacate the southern side. That deadline is fast approaching now.

Some of the fears raised with me in recent weeks by at least 3 different operators are unfounded, but those that are of concern are that, in addition to that double application of landing charges, they are now faced with extremely high costs to build brand new facilities on the north side and will be required to abandon those that they have been living in for quite some years - decades in many cases. Those will be bulldozed into the dirt. They are faced with increased rental charges, some threefold, on the land that they will occupy on the north side. However, far more critical to them is the lack of determination yet on the precise term of the leases that they are to be given. Some have been told that they will be for periods as low as 10 years, up to 25 years. The crunch is that the common denominator in all of the leases is that, at the end of the lease period, the buildings they build on the north side are to revert to the ownership of the FAC.

Mr Leo: Fred, do you know how boring you are?

Mr FINCH: The member for Nhulunbuy might not give 2 rats about that, but those of his constituents who are to suffer the cost imposition of this will care. It means that, if those people are lucky enough to gain extensions to the leases on their own buildings, they will be paying rental on the improved value of buildings put there at their own cost, and that is quite contrary to what the federal member, Warren Snowdon, said in April 1989. He said then that there would be no cost imposition to Territorians. He said that there was to be no additional cost, and that the big difference between the FAC proposal and that of the Territory government was that we were to charge some terminal fee of \$8 a head for every passenger.

Wait until he sees the increase in ticket prices for those using the new terminal on the north side, with sevenfold to tenfold increases for lease rentals for the major airlines. Wait until he hears what costs those aircraft companies servicing Aboriginal communities in the remote areas of the Northern Territory have to meet by way of extra ticket charges. Those costs will have to be passed on. In 1987, in response to a direct question about small aircraft operators, Senator Collins said on the 7.30 Report that he did not think that there would be any cost imposition to them. He said that they were all in private enterprise and they had to make profits, and they would make profits regardless of the price that was put on their operating costs by the FAC, at the direction of the federal government.

It was the federal government that said they had to get a return on a mickey-mouse \$30m evaluation of the existing assets that had been long paid for by the taxpayer. What did Senator Collins say in response to my suggestion at that time that the Territory government had allocated, in its proposal on the new terminal, \$5m to be put into small operators in the GA industry, to transfer to the north side? We realised that they were in for big costs and that Territorians would not be able to bear it. Senator Collins pooh-poohed the idea. Let us see what he said at the recent opening of the FAC building, when confronted by senior representatives of industry who said seriously to him: 'This is a fine terminal, Senator Collins, but what about the costs that will be imposed on the general aviation industry in the move to the north side?' For the benefit of honourable members opposite, his answer was: 'There will be some casualties'. And then he walked off. What a shameful response!

There are some options here for Senator Collins, who is the Minister for Aviation Support. He can extend, for a substantial period, the leases for those operators that exist already on the southern side, and allow them the freedom to get the value out of the buildings they currently own. Secondly, at the very least, he can provide some government subsidy for those who opt to move at an earlier time to the north side or if people are forced to move to the north side. Thirdly, he might provide access to Territory-held land adjacent to the current airport by way of a taxiway so that the Territory government can see that these small operators are looked after in the interests of all Territorians. A fourth option is totally undesirable, and that is to look for a new secondary airstrip. That would be a great cost to the taxpayer although we cannot cast it out of our considerations. Those are the options open to Senator Collins, and I will look forward to his response to those operators who, at the moment, and despite a great deal of sympathy from the FAC people here, are being faced with catastrophic increases in prices and who are saying: 'Yes, in line with Senator Collins' suggestion, we will have to go out of business'.

Mulholland Brief

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

In his first answer, he said that Mr Mulholland 'was engaged to oversight further police investigations'. Later in his answer he said that, in fact, that was the case. Could the Chief Minister clarify whether Mr Mulholland is leading and supervising an independent investigation into the allegations made by Sergeant Wrenn and others on the 7.30 Report or is he oversighting a further investigation by the police? If so, who is leading and supervising the police investigation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question was a little hard to follow. Certainly, we have spoken at some length about and made very clear in this House exactly what Mr Mulholland's role is, and I did not think that there was any confusion. His role has not changed since he was commissioned to oversight these investigations, but it is a broad oversighting. He is not constrained in how he goes about his oversighting of these investigations. In the end, he will report to me - and I have undertaken to table a copy of his report in this parliament - on any aspect of the investigations or matters relating to the investigations that he has any concerns about whatsoever. If he believes, for whatever reason, that the investigations were not adequate and complete and he recommends another course of action - and suggestions were made that he might recommend that these matters were so complex and were not being dealt with properly that a commission of some sort should be established - he is free to do so. I have given an undertaking to the House that the government will implement whatever Mr Mulholland recommends.

Banning of Alcohol for Tribal Aborigines

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

If the Chief Minister wants to find a way to ban tribal Aborigines from drinking alcohol, why does he want a law that would ban me from drinking but not Mr Michael Mansell?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the member for Arafura agrees with me on which of the 2 gentlemen mentioned is an Aboriginal. The media and some commentators took some of my words out of context, not some of the words ...

Mr Bell: If you would put your mind into gear before you open your mouth, you would not say the sort of things you did.

Mr PERRON: That was very original, Neil.

In my communication to the Prime Minister, I was referring to a situation wherein traditional Aboriginal men, in particular, but women as well, had appealed to me to try to find some way in which communities could remove access to alcohol from members of their communities who had clearly and constantly demonstrated an inability to cope with it. Some members of the media have represented this as my advocating that the right to drink alcohol be withdrawn. I have not advocated that and I do not advocate it. This matter is serious. The problem of Aboriginal alcoholism in particular

has created a dilemma for us. Alcoholism period is a problem for us. However, the seeming inability of quite large numbers of Aborigines to cope with alcohol is something that I am sure all members of this House take seriously. However, whilst we all take it seriously, the divergence of views as to the answers is very significant. If we all talk about them a little more together, we may achieve more common ground than we have to date.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Self-government Celebration Costs

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, further to a question asked of me this morning, I can indicate that the \$200 000 for the self-government celebrations included broadcasting time.

Royal Darwin Hospital Incinerator

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to a recent newsletter circulated by the member for Wanguri in which the member informed residents that he had been responsible for changing the specifications of the incinerator at the Royal Darwin Hospital to meet environmental guidelines, following a meeting with the Department of Transport and Works. I ask the minister whether, in fact, the member for Wanguri did accomplish that?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, frequently one becomes exasperated by the exaggerated claims made by members opposite but, on this occasion, the member for Wanguri has taken the cake. Not only did he make an absolute fool of himself with some of the questions he raised with the Department of Transport and Works and the New South Wales State Pollution Control Authority but, despite some lengthy technical briefings from the department, he still has it wrong. In spite of that, in the newsletter which he circulates in his electorate - and I am not surprised that he does not put his picture and the name of the party he represents on the newsletter - he incorrectly takes the credit for developments at the hospital.

The member for Wanguri claimed that the department's specifications and operating guidelines for the Royal Darwin Hospital would have allowed the new incinerator to release cytotoxins into the atmosphere. That is totally untrue, and he was advised of that in a briefing. In fact, under certain operating conditions, the technical specifications and design of the incinerator would allow those things to be taken into account. More pertinently, the member for Wanguri was briefed on the fact that the basic purpose of the replacement incinerator was to provide a cost-efficient facility which would consume less fuel, that being in the interests of the budget of the Department of Health and Community Services. He has sought to push those matters aside.

He claims that he called for withdrawal of the tender documents, and I suppose the fact that he put that call in a press release newsletter somewhere may justify that claim. Of course, there was no need for that to occur. The specifications met both the New South Wales state pollution control guidelines and the anticipated amendments to those, which are assumed to comprise the forthcoming national scheme. He had been given that information and sought to discard it. He went on to say: 'Following discussions with engineers from the Department of Transport and Works' - and they must despair at having to brief some of these people - 'I have obtained agreement to amend the operating guidelines to overcome the potential problems as originally identified by me'. What absolute nonsense! No wonder his leader is ashamed of him.

During the last sittings, we heard the most abysmal delivery from a shadow spokesman on the environment that could ever have been made anywhere in the world. It was shameful. The people who voted for him, and those who supported the ALP indirectly through the Green Independents, must have reeled in their seats when they heard about that delivery. Not only do we have an incompetent shadow spokesman for the environment, but one who falsely claims credit for matters that he has no reason to claim credit for. Those departmental officers will still be available to him and others in a vain attempt to educate them in matters that really they ought to be across.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Chief Minister is aware of a further serious allegation from a police officer reported on the 7.30 Report last night about 'payments of up to \$30 000'. It was reported that, like the officer mentioned yesterday, this police officer would provide his evidence only directly to Mr Mulholland. Does the Chief Minister intend to maintain his refusal to allow witnesses to approach Mr Mulholland directly? If so, what are we to do about these people who, for whatever reason, are reluctant to be interviewed first by police or by officers of the Department of Law? Are we to assume that their evidence does not exist or that it will simply go away?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of allegations made - I believe by the reporter of the 7.30 Report - last night that a police officer had made allegations about another police officer who was supposedly involved in a \$30 000 corruption racket. I think that chain is worth noting because the member asked me whether I was aware of allegations by a police officer in this regard. In that case, I was not. However, I read a transcript of what was said on the 7.30 Report.

The honourable member asks whether I will continue my refusal to allow witnesses direct access to Mr Mulholland. The honourable member has not really taken much notice of what was said during the Assembly sittings when I announced that, on Northern Territory Police Force initiatives, I had agreed to and facilitated the engagement of Mr Mulholland QC of Queensland to oversight the police investigations in the Northern Territory into 3 particular cases involving drugs, allegations of police corruption and a prostitute. Honourable members opposite do not seem to have grasped that Mr Mulholland QC, a man of eminent standing in this country, the senior criminal counsel in Queensland, is not a man whom you tell how to go about his job.

Mr Bell: That is precisely what you are doing.

Mr PERRON: He is not a man to be told whom he should see and whom he should not see and who will be facilitated to see him. Under his charter, he is able to see any person and he is able to report at the end of the investigations. As I have foreshadowed, those investigations are not far from conclusion. Mr Mulholland is able to report to me, and I have undertaken to table in this Assembly his report on any matter which is of concern to him in respect of the Northern Territory, its government, its officers, its politicians or whomever. He is able also to report with recommendations advising, if he sees fit, that particular matters or sections of matters should be referred to anything from a Royal Commission of as high a standing as the Northern Territory government has the authority to implement down to whatever other levels of investigation or inquiry he sees as being appropriate.

Honourable members seem to be suggesting that we should rewrite Mr Mulholland's charter in some way. In doing so, they are putting the view that he is a man who should be told what to do. He has before him the transcripts of a large number of interviews and re-interviews by senior detectives. Three teams of senior detectives in the Northern Territory Police Force are handling these matters, and they are being oversighted by Mr Mulholland QC and his very able assistant. He has before him the

detailed and unedited transcripts of allegations. If he wants any further interviews to be conducted and if he wants personally to obtain any information from any witness, he is able to take appropriate action. It has been said that, if any person wants to get information to Mr Mulholland, but does not want to see the senior police detectives who are working on this matter, they could perhaps see the Commissioner of Police or the Secretary of the Department of Law with a view to their passing on this information to Mr Mulholland.

I would like the member for MacDonnell, the shadow attorney-general, to stand by the statement he made at the end of his interview with the 7.30 Report last night. In relation to whether a particular sergeant was told to go on paid leave, he said: 'I am not aware of any of the details in respect of any of the officers. The approach that has been taken by the opposition has been to allow the inquiry to proceed and to wait for its recommendations'. I suggest he do exactly that.

Mr Bell: Provided it is unconstrained.

Mr PERRON: Oh, you want to qualify that now. You do not want to wait for the inquiry to conclude?

Mr Coulter: Mr Mulholland is not the sort of person whom you constrain.

Mr Bell: If you cannot ring him up and talk to him or his officers, he is constrained.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, at the beginning of this exercise, honourable members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition ...

Mr Bell: What are you hiding, Marshall?

Mr PERRON: It was said that even such an esteemed person as the Premier of Queensland, who is a bit of a guru to the Leader of the Opposition, supports Mr Mulholland as a man of the highest integrity and a man who might be said to be brilliant in matters of criminality. Honourable members opposite are purporting that this man will be snowed by the Northern Territory police. It is preposterous. This man is eminent in his field in relation to criminal allegations and getting to the bottom of such matters. It is not for us to say to him that we have a list of people that we have determined that he shall interview personally because they have requested it, despite the fact that he has access to all the transcripts of all the investigations and interviews with these very people. He can interview them if he wants to ...

Mr Bell: He does not know about them.

Mr PERRON: ... at any time. He is unconstrained.

Mr Bell: He does not know about them.

Mr PERRON: Oh, come off it!

Mr Speaker, I think that is enough said on this matter at this time. Honourable members opposite should be a little more patient and let the investigations conclude. When Mr Mulholland reports shortly, if there are any questions, I am sure they will be raised, and I encourage members of the opposition to raise them but, for goodness sake, display some confidence in the man you say you support, and in our Commissioner of Police, the

Secretary of the Department of Law and the Ombudsman, all of whom have had no allegations made against them to suggest that they are involved in some great conspiratorial cover-up over this matter. That is what the member for MacDonnell is trying to imply in some sneaky way. Give them a chance to do their work unfettered and to report to the courts, where charges are laid, and let the court processes take their course and see what Mr Mulholland has to say. The honourable member can then make the biggest furore in the world if he believes that Mr Mulholland has been inadequate in addressing the task that has been given to him.

Mulholland Brief

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES

My question follows on from that answer. I start by making it clear that no one is casting aspersions on the character or the ability of Mr Mulholland, the Northern Territory police or anybody else. However, we have a circumstance where it is alleged that, in the community, people - police officers, I understand - have information that they think is relevant to the inquiries that Mr Mulholland is undertaking. For good or bad reasons, they are not prepared to provide that information to the local law enforcement officers. The question then is what we are to do in that situation? How can Mr Mulholland conduct the fullest possible inquiry, when there may well be information ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable Leader of the Opposition ask his question?

Mr SMITH: I have. I asked how Mr Mulholland can conduct the fullest inquiry when there may well be information in the community that has not gone through the official channels but that would help him in his deliberations.

Mr Coulter: Do you think he is a fool?

Mr SMITH: No, we do not think he is a fool, but he cannot know about information that is not available to him because there is no channel for that information to get to him. All we are asking is that a channel be provided for that information to get to him, and the reasonable and logical way to effect that is to allow people in that situation specific access to him. Will the minister provide it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has now joined his colleague. I thought he was staying out of this exercise because he was somewhat embarrassed at the line being taken. He says that he is not implying that Mr Mulholland is incapable of doing his job. He then says the I will tell Mr Mulholland how he should suss out all this relevant information.

To digress for a moment, I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition might ask himself why these persons who claim to have information of wrongdoing in the Northern Territory are not prepared to go to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Smith: I don't know.

Mr Bailey: It does not matter.

Mr PERRON: Oh, it does not matter! It is irrelevant!

Mr Bailey: Yes. If they want to get information to Mr Mulholland, it is irrelevant.

Mr PERRON: It is rather like saying that you want to go and see the Commonwealth Attorney-General on this matter because you are not prepared to discuss it with the Northern Territory Attorney-General or the Chief Minister or that perhaps you might go to England to see the Queen about the matter because you do not trust anyone in between. It is absurd.

Mr Smith: You have set up an inquiry into a matter and now you will not allow people access to that inquiry.

Mr Bailey: You are beginning to sound like Joh Bjelke-Petersen: 'Trust us, trust us!'

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I repeat my point. The Northern Territory Police Force has probably the best reputation of any police force in Australia. Sadly, from time to time, allegations are made and demonstrated to have some validity. Sometimes, a police officer acts improperly. There have been a number of cases in which such people have been dealt with, properly, severely and promptly and, where necessary, that will continue to happen. Sadly, when dealing with fairly large numbers of people, the occasional rotten apple is found among them. We must be diligent in maintaining systems which will weed these people out and trample on them.

I can assure honourable members, people in the public gallery and the listening public that the Commissioner of Police of the Northern Territory is a man of the highest standing, an absolutely dedicated man, a professional police officer to the core, who is determined to ensure that the Northern Territory Police Force remains the best and cleanest police force in Australia. Those honourable members opposite who know the Commissioner of Police personally probably do not disagree with some of those statements. Why then are they prepared to put up with this nonsense that, because a citizen or a police officer claims personally not to trust the Commissioner of Police and refuses to talk to him about allegations of wrongdoing by other police officers, it is legitimate to go over the head of the Commissioner of Police, the implication being that perhaps the Police Commissioner is not an honourable fellow. It is a nonsense.

Mr Smith: You have established an inquiry into a number of matters.

Mr PERRON: We have also the Secretary of the Department of Law, a man who does not have such a high public profile as does the Commissioner of Police - nor should he - but a man in whom, personally, I would place enormous faith. He is a man of integrity, who takes his job seriously and will continue to do so. He also is able to be approached by persons who do not want to go to the Commissioner of Police for discussions. Indeed, occasionally, people do have talks with Mr Conran, the Secretary of the Department of Law. If necessary, he will facilitate the transmission of material, unedited in any way, to Mr Mulholland, including requests to be interviewed by Mr Mulholland. Mr Mulholland has before him a request by a Sergeant Wrenn to be interviewed. There is no cover-up about this. However, we will not instruct Mr Mulholland to see such people. It is up to himself. For goodness sake, have some faith in the man in whom you claim to have some faith. He is not a fool. He is a brilliant criminal lawyer and

the most senior criminal counsel in Queensland. Have some faith that he will not be snowed by all this waffle from police and that he will see that there is more to this matter than has been investigated.

We are saying that, hopefully, there will be an end to this soon. The investigations are nearly concluded. If charges are appropriate, they will be laid. The matter will become very public, as it should if charges are laid. If there are persons investigated about whom allegations have been made and charges are not laid, I am sure there will be some explanation. We are placing our faith in Mr Mulholland to have that double security over and above our current police and legal system. He has been given an unfettered charter to tell us whether this investigation has been carried out impeccably. If we care to wait a little longer, we will have that information. I suggest honourable members be a little patient and get out of his hair while he gets on with the job.

Payment of Part-Time Instructors

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In the past, there have been regular complaints from the Department of Education's part-time instructors about delays in the processing of their pay cheques. Recently, the minister indicated that efforts were being made to address this problem. Can he indicate whether an improved system has been developed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure honourable members will have received complaints from time to time about late payment to part-time instructors, and I gave an undertaking to address that matter. Treasury has approved the establishment of regional cheque accounts, and the necessary mechanisms and procedures are now in place to pay part-time instructors and contract staff at the completion of each fortnight. Members would be aware that this has been a problem in the past. I hope that this new process will enable people to be paid at the time that they complete the work. We do not anticipate any problems with the new arrangements. However, the situation will be monitored by the department. If any members continue to receive complaints about part-time instructors not receiving their salaries on time, I ask them to contact my office or the department.

Cost of State Square

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The minister has told the public repeatedly that the State Square is a fixed price project and that the price is \$100m. The Auditor-General's report, which was released publicly yesterday, indicated that the project would cost 'well in excess of \$100m'. Is the price of State Square fixed and, if so, what is that fixed price?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at this very moment, to all intents and purposes, the State Square project is on target and on budget. We gave notice in 1988 that, with the exclusion of fees and landscaping costs, the project costs were \$100m approximately. I think it was \$99.8m in 1988 dollars. The first stage, the Supreme Court, is near completion now and is almost on target. It is a very small margin over the original budget for construction costs.

In 1988, we announced that the bare building costs were \$87m. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition might recall that fact, if he would cast his mind back. We gave to the press a very comprehensive breakdown of all of the component costs of the total project. Of course, there will be some escalation of costs resulting from a natural rise in the cost of construction and, taking that into account, the Supreme Court building is almost identically on budget. The second part of the project, the Parliament House, is currently out for tender for all of the subcontract packages. As I have said repeatedly in this House to the Leader of the Opposition and to others, when those tenders close and we add up all of the subcontracting prices, we will know whether or not the original budget figure for Parliament House is on target.

I am not sure where the figures used in the Auditor-General's report have come from. I have not seen them myself. It may have been a descriptive suggestion that they would be well over \$100m. In a month or so, when the prices have been collated and evaluated and recommendations have come through, we may find, as we did with stage 1, that on some components we will accept a small cost penalty to ensure that locals get the work. Honourable members may recall that, with about 4 components of the first building, we accepted a few hundred thousand dollars local penalty to ensure that all of the works went locally. Local businesses are extremely pleased. They say that they believe 95% of the project has gone to locals and, of course, that is rewarding to the government which took the decision in the first place.

With regard to the final price, we will have to wait until those tenders come in and then we will evaluate them. Some variations have been made to the original design brief, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows, so there may be some change in the price, but only time will tell. At that stage, as I have always said, we will announce the total budget figure for the total project.

Mr Smith: It is likely to be bigger than you thought?

Mr FINCH: At the moment, we do not know. We have no cause to say that it will be higher at all, other than for the escalation factor and those components that were announced at the time as being outside the \$100m.

There is no cause for concern at the moment. In fact, I am extremely pleased with the way the project is going, and particularly by the way it returns jobs. Some 600 jobs are involved in stage 1, on and off site. We spoke about this yesterday in the House. A clear statement has been made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Territory Nationals that they would stop the project forthwith. I would like every one of those 600 workers, whatever they are doing, to know that the Leader of the Opposition, the ALP and the Nationals would stop that project tomorrow if they had half a chance. Fortunately for those workers, and for the hundreds who will work on Parliament House, they will not get that chance.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

An erstwhile friend of the Leader of the Opposition and a former Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority is currently a would-be politician. I refer to Mr Bob Ellis who has said in public statements that the proposed flood mitigation dam at Alice Springs cannot proceed because a certificate issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection

Authority to protect a number of trees near the proposed dam wall will prevent construction. Has the minister investigated this claim and, if so, what action will be taken?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I instructed the Department of Law to examine the statement that was made by Mr Ellis, and my subsequent advice is that a certificate has been correctly issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority for the construction of a flood mitigation dam. Of course, the Northern Territory government will comply with every aspect of that certificate. However, in the event that the construction proposal, as outlined in the draft environmental impact statement, is amended, and I expect that it will be amended in the final EIS, then the Territory government may have to seek an amendment to the certificate. That is standard practice, and we agree with that.

To date, there has been no breach of the certificate whatsoever. Contrary to the claims made by Mr Ellis, nothing illegal has been done and nothing illegal is intended. Some honourable members opposite may well have some vested interest in not seeing the Alice Springs flood mitigation dam come to fruition, but they cannot argue with any degree of confidence that Aboriginal people have not been consulted about the dam proposal. The Chief Minister and I have taken great pains to discuss the project personally with affected Aboriginal people over the last 18 months. We have set out to inform them at every step along the consultative path. I firmly believe we have done as much as we can in this area to date.

Mr Ellis, honourable members opposite and others who are politically opposed to construction of the dam can be assured that the project will not start until the final environmental impact statement has been prepared and released and, in the process, any variation in accordance with section 23 of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act will be properly addressed.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of the report commissioned by the Central Land Council on the flood mitigation dam in Alice Springs by engineers Webb, McKeowan and Associates? Further, is he aware that, at page 7 of the report, under section 35, 'Warning Time', they claim that 'the whole presentation of warning time is misleading and that the calculations, such as they are, clearly show no measurable improvement in warning time compared with the existing situation'? Would the minister care to comment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure if the honourable member is quoting from the complete report. We received the report after we requested it yesterday. In fact, it was released on 2 August, albeit selectively. Neither the Conservation Commission nor the Power and Water Authority was paid the courtesy of being given a copy of the complete Webb Report. We received the complete Webb Report yesterday, and officers of the Conservation Commission and the Power and Water Authority are examining it. I would not like to comment ...

Mr Collins: It is pretty straightforward.

Mr COULTER: As I said, it was distributed selectively. We were not given a copy. Even though 8 August was the closing date for all submissions in this regard, we were not given a copy until yesterday. I do not want to comment on the Webb Report other than to say that we may agree with much of what is in the report.

Mr Collins: I doubt it.

Mr COULTER: Let us wait and see. The Central Land Council, which commissioned the report and distributed some parts of it, has now given us the complete report. I will wait until our engineers have had the opportunity to examine the complete report before I make any comment on those aspects.

Live Beef Exports

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Recently, the Philippines government issued an executive order to increase tariffs on feeder steer imports. What effect will that increase in tariffs have on the live beef trade from Australia?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question and his interest in the well-being of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. Some 15% of cattle turned off in 1989 in the Northern Territory was sold for live export, and the Philippines comprised a large part of that. In the order of 28 000 cattle were exported live from Australia in the fiscal year 1989-90. Some 90% of those animals were sourced from the Northern Territory. The national value of live export is something in the order of \$10m a year, and 90% of that comes from the Northern Territory. Thus, it is a significant component of the turn-off of our pastoral industry. It has a considerable flow-on to the Northern Territory economy and to the buoyancy of our pastoral industry. The interest displayed by the member for Karama is in contrast to that displayed by the honourable members opposite, particularly the shadow spokesman for primary industry who, in the past, has spoken out quite strongly against the live export of cattle from the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: That is a load of absolute codswallop.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I refer the member for Stuart to his comments on Wednesday 15 February 1989, and I quote from the Parliamentary Record: 'I have often spoken about the outrageous number of cattle which we export on the hoof from the Northern Territory'.

Mr Ede: Exactly. It would be far preferable to have our own department process them locally.

Mr REED: It gives the lie to what the honourable member and opposition members were saying yesterday in relation to jobs, jobs, jobs. The honourable member has opposed continuously the live export of cattle and has taken no interest in the possible loss of these markets. The member for Stuart has fought consistently against anything the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory has done to better itself and to further the economy and development of the Northern Territory. It gives the lie to the argument put forward by members of the opposition yesterday about jobs, jobs, jobs. They really do not care. This means jobs, jobs, jobs and that is what this

government is here to protect. The honourable member should be absolutely ashamed of himself. I have proven very clearly that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is insincere in what he says in this House and in what he says to the industry. I have proven him to be a liar.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr REED: I withdraw the remark, Mr Speaker.

By parliamentary decree, the Philippines government has moved to increase the tariff on feeder steer imports from 10% to 30%. This is an impost that the Northern Territory cattle industry will not be able to withstand. I have had discussions with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and, yesterday, I wrote to the Minister for Trade Negotiations, Neil Blewett, who was in the Philippines the week before last when these announcements were made. I must say that they were made somewhat to the surprise of some of the Philippines people present and certainly to the surprise of the honourable minister. I have written to him explaining the impact that this will have on the Northern Territory pastoral industry. The AMLC is pursuing the matter also.

During 1989, the Philippines government twice increased the permitted level of feeder cattle importation into the Philippines, first to 38 000 head per year and, secondly, to 58 000 cattle per year. Of course, that caused the Northern Territory industry, both the producers and exporters of live cattle, to increase their potential to service those markets. These recently announced increases, which will come into effect at the end of this month, will impact seriously on their ability to service those markets and, indeed, on their long-term potential to be able to meet demand. Therefore, it is a matter of considerable concern.

The consequences of the announced change will mystifyingly classify the cattle as 'finished goods' from the point of view of the tariff to be applied in the Philippines. That classification will suffer a 30% tariff, and that is the position that we face. I am pursuing the matter and I hope that the opposition's primary industry spokesman, the member for Stuart, will take a greater interest in this issue and will support the primary industry which he has failed to support previously.

State Square

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I remind the honourable minister again of the statement contained in the Auditor-General's annual report that the State Square project is likely to cost 'well in excess of \$100m'. No doubt those words were chosen carefully by the Auditor-General. I remind the honourable minister of his statement in 1988 that the cost of the State Square was fixed and would not be more than \$100m in 1988 figures. If the Auditor-General can tell us that the cost of State Square will be 'well in excess of \$100m' - and obviously, in reaching that conclusion, he has used information available in the minister's own department - why is the minister himself not able to provide us with a more accurate figure on the likely cost of State Square than he has given us so far?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously, the Auditor-General is a much more astute and observant man than is the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, he has chosen his words very carefully. He has used nothing more than a descriptive term ...

Mr Collins interjecting.

Mr FINCH: ... at the most, to forecast ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Sadadeen not to interject in that manner. I remind him that this question time is being broadcast and, in order to allow constituents in his own electorate to hear the answer, I would ask him to be silent.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it is quite obvious that, if the Auditor-General was privy to a specific figure, he has carefully chosen not to use it because of its lack of precision. If he had a predictable figure of, say, \$150m or \$151m, he would have said that the cost of the project is expected to be ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr FINCH: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to close his mouth and to open his mind for just another moment, he will hear my response. I have told him that, when tenders close in a few months time, we will know the precise figure. And, yes, it may vary from the original budget.

Mr Smith: It is a new definition of a fixed price contract.

Mr FINCH: He still cannot comprehend. He is an ex-educator and it is probably a blessing that he is no longer influencing our schoolchildren.

Mr Ede: He uses an elastic band.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr FINCH: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would like to open his mind as well, he too might learn something.

I explained that progress to date has shown a very small variation, less than \$2m, to the original budget.

Mr Smith: Up or down?

Mr FINCH: Up. I explained that this was a direct result of government taking a number of decisions to ensure that work went to local businesses. The air-conditioning ducting is an example. Tiling could have been done more cheaply by tilers from Victoria, and we could have had the painting done a little more cheaply by using painters from New South Wales. Carpentry could have been done more cheaply from South Australia. However, this government took a deliberate decision to ensure that 90% of the work would be carried out locally by local tradesman and local labourers supplied with material from local shops and manufactured in local establishments. We could have obtained the reinforcement steel a little more cheaply from South Australia and the structural steel a little more cheaply from Western Australia. We could have done exactly what is being done at the new Darwin

Airport Terminal. As the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government said yesterday, a visit to that site reveals more Western Australian and New South Wales cars than Territory cars. The construction of the Supreme Court, now in progress, is about keeping jobs and keeping people in the Territory. It is about feeding them, about sending children to school ...

Mr Smith: That is good.

Mr FINCH: Now we have the first acknowledgement that it is good. This is the man who said in the streets that, together with his coalition colleague, the member for Barkly, he would close the job down forthwith and put those ...

Mr Tuxworth: Hear, hear!

Mr FINCH: I take up that interjection. I do not need to be the honourable member's campaign manager because people will know, when he runs for that seat in Darwin, that if he had the opportunity - which he will not have - he is the man who would put those people into the dole queue.

To return to my answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question, I can say that it is true that the price has increased as a result of escalation.

Mr Smith: What is the price? You are the responsible minister. What is it?

Mr FINCH: Our costs have not escalated enormously, unlike the costs of any project ever completed by a Labor government anywhere in Australia, whether it be the Parliament House in Canberra, or the project on the waterfront in Sydney in the Wran days. Their costs escalated threefold - indeed, in the case of Parliament House in Canberra, from \$200m to \$1200m. Our project is being very well managed. It is on target and on budget. It is delivering jobs ...

Mr Tuxworth: What has it cost?

Mr FINCH: I have told you what it has cost. Surely the member for Barkly does not have a problem opening his ears. The original announcement in 1988 ...

Mr Tuxworth: I only want to know what it has cost.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, he has been told 3000 times, and I will tell him again. The original budget of \$100m in 1988 dollars, excluding landscaping and fees, is still on target.

Mr Ede: What will the landscaping cost?

Mr Tuxworth: What will it cost with escalation?

Mr FINCH: I can do a calculation for him later if he likes.

Mr Tuxworth: No. You cannot do that until all the tender prices come in.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, he now understands that we cannot know the full cost until the tender prices close. It takes a little time for the penny to

drop with some people. I will repeat for him that the actual price for stage 1 is a little over original budget, including escalation. These figures are reasonably well predicted.

The reason that we used figures of this sort - and we did it deliberately in 1988 - was so that people in the industry would know what our current commitment was. On this project, we are not in a burning hurry. If we have to stretch it out so that locals are assured of getting the right product and having the right involvement, so be it. We will accept the escalations and the natural rises in the costs of products and labour. When we have finished the job, we will know the total figure, including the escalation to the last day.

The total price for stage 2 ...

Mr Tuxworth: It is the total sum of the tenders that have come in.

Mr FINCH: Now he has it. The price of stage 2 will be known in a little less than 2 months time. He will know then exactly what the basic construction price will be. Unless there is a major variation from prices as they come in, it will be on budget notwithstanding those variations that I have explained.

Hepatitis B Study

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I draw his attention to a recent study by the Menzies School of Health Research. I understand that some preliminary results of that study have now been made available to the Department of Health and Community Services. It has identified a very high level of infection with hepatitis B among Territory primary schoolchildren. Has his department had time to determine the response that it intends to make?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the results of the study to which the honourable member is referring are still being evaluated. The study included a survey of some 1115 Territory primary schoolchildren. One of the preliminary findings was that 29% of the children in this group had been exposed to hepatitis B virus at some time during their lives. It is well known that there is a high level of hepatitis B in the Territory community and vaccination programs are administered by the Department of Health and Community Services to address that problem. Nevertheless, in recognition of these findings, the government has decided to expand its programs and to provide hepatitis B vaccine for all newborn babies in the Territory. Currently, vaccine is provided by the government for high-risk groups only.

It is too early for the impact of our current hepatitis B program to show up in such a survey and so there is no reason to suppose that these existing programs are inadequate. However, I realise that the survey's findings could cause some concern to parents of newborn babies, and the government wants to offer them the fullest support. This new initiative will cost the Territory about \$30 000 a year on top of what we spend already on hepatitis B control. Under existing programs, a large number of Territorians are vaccinated every year. These include all newborn babies in high-risk communities, policemen and prison officers who are likely to encounter blood in the course of their duties with wounded or violent people, and the families of known carriers. That is not a mutually

exclusive group, but it gives an indication of the sort of people who are covered.

The government began routine hepatitis B vaccination of all Aboriginal children at birth in 1988. In 1989, the government submitted a proposal to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to vaccinate all Aboriginal children from birth to 12 years of age. That would have been undertaken at a cost of \$1.3m. However, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs rejected that proposal. Later in 1989, DAA offered \$500 000 for a vaccination education program to be developed in consultation with Aboriginal medical services. The low level of funding was for children up to 5 years of age and covered 1575 children in the Alice Springs and Barkly regions. The remaining 2517 children were intended to be covered under later funding. In June this year, the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Commission offered \$450 000 to the Territory, only \$50 000 of which was for the Department of Health and Community Services' programs in conjunction with Aboriginal medical services. The remainder was to go direct to the Anyinginyi Congress and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. A request has been made to ATSIC to provide adequate funding for the vaccination program in the 1990-91 financial year.

This has been a matter of some frustration for me in relation to this program. It is an example of some of the issues of concern arising as a result of the ideological positions being adopted by ATSIC in respect of independent health services. In respect of this hepatitis B program, our departmental assessments were that, for \$276 496, the Department of Health and Community Services could vaccinate 3500 children and, for \$376 601, the Aboriginal medical services could vaccinate 600 children. On that pro rata basis, with the allocation of \$450 000, we could have vaccinated every Aboriginal child in that age range throughout the Northern Territory through the Department of Health and Community Services - that is 4100 children. Because ATSIC insisted that \$400 000 of the \$450 000 had to go to the independent health services, only about 1500 children will be vaccinated.

I think that is a gross waste of money simply to promote an ideological position taken by the ATSIC organisation. It is a matter of some real concern. I have taken the matter up with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. As usual, it is very difficult to get a response on this type of request. It is very similar to what occurred, unfortunately, with the marginalisation of Aboriginal health at the National Health Ministers' Conference, with the formation of those new Aboriginal health organisations through ATSIC rather than through the health organisations of the federal government. I am very concerned about many of those problems.

I would like to make the point that, although hepatitis B is considered to be a mild disease, it can cause permanent liver damage. It is endemic in Aboriginal communities and usually it is acquired in early childhood, with most individuals then developing an immunity. Earlier studies in Australia and overseas have shown that the risk of hepatitis B infection is greatest for children of Asian and southern European origin, and for Aboriginal children. The Menzies School of Health Research study confirms this. Medical research has shown that there is a small risk of hepatitis B transmission between children at kindergarten and an even smaller risk between children at primary school. The study could provide no evidence to suggest that transmission has occurred at school.

Other studies have shown that some children become infected with hepatitis B at or around the time of birth, and others become infected in the home or community environment within the first few years of life.

Hepatitis B is highly infectious and is transmitted by exchange of body fluids during sexual intercourse, through contact with infected blood and even through contact with open sores. The risk of transmission is increased in situations involving overcrowded living conditions, contaminated water supplies, poor housing and sanitation, and high levels of skin infection. Generally, the risk of infection is low for older children and adults but immunisation is available. People needing advice as to the advisability of immunisation should contact their doctor or their local Community Health Centre.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr BAILEY (Wanguri)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the Minister for Transport and Works made a number of comments relating to me personally, and I feel I need to correct the record. The first demonstrated the total ignorance of the minister. He held up a page from a 4-page newsletter and said: 'Doesn't the honourable member bother putting his name or any other information that identifies where it comes from'. That action shows the sheer idiocy of the honourable member in not ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. I ask the honourable member for Wanguri to withdraw the words 'sheer idiocy'.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw the words.

Mr SPEAKER: Unreservedly.

Mr BAILEY: Unreservedly, I withdraw the words 'sheer idiocy'.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member was given leave to provide a personal explanation. He is making a speech regarding the content of his newsletter and various other matters.

Members interjecting

Mr SPEAKER: There was a point of order in relation to some of the terminology the honourable member used but, at this stage, I do not believe that the statement that he is making is contrary to standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the honourable minister the lack of information given to indicate where that part of the newsletter came from. It is part of a 4-page newsletter that carries quite clearly the name 'John Bailey's Wanguri Electorate Newsletter' on the front of it. If the person who passed the copy to him had given him the entire newsletter, perhaps he would have had that information.

Secondly, the honourable minister stated that the reference in the newsletter to the fact that I had received assurances, following my initiation of inquiries, that the specifications for operating procedures would be changed, is incorrect. Information was brought to my attention regarding deficiencies in the tender procedures for the new hospital incinerator. I made inquiries with the New South Wales State Pollution Control Commission regarding that and received from that body information that was basically a document called 'Notes on Biomedical Waste Incineration'. They sent copies to the Conservation Commission too, which was the first time any Northern Territory department had had copies ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing order 57, in relation to personal explanations, says that 'having obtained leave from the Chair, a member may explain matters of a personal nature'. The honourable member is debating the contents of a document and advice he has received.

Mr SPEAKER: The standing order that the honourable Attorney-General is referring to, standing order 57, allows that there be no debate in regard to the personal statement that an honourable member is making.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I thank you.

This information was received in the Northern Territory by both my office and that of the Minister for Conservation. They pursued that information. I agreed that, from information that I had received initially, the original questions that I raised with the State Pollution Control Commission did not appear to be the major problem. However, the information based in that document did allude to there being 'problems with the operating procedure as specified in the tender document'.

I asked then for a meeting with a Mr Allan White of the Department of Transport and Works ...

Mr Hatton: A ministerial officer, I believe.

Mr BAILEY: A ministerial officer, Mr Allan White, with 2 engineers from the Department of Transport and Works. I had a long discussion with them and an agreement reached was that the problem related to the ability for the incinerator to be operated at 2 different burn temperatures. The tender document suggested that the higher temperature should be used for cytotoxic waste and the lower temperature for other biomedical waste. It was pointed out quite clearly in this document that the higher temperature was needed for all biomedical waste, and I received an assurance from Allan White that the directions for the operation of the incinerator would be that it would operate at the higher temperature for all materials that were considered in any way dangerous through producing dioxins and furans and that, if the operating procedure could not be guaranteed, then the switching device that adjusted it between one temperature and the other would be taken out of service. He stated quite categorically also that the original reason for installing the incinerator was as a cost-saving measure, a fact which has never been disputed. However, he added that, if there were any risk of producing dioxins and furans, increased cost would have to be incurred as a result of running the incinerator at the higher temperature.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Ophthalmology Services at RDH and Fogg Dam

Mr HATTON (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, during the adjournment debate last evening, the member for Koolpinyah raised some questions in respect of ophthalmology services at Royal Darwin Hospital. As well, she raised some issues associated with Fogg Dam. In respect of the Fogg Dam issues, I am obtaining more comprehensive information before providing an answer.

However, in respect of ophthalmology services, I can respond that, at the Royal Darwin Hospital, we have 1 full-time plus 1 sessional ophthalmologist. The full-time ophthalmologist is an overseas-qualified person whose qualifications are fully recognised in Australia. Currently, he is on leave and a locum British ophthalmologist is working in the hospital at this time. In addition, a 'rotating' Registrar from Sydney Eye

Hospital comes to Royal Darwin Hospital. Waiting times for eye surgery are virtually non-existent. We have 12 Aboriginal patients, some of whom have not even decided to have surgery at this stage. They are still considering their position. There is virtually no waiting time for surgery.

As for eye clinics, at one time there was a 2-month delay in appointments because we were not sure the locum was coming. However, most people were told to ring about now because they could have earlier appointments if the locum had arrived. In the south, it is common for people to wait much longer for their appointments. I am advised that there are waits of about 18 months for access to ophthalmology services. Here, access is available almost straight away. The recent 2-month delay was to satisfy the ophthalmologist coming in.

With our full-time specialist, plus Dr Mahmood in the private sector, and with part-time sessions plus another private ophthalmologist in the town, demand is such that it would be unlikely to support any more specialists in this field. Some 12 months ago, the waiting list for surgery was 6 months. Now it is non-existent. This is because our full-time specialist has been going out to remote areas, determining problems and working hard to reduce the waiting lists. I have no way of finding out what the waiting times are on the private lists, but I believe that the information I have given satisfactorily answers the honourable member's question.

Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In this House in February of 1989, the minister said that he was confident that he would be able to confirm a major development by Henry and Walker on Myilly Point 'before the end of the year'. That was before the end of 1989. It is now 5 years since the government entered into an arrangement with Henry and Walker over that land, and not a sod has been turned. How long is the minister prepared to support his deal, when the favoured developer has patently failed to provide a single job on the most valuable development site in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would be aware that a proposal was put to the government before the end of last year. We referred the developer to the Darwin City Council because of areas of council land that impinged on the proposal. As I said last year, the matter cannot go on for ever. However, we must bear in mind that the use of the site is constrained by the university which will be there for at least another 6 years. I can definitely assure honourable members that a proposal was put and that there will be some further work done regarding the time frames involved. Obviously, the situation must be freed up to ensure that a valuable area can be developed, but developed in a way that is beneficial to all of us.

Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Am I to assume from his answer that the government is looking at an extension of the exclusivity period for Henry and Walker over this land until the Northern Territory University vacates the remainder of the area? If that is not the case, what time scale is the government looking at?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's assumption, the answer is no. In relation to the second part of the question, I refer him to the answer I made last year

Mosquito Control

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What progress has been made towards implementing the recommendations of the Mosquito Task Force report prepared by his department and the Darwin City Council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Karama has more than a passing interest in this subject, as has the member for Leanyer. Since the day they were elected, both have been promoting the cause of mosquito control in the northern suburbs of Darwin. In his maiden speech in this House, the member for Karama referred to the concerns that the people in his electorate had about the continuing mosquito problems emanating from the Leanyer Swamp area.

The government has been doing extensive work in that area since that time. I am pleased to update honourable members on the latest developments that are occurring to address this very serious problem for the people in the northern suburbs who live in the vector range of mosquitoes at Leanyer. The transmission of diseases by mosquitoes is a major problem in the Territory. Other than the ever-present threat of malaria, transmission of the Ross River virus occurs in the Northern Territory on an annual basis. My Department of Health and Community Services has a comprehensive surveillance and control program. This program is operating so well that dengue fever is not present in the Northern Territory in spite of a current outbreak in Queensland.

To further understand mosquito disease control, my department has undertaken studies on the basic biology of the *Anopheles faranti* complex which is the primary vector of malaria in the south-west Pacific. In conjunction with the Menzies School of Health Research, the department has developed and perfected a DNA probe which is now ready for use. This has been accomplished after 2 years of research at a cost of \$30 000 per annum. In preliminary investigations, this probe has been successful in identifying the various members of the species complex for adults, larvae and even dried museum specimens. This will be useful in ecological and habitat studies required for malaria vector control. Further collaboration with the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has developed additional techniques of identification of these mosquitoes as well as lists of all viruses carried by the mosquitoes.

My department conducts a helicopter control program against salt-marsh mosquitoes, principally in the Darwin and Alice Springs regions, with an annual budget of \$50 000. This is further supported by a combined mosquito engineering program, involving the Darwin City Council, to eliminate breeding areas by engineering drainage. This involves an annual budget of \$180 000. I am pleased to report that a major maintenance program in drains around Darwin has been largely completed and that the drains are mosquito-free.

A Northern Territory disease control program has been instigated at a cost of \$35 000 per annum to assist with direct mosquito control in the population centres of Jabiru, Darwin and Alice Springs. Recently, Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the report which suggested the need for a better resourced mosquito control program and the establishment of a Mosquito Control Advisory Committee. The committee will be of particular value in reviewing program performance, disseminating information to the community, interpreting information from the community, and assisting in the decision-making process in respect of contingency options. It will advise me through the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health and Community Services.

The committee will be modelled on others which have been effective elsewhere in Australia. It will include the following members: a representative of the Medical Entomology Branch and another from the Communicable Diseases Branch; a medical practitioner; a member of the Legislative Assembly; an alderman of the Darwin City Council; and a representative of the Environment Unit of the Conservation Commission. I can advise honourable members that the Legislative Assembly representative will be the member for Karama who clearly has a direct interest in the matter from an electorate viewpoint, an interest which has been apparent since he was elected in 1983. In addition, there will be 2 community representatives and a nominee from the Department of Defence.

The committee will meet twice yearly or as required, and we will be kept informed on the current status and performance of elements of the mosquito control program. Sufficient members of the committee were appointed to allow an inaugural meeting on 8 August at which agreement was reached on the general areas of interest. My department agreed to provide secretariat functions, and I expect the remaining vacancies on the committee to be filled soon.

One important element highlighted in the report of the task force was the responsibility of the Department of Defence as the owner of a large section of the land containing mosquito breeding sites close to Darwin's northern suburbs. Recently, I have written to the Minister for Defence, Mr Robert Ray, seeking his financial support for remedial works on defence land. These works, which largely comprise restoring land pitted by bomb craters, are essential if our mosquito control program is to be effective. The estimated cost of such rectification works is \$200 000. I have not yet had a response from the federal minister, but I will keep honourable members informed about developments. In respect of the financing of this rectification work, the committee has proposed that the 3 levels of government - Commonwealth, Territory and local - contribute on a pro-rata basis, according to the proportion of land area which they control within the vector area. I think that is an eminently reasonable approach. The Northern Territory government has accepted the proposal for the commitment of funds on that basis, as has the Darwin City Council. The only level of government which has made no commitment at all in that area is the Commonwealth. I assure honourable members that I will keep pressing the Commonwealth to meet its environmental obligations to the people of the northern suburbs.

Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, I refer the minister to an answer that he gave in this Assembly on 21 February 1989: 'The development rights for Myilly Point are in the hands of Henry and Walker. As I said, there is no time constraint on the developer. Of course, the government would not allow those rights to extend indefinitely'. This morning, he said that the government was considering time constraints on Henry and Walker. When will the government take a decision to stop this farce whereby a developer can hold up development of a prime piece of real estate in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a pity we have to keep on giving answers to the Leader of the Opposition because he does not listen to what he is told. He likes to ignore anything which informs him of the facts. I am glad he referred back to that answer because it stated that the exclusivity would not exist forever.

Mr Smith: It has been a long time.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, there he goes again. He is not interested. The community knows that that is one of his big problems. One of these days he may wake up to that, and then we might be in a bit of trouble.

Quite plainly, the government's attitude now is that no exclusivity exists. The government would certainly entertain any proposal from any other developer that would do justice to the site. The answer that I gave

in February referred to that course of action. However, the Leader of the Opposition does not want to understand what is going on. He would rather try to make a fuss and grab a headline. I cannot help him if he does not want to understand, but he certainly wastes the time of the House and community by going over these matters continuously.

Racing Industry

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

Can the minister advise the House on the progress of the racing industry in the Northern Territory, particularly after what must be considered the most successful Darwin Cup ever held?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the results of the Darwin Cup Carnival are the best on record - a record field, a record number of visitors and participants, and an excellent carnival overall.

Mr Vale: And a winner for Alice Springs.

Mr FINCH: And, of course, as the member for Braitling has prompted, a win to Lord Chamberlain, a horse owned and trained in Alice Springs by John Turner.

It was an exciting finale to a month of racing, and I need to commend Ted Bailey, the Board of the Darwin Turf Club, and its Secretary, Paul Cattermole, for an excellent job done again. The club has done a tremendous amount to improve the facilities over the years, and much of that work has been supported by funds that it has received from the TAB. I need to remind honourable members that the TAB is flourishing. It has the greatest growth rate in Australia and has come from something like an \$18m turnover in 1985 to some \$45m to date. Those profits are put to very good use in supporting the racing industry throughout the Northern Territory, thus returning to the punters a large proportion of their investment dollars in the form of improved racing facilities and amenities.

The Bennett Report, which was adopted 3 years ago, recommended levels of funding which have now been exceeded due to those improvements in the TAB turnover, and that trend will continue. We are looking at better broadcasting facilities and, as I advised members last year, we have been waiting for the federal Minister for Transport and Communications to approve a limited broadcast licence for that purpose. That will be a radio network that will operate off the Imparja satellite providing a comprehensive racing broadcast system to people not only in remote areas of the Northern Territory, but right throughout the Northern Territory and interstate.

When the former federal minister was in Darwin, just before the federal election, he did give an undertaking that, if they were returned to power, that approval would be forthcoming. It has been a little slow. Some further reviews have been conducted in Canberra but we hope that, before long, that approval will be forthcoming and will enable the provision of a better facility for those punters who would like not only to take advantage of the telephone system to the TAB to place bets but who wish to hear the race called whilst at their homes, while they are doing their gardening, sitting on the verandah or driving their cars. When we get that licence, and we trust that the federal minister will not hold that up much longer, that facility will be put into place immediately. A good return will help

to increase TAB turnover and, once again, that will help to promote racing. The carnival was excellent and a great time was enjoyed by all. Many compliments were received from interstate visitors, trainers, jockeys and tourists who are interested in the racing game. I finish by offering my congratulations to one and all of those involved in the Darwin Cup Carnival.

Kava

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What procedures has he put in place in relation to the restriction of kava sales to remote communities? What success or otherwise has been achieved through the consultation process which his department is undertaking in relation to the sale of kava generally?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thought I had answered a question along those lines on Tuesday, but I am happy to answer the question because kava is a really important matter, particularly in the electorate of the member for Arnhem. Briefly, without reiterating all the matters that were dealt with in a previous answer that I gave earlier this week, I will state that kava control was introduced on 12 June, if I remember correctly, under section 90 of the Consumer Protection Act. Kava was declared a prescribed substance. The declaration stated that, from that date, it was illegal to supply or sell kava except with the approval of myself, as the Minister for Health and Community Services, and then only under such conditions as I as the minister would approve. After I announced that in the May sittings, I commenced a wide-ranging consultative process throughout the communities in Arnhem Land where kava was in use. I might say that there was no chance of any approval ever being issued to a community which was not already using kava.

Secondly, I continue to support the principle that communities must accept responsibility for their own behaviour and, to that extent, that they should be confronted with the facts of the situation and expected to make some responsible decisions themselves. That is a genuine process of self-determination which I strongly support. In that process, however, as I have said to the communities, I have public health responsibilities as the Minister for Health and Community Services. That being the case, even if communities said that they wanted kava, I would impose such restrictions as were necessary to avoid any harmful consequences of kava sale.

Those were the points I made to the communities and I have been encouraging them to move voluntarily to seek the banning of kava. Two communities - Galiwinku and Maningrida - agreed to the placing of a ban on kava and that has been implemented. Kava can no longer be legally supplied to those communities. Waruwu and Ramingining decided that they would like some kava supplies, and we have granted licences to allow it to be sold by the respective community councils, with no individual sellers of kava and with a maximum availability of 50 g per person per day. That level was set on the basis of advice from the Menzies School of Health Research, which says that the consumption of 100 g of kava per person per day is injurious to health. We set the limit at 50 g on the basis of keeping it below the level that the Menzies School of Health and Research advised would be harmful. There has been considerable negotiation about that because the communities have been trying to increase that limit. However, I can advise that kava consumption in Ramingining has decreased from in the order of 10 bags - a 75% reduction in consumption.

In Milingimbi, 2 diametrically-opposed views are held within the community resulting in quite a difficult situation. With the Drug and Alcohol Bureau, I am seeking to assist a resolution. There is a very strong pro-kava lobby and a very strong anti-kava lobby. Through the Drug and Alcohol Bureau, we have offered to conduct a plebiscite of the community with a secret ballot arrangement to alleviate some of the pressures being imposed on people there.

We have not heard anything from Gapuwiyak. Certainly, no legal supplies are allowed into Gapuwiyak.

Mr Leo: What about petrol sniffing?

Mr HATTON: The member for Nhulunbuy asks about petrol sniffing in those areas. In some communities, petrol sniffing has re-emerged. It is a cyclical problem. The department and the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, which comprises senior Aboriginal people throughout Arnhem Land, are addressing the problem. The department is actively involved in providing counselling and substance abuse support programs within the communities.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health and Community Services will restrict his answer to the original question that was asked by the member for Arnhem in regard to kava, not pick up interjections from the member for Nhulunbuy in relation to petrol sniffing.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I advise that kava is a concern. In the end, communities are making decisions for themselves and they must live with the consequences of the decisions that they take. It is important that the process of self-determination is backed up by public education programs to discourage substance abuse and to provide alternative solutions to their problems.

Child-Care Centres - Screening of Staff

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer him to commitments made during the Wanguri by-election. What progress has been made towards implementation of a screening system for child-care centre relief staff which was promised last year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during the Wanguri by-election last year, a couple of incidents involving child-care centre relief staff gained considerable publicity. As a consequence, the Chief Minister undertook that the Children's Services Branch would develop a program to assist child-care centres in the screening of people who take up duties within the centres, in particular relief staff. In doing that, it has always been emphasised that the fundamental responsibility for screening and selection of staff must rest with the employer. We will not accept the ultimate responsibility for deciding the appropriateness of a particular staff member. The employers are expected to exercise their duty of care in the selection of their staff. They can do that through the normal process of interviewing and checking on past employment to determine whether there are any reasons why it may be inappropriate for certain persons to work within a child-care centre. We will not place that responsibility on the department. We will supply support to the child-care centres in the process of their own decision-making.

The incidents that occurred in 1989 highlighted the difficulties faced by child-care centres in checking the bona fides of casual staff in particular. The government suggested that the services of the Northern Territory Police Force could be used for this purpose but was also mindful of the individual's right to privacy. Following consultation with child-care providers and licensees, the government agreed to provide a voluntary screening service. From this month and as of this week, people wishing to work as relief staff in child-care centres in the Northern Territory may apply to be placed on a list, following which their bona fides and police records will be checked prior to their registration for consideration for employment by child-care centres. As I said, this system should not be viewed as a professional registration scheme for children's services staff. Placement on the list is not a prerequisite for employment in child-care centres. However, the service has been established to assist licensees of child-care centres with the time-consuming process of preliminary screening of casual staff. Licensees will remain responsible for the interviewing, selection and appointment of all permanent and relief staff.

The cost of establishing and operating the scheme will be borne by the government for a trial period of 12 months, when the scheme will be reviewed. The service will be managed by the Northern Territory Children's Services Bureau, located at Shop 14, Casuarina Plaza. A 008 toll-free telephone number will be available for callers from outside the Darwin area. No system of screening can provide a guarantee as to the conduct or performance of child-care staff. This is the licensee's responsibility. This scheme is intended to provide support to child-care service providers in carrying out the valuable and demanding role of offering good quality care for young children.

Powerline to Cosmo Howley Mine

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is it a fact that the Power and Water Authority has spent \$4.2m building a powerline to the wrong mine? Is it a fact that the line was built in the full knowledge that there was no contract with the Cosmo Howley mine to use the power? Is it also a fact that, prior to the line being built, a separate wing of the minister's administration had approved AGL signing up Cosmo Howley to use gas turbine generators for its electricity needs and that AGL had a binding contract with Cosmo Howley for a period of 10 years? Is it a fact that, as a result of this, the \$4.2m powerline has never been used? In light of the minister's efforts in the area of power saving, which he spoke about yesterday, does he not regard this performance as abysmal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should spend a little more time in the northern part of the Northern Territory. That story is so old that Dave Nason of Channel 8 did an interview on the subject 2 weeks ago, alleging that I had approved a powerline which was not connected to anything and was simply rusting away. What is more, the story is not true.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Do you want to hear the answer or not? Just sit down and relax, and you will learn something.

It has been my intention to develop the Northern Territory electricity grid since I became the minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority. There is ample evidence of progress in that area, including the 132 kV line to Katherine. There are also a number of proposals to develop the grid in the member for Stuart's electorate. I will give him copy of a booklet entitled 'The Northern Territory Energy Strategy' which outlines our plans for the power grid and how we wish to go about providing electricity to Northern Territory consumers. It is my intention, wherever possible, to replace all fuel oil generation of electricity in order to ensure that electricity costs in the Northern Territory do not increase. We have not had an electricity price increase since October 1986, when the Chief Minister of the day was none other than Ian Tuxworth. The proposed powerline to Jabiru is another good example of the strategy.

Mr Ede: No, no, no.

Mr COULTER: I will get back to your question.

Mr Ede: You will get back to it, will you? You are still trying to think of an answer.

Mr COULTER: I want merely to explain my approach. We talk about microeconomic reform. That is the placement of infrastructure throughout the Northern Territory in order to allow mines to open.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! My colleague asked a specific question about the powerline to Cosmo Howley. So far, that question has not been answered at all. It was fair enough for you to admonish the unfortunate Minister for Health and Community Services for drifting away from the subject.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Are you reflecting on a decision of the Chair?

Mr LEO: No, Mr Speaker. I am just asking for a sense of balance. If you are going to get up the Minister for Health, get up the Minister for Mines and Energy as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In terms of consistency, the Minister for Health and Community Services was responding to questions from you which were not being directed through the Chair, which conduct I found to be out of order. I find that, in his response, the Minister for Mines and Energy is answering the member for Stuart's question in regard to power, electricity grids, and the philosophy and the policy of the government of the day. There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, of course, we could run power out to Jabiru, and that was part of the proposal for the 132 kV line to Katherine. However, we were not allowed to run powerlines through a national park. That was what Senator Richardson told us, which was illegal by the way. He had no right to stop that. This occurred after we had received sacred sites avoidance for the line site, and it was knocked back.

At present, we are operating privately most of the power grid system, including the power generation at Cosmo Howley by AGL. The EDI proposal, which is the line that the honourable member is talking about from Pine Creek to Cosmo Howley, could be considered to be another generator. The 3 generators which have been installed at Cosmo Howley by AGL are running flat out. There is no reserve there, and the powerline across to Cosmo Howley was put there to provide continuity of service so that, at the flick

of a switch, we would be able to provide it with electricity from EDI. It would be very simple to do.

We have just signed up to come off that same line. It is acting as another turbine in order to provide continuity. That is what electricity backup and continuity is all about ...

Mr Smith: It has not been connected.

Mr COULTER: If you will give me time, I will have an electricity grid right across the Northern Territory that you can go up to with a set of jumper leads and start up whatever industry you like. That is what will happen.

Mr Ede: It has never been used.

Mr COULTER: Another line is to come off that powerline that has never been used, going to the Western Mining Corporation's Goodall Mine. The tenders have been put out on that, and I expect it to be completed by October this year. That line will be energised. It will pass very close to Woolwonga and that will be linked as well.

Mr Smith: When?

Mr COULTER: To Woolwonga?

Mr Smith: Yes.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the Woolwonga project is held up for a number of reasons, but mostly because of the road crossing at Cosmo Howley. The Department of Transport and Works is assessing the safety aspects involved with the number of trucks that would be crossing the road ...

Mr Smith: Put in an overpass.

Mr COULTER: I ask the Leader of the Opposition what he would do. Would he allow the trucks to cross without any safety features?

Mr Smith: I would get them to beep horns: boop, boop, boop!

Mr COULTER: Horns? And they go boop, boop, boop - now there is a technical answer from the Leader of the Opposition! I did not think that he had that road engineering design-and-construction attitude, but that is the answer that Territorians or people in a Greyhound bus can expect. As they come up over the top of the Hayes Creek hill, I hope that the Leader of the Opposition's early warning signals will be working - the boop, boop, boop. I can imagine the passengers popping their heads out of the windows of the bus as 150-t trucks run across in front of them. We plot the buses coming down that hill, and they travel very fast indeed. I do not think the road safety aspect and controls suggested by the Leader of the Opposition will be acceptable.

However, that is why the Woolwonga project is held up at present. It would add another \$1m to the cost of building that road. Let me go down the road a little further to Mt Todd. A huge electricity supply is required there, and powerlines to carry it.

Mr Speaker, I will circulate the Northern Territory government's energy strategy which outlines the grid system that we will put in place. In some

areas, electricity towers will be required. I suppose I will need to dress them up with green branches and nests for the birds so that I can appease the environmental group which is opposed to transmission lines of any sort going anywhere. However, I will do that, Mr Speaker, and we will have a grid. We will reduce electricity costs in the Northern Territory or at least maintain them at today's level by providing that grid right across the Territory. We simply cannot afford to generate electricity using oil or fuel at today's prices.

Mr Ede: They have gas.

Mr COULTER: That is right. And they will have gas at ...

Mr Ede: Which you agreed to them having. Then you put a thing in here which has sat for 12 months. Isn't that incompetent?

Mr COULTER: They have gas and they have 3 turbines travelling flat-strap all day. Let us take it back to something you may know something about. If a turbine happened to throw a fan belt or some damage occurred, there would be no backup. Cosmo Howley was the first mine to go on to gas ...

Mr Smith: Show us where your contract is.

Mr COULTER: I will show you, and I will take you to the opening. Mr Speaker, I make this promise to the Leader of the Opposition. I will take him out for the energising of that line in 12 weeks time ...

Mr Smith: But it will not be at Cosmo Howley, will it?

Mr COULTER: ... and I will allow him to throw the switch to energise that line.

Mr Smith: Thank you.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I would love to have him out there, and that is a promise that I make to him - provided the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is hanging off the wires at the other end!

Woolwonga Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I think we can read into his previous answer that it is true that a \$4.2m transmission line was put in place to Cosmo Howley. It has never been used and will not be used for that purpose. Is it true that a major stumbling block in the negotiations concerning Woolwonga is the government's insistence that a dedicated road be put in for the cartage of material from Woolwonga through to the existing plant at Cosmo Howley, and that the cost of this dedicated road plus an underpass, overpass or whatever is required at the Stuart Highway intersection, has been costed at \$6.5m? Is it equally true that the anticipated heavy-load traffic on that road is about 1 truck per hour?

ANSWER

Mr COULTER: No, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: It is 1 every 2 hours then, is it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Disadvantaged Schools and Country Areas Programs

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Some time ago, the minister approached his federal counterpart and federal members about inequities in the federal government's Disadvantaged Schools and Country Areas Programs in respect of Territory children. Has the federal government responded to the minister's approaches?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that this has been of ongoing concern to the Northern Territory government for 7 years. We feel that we are being disadvantaged through the inequities of the formula systems that are applied to these programs. The problem is that the funding formulas used for the Disadvantaged Schools and Country Areas Programs at present do not correctly identify the target groups. This results in the Northern Territory receiving far less of these program funds than it should. The Commonwealth government has procrastinated for a number of years on this matter. It is quite clear that the reason for that is that it is looking after the interests of the southern states. It is not interested in our concerns about the provision of the correct funding formulas for disadvantaged kids in the Northern Territory.

The current formula is supposed to allocate resources on the number of persons living 100 km and 150 km from a 10 000 population centre. Persons 100 km plus are being counted once and those over 150 km are counted twice for funding purposes. There are 37 000 persons in the Northern Territory living more than 150 km from 10 000 population centres. Victoria, which has merely 3684 such persons - using 1986 census data - attracts almost 4 times as much funding as the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory receives 3.7% of the national funding while Victoria receives almost 15%.

The Commonwealth is well aware of this situation because of the repeated and ongoing representations of the Northern Territory. However, it has done nothing to redress the situation. The anomalies in the national funding formula are the cause of Northern Territory children having only limited access to the programs that target specifically their special needs. For us to give the disadvantaged students the opportunity to have access to the Country Areas Program and the Disadvantaged Schools Programs, we have to rotate the schools. That is not acceptable to the Northern Territory government and I do not think it is acceptable to any member of this Assembly. Many members represent constituents whose children are disadvantaged as a result of living in areas further than 150 km away from 10 000 population centres.

A number of members have contacted me regarding this. The member for Stuart has written to me on this problem. I think that he was unaware of the Commonwealth aspects of this matter and I am sure that he will take that up. I offered a briefing to Senator Bob Collins and Warren Snowdon some time ago. I know that Senator Collins has taken up the issue and is fighting with us to ensure that Territorians are given a better deal. I do not know about Warren Snowdon. Unfortunately, when we try to obtain dollars to help Territorians, the opposition seems to fight us on so many occasions. I refer in particular to the Northern Territory University.

I urge members to look at the situation realistically and to contact the federal government. I reiterate that the Northern Territory has 2.5 times more isolated persons than has Victoria, yet Victoria receives nearly 4 times the funding that the Northern Territory receives. That is a disgrace and it has to be addressed. I have had no response from the federal government. I hope that members pursue the matter with vigour, and I can assure them that the Northern Territory government will do so. Our formula needs to be based on the needs of people in the Northern Territory. We need to ensure that all disadvantaged students have access to the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the Country Areas Program.

Berrimah Research Farm Frontage

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I assume the minister has the interests of his department at heart and that he knows the importance of agricultural research to the people on the land. Has he retrieved the Stuart Highway frontage of the Berrimah Research Farm which was alienated for the now failed international grammar school project? For some time, this land has had a large weed burden and the remains of excavation. It is a disgrace and does nothing for the morale of the employees of the Berrimah Research Farm. It is not appreciated by professional staff as this valuable agricultural land should be put to proper agricultural research use again.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries is not responsible for the area of land referred to.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I know that. You have to get it back.

Mr REED: I understand that that land is tied up with legal processes following the consequences of the international grammar school project.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to comments made by the Chief Minister last night on the 7.30 Report, in which he confirmed what the opposition has come to suspect during the last few days. He said: 'There is no independent inquiry. There is no inquiry at all'. I indicate to the Chief Minister that I have circulated a motion in respect of a resolution of this problem and I advise that I will be seeking to move the suspension of standing orders to allow debate on that motion. However, my question is as follows. Will the Chief Minister now place on the record in this Assembly, firstly, that Mr Mulholland is not conducting an independent inquiry into the police investigation of corruption allegations and, secondly, that Mr Mulholland is not even conducting an inquiry and cannot and will not accept independent evidence from people who approach him?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the full transcript of last night's interview but it is certainly available to the honourable members opposite. I am surprised that the honourable member has to ask the question to get the information. On Tuesday 1 May this year, I made a statement to this Assembly specifically outlining Mr Mulholland's role in oversighting police

investigations into 3 specific cases of some sensitivity in the Northern Territory. There is no ambiguity in anyone's mind, other than the mind of the member for MacDonnell, as to what Mr Mulholland's role is. His role has not been changed in the months since he was engaged by the Northern Territory government to act in this very important role. His role has not changed at all. In relation to the other matters raised by the honourable member, I suggest that they might be dealt with through processes which the Leader of the Opposition is proposing to utilise in this House.

Telecommunications

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

This question is addressed to the minister in his capacity as minister responsible for telecommunications in the Northern Territory. Has he examined the various scenarios now being considered by the federal government to change Australia's telecommunications system? If so, what advantages or disadvantages would accrue to the Territory as a result of such change?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. Indeed, I have sought a preliminary study of this complex issue as it relates to the Northern Territory. In summary, it seems that the Territory ought to be deeply concerned about the progress of the raging debate, particularly as it affects the fate of Telecom's community service obligations, known as CSOs. The federal government has put the cost of CSOs at \$230m per year. This amount equals the value of services which Telecom provides to customers not deemed to be profitable. In essence, Telecom uses its profitable services to cross-subsidise its non-profitable services. According to Telecom, the Territory is cross-subsidised substantially by profitable services in the eastern states. This means that we will have to be vigilant to ensure that, in any deregulation process, Territory residents are not affected adversely by the increased charges.

Deregulation does not necessarily mean that Territory residents will be lumbered with higher charges because, without doubt, CSOs are a federal government responsibility. It could be, for example, that the federal government would place a levy or a special tax on Telecom and other telecommunication carriers to fund the CSOs. Such a levy would then be returned to the carrier providing the most cost-effective delivery of the CSO. If we can get an assurance from the federal government that CSOs will be met, deregulation should not adversely affect Territory residents. In fact, it should provide substantial benefits, because more efficient systems should provide cheaper STD and IDD rates with reductions of as much as 30%. That is the theory, although the reality is really in the lap of the gods. The whole issue is in the Canberra melting pot at present, where it is the subject of bitter factional infighting in the Labor Party.

The Beazley option would combine Telecom and OTC into a 'megacom', with the sale of Aussat to an alternative carrier. The Keating option would link Aussat and OTC for a bigger sale. Then there is the left-wing option, which is to do nothing except conduct a vendetta against anybody who would do something. The Northern Territory government will maintain a watching brief on this issue, however it develops. The commitment of the Department of Industry and Development in this area is well known. In fact, we have taken Telecom to court for alleged overcharging in some of the remote areas of the Northern Territory. We are not going to stand by and see the Northern

Territory victimised in the bitter brawling which is taking place in the Labor Party at the moment.

Mr Ede: We will fix it.

Mr COULTER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says: 'We will fix it'.

Mr Ede: You are not game even to talk to your own people.

Mr COULTER: This is the man who decided that the factional business was so tough that he ought to get out of it. He resigned as the only member of the centre right in the Northern Territory. That is how much he will fix it.

Mr Speaker, our task will be to make sure that Territorians, who have every right to expect efficiency in their telecommunications service on a par with other Australians, are not disadvantaged in any deregulation process, should it emerge.

Section 44(1) of the Australian Constitution

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

A few weeks ago, a member of the federal parliament suggested to me that the matter of section 44(1) of the Australian Constitution and its possible breach was referred to meetings of the Attorneys-General for resolution. This section of the Constitution relates to factors that may disqualify people from becoming members of the federal parliament. Has the matter been discussed at meetings of the Attorneys-General? If so, what was the resolution and under what power was the resolution made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter was referred to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General by the member for Sadadeen, who had collected some information, some petitions and other bits and pieces. I cannot recall the matter being part of the formal agenda of the standing committee or any discussions or resolutions occurring. I am certainly quite happy to research the records to see if the matter has ever been raised, possibly in my absence, and to provide that information to the honourable member. My recollection of the matter is that the member for Sadadeen provided some information to all Attorneys-General.

Toxic Waste Dump

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is he aware that firefighters will refuse to attend an outbreak of fire at the Hidden Valley toxic waste dump? Does the minister accept that he does not know what chemicals are contained in the toxic cocktail now located at that dump? What contingency plans does he have to handle an outbreak of fire at the dump? Why is it that the minister has no inventory of such dumps and is thus constantly forced to react to such situations as they arise?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I realise that the honourable member has been in the House for only 12 months, but really he ought to study the administrative arrangements orders because the toxic waste disposal site is managed under the Dangerous Goods Act which is under the administrative responsibility of the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government through the Work Health Authority.

Mr Bell: The Minister for Health and Community Services and Minister for Conservation is not interested. Terrific!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, you wonder why you bother even trying to give information to the members opposite. They are not interested. They want to play politics day and night. Every time you try to give some guidance to them on something as fundamental as which minister has responsibility, you get the nonsense that comes from the member for MacDonnell.

These detailed questions should be directed to the minister who has the administrative responsibility for the management of the site. However, I will advise the honourable member that the Conservation Commission, through our Environment Protection Unit, which was established in May 1990 and which is working very effectively, has been aware of some concerns in respect of that site. Honourable members will be aware of the matter that was debated on the 7.30 Report last night. I might say that it was quite a balanced and well-presented report.

There are concerns in respect of the disposal of a number of chemical waste materials in the Northern Territory. In fact, it is a major concern in Australia. Some burning of the waste at that site did occur. That was stopped last year. The area was hard-standed, and waste was stored there. Last year, a storage facility was constructed there. Since last year, the new waste has been packaged appropriately and stored inside that warehouse and storage area. The waste that was in the hard-stand area is being identified progressively for appropriate packaging and storage.

The matter of any damage to the environment occurring as a result of what is currently being stored has been investigated. I am advised that there is no indication of any leaching into the environment. However, the Environment Protection Unit, in conjunction with the Work Health Authority, is carrying out site investigations to ensure that the site is properly cleaned.

Mr Bailey: Flammable liquids are stored next to highly toxic liquids.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, in asking the question, the honourable member commented that we did not know what was there. If he knows what is there and the authority does not, that is curious. He is saying now that he knows precisely not only what is there but where it is. He cannot have it both ways.

Mr Ede: Come on, we know.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Environment Protection Unit is checking the site. Where there had been some open pits burning, that was stopped in 1988 or 1989. I have asked for that site to be investigated to ensure there is no leaching into the environment resulting from previous practices. I have asked for those investigations to be carried out. They are being dealt with expeditiously through the Work Health Authority working to the Environment Protection Unit.

People become frightened when terms such as 'toxic waste' or 'noxious waste' are used. Fundamentally, we are talking sump oils, which we recycle at Mataranka for use in lime kilns, pool chemicals, which we are trying to get out of people's backyard sheds, and some industrial chemicals from factories. Most of the material there has been accommodated in a supermarket or a warehouse at some stage. We are relocating it away from the community to a disposal site. We are packaging it appropriately. As is occurring elsewhere in Australia, we are working towards long-term disposal. The Australian and New Zealand Environment Council has been working on this program. We need a high-temperature incineration process for the safe and environmentally-appropriate disposal of these chemicals and other wastes. Everybody knows what needs to be done, and every time a government suggests an appropriate location for it, the NIMBY syndrome is put forward - not in my back yard. The member for Barkly is very familiar with that debate. He played both sides of the coin. He promoted a site in his electorate and, when he changed party, he changed his mind.

Mr Tuxworth: Palmerston was the better site. I had to defer to that.

Mr HATTON: It is a shame that you did not tell your Cabinet colleagues at the time.

Mr Finch: That is why he sent me all around Australia to promote Tennant Creek.

Mr HATTON: Australia needs to resolve the problem of long-term disposal. In the meantime, we need to collect that waste and store it. That process is taking place. If he wishes to know the details, I ask the honourable member to refer his questions to the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government.

Toxic Waste Dump

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer the questions to the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this indicates how well the various government departments work together on these matters. The Minister for Health and Community Services has had the benefit of a full briefing on this subject. However, there are a couple of facts that need to be stated. First, the dangerous goods reserve has been established for the last 4 or 5 years. It has been collecting dangerous or possibly dangerous substances from people's backyards and garden sheds. These are being stored there for want of the ability to destroy them. The site is fenced and it is illegal to enter it. It is patrolled by a daily security patrol. It is visited constantly by the Work Health Authority and by people who use the explosives area there.

I am not sure where the 7.30 Report obtained the supposedly amateur video that I saw on television last night. If that was an amateur video, I will go jump. I am not asking the 7.30 Report where it got the video because I know that it will not tell me. The fact is that the person or persons drove through the fence in a vehicle in order to tape that footage, and broke the law in doing so. I know that the media tends to put itself

above the law, but it is quite illegal to enter such a place. The matter is in the hands of the police and will be investigated thoroughly.

I will visit the site today. I know that much work has been done. It is a pity that the people who went out there to take the video disturbed those substances, because they can be dangerous. There is no doubt at all that they were disturbed and that also is illegal. When I visit the site, I am quite happy for a member of the media to accompany me. I will visit the site under the authority vested in me as minister and accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer of the Work Health Authority. If members of the media would like to come out, they may meet with me at midday today.

Mr Bailey: I will go with you.

Mr McCARTHY: You did not get an invitation but ...

Mr Bailey: Here we go. It is all secret, is it?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, if the member for Wanguri chooses to come, probably I could bear his presence for a short time.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Royal Darwin Hospital Incinerator

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, yesterday I was asked a question concerning the incinerator at the Royal Darwin Hospital. Subsequently, the member for Wanguri, who asked the question, made a personal explanation. As usual, the member for Wanguri had it wrong right from the start. If he cares to read Hansard, he will see that I did not make any allegations about his name not appearing on the newsletter. I was talking about the name of his party and about his photograph.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Could you advise me which section of our standing orders allows a minister to answer a question twice? He did not even indicate that he had answered inadequately in the first place. He is responding to a personal explanation made by my colleague. He is debating a personal explanation. He is not answering a question or giving new information. He was not even asked the question a second time.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Nhulunbuy makes a valid point. I thought that yesterday's debate had covered everything which needed to be known in response to the question. However, the member for Wanguri ranged quite widely in his remarks yesterday and I think that the Minister for Transport and Works is now endeavouring to clarify his own position. Is that so?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I am providing supplementary information.

Mr SPEAKER: Then do it by way of a personal explanation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr FINCH (by leave): The supplementary information is that, as stated yesterday, the basic intention is to provide a low-cost, low-fuel consumption incinerator to replace the existing facility. As a bonus, the design of the proposed incinerator would allow it to be used for elimination of cytotoxic waste. The Work Health Authority has advised that the quantities of such waste in Darwin are relatively small in comparison with those processed by southern facilities. The authority states: 'It is

difficult to determine the levels of hazardous substances likely to be released accordingly'. By way of explanation, the point is that the incinerator could be used to eliminate such waste through a process involving 1-second gas retention time at a temperature of 1100°C, starved-air primary combustion and secondary combustion conditions. That is a very short time requirement. The member for Wanguri missed the point totally when he suggested that the operating conditions of the incinerator ought to be set at that high level continuously.

Mr Bailey: I did not say that.

Mr FINCH: In fact, that would lead to a more deleterious effect on the atmosphere by burning far more fuel than would be required for normal purposes.

By way of further personal explanation, Mr Speaker, the member for Wanguri stated that he had received briefings from my ministerial officer, Allan White.

Mr Bailey: No. I said Alan White from the Department of Transport and Works. You said 'ministerial officer'.

Mr FINCH: I did not say a thing, Mr Speaker. In fact, I know which Alan White briefed the honourable member. For the record, it was Alan White the engineer, not Allan White the ministerial officer. He got that wrong.

Mr Bailey: Your colleague got it wrong.

Mr FINCH: The member for Wanguri's comments about having the standards changed were also untrue. There are no standards. As he said himself, we used notes on biomedical waste incineration from New South Wales because our expert consultants had decided that we would adopt the New South Wales guidelines. Once again, despite receiving an opportunity to explain his position, the member for Wanguri still got it wrong.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Fogg Dam

Mr HATTON (Conservation): Mr Speaker, I would like to provide an answer to a question asked by the member for Koolpinyah who, during Tuesday's adjournment debate, asked what I intended to do about the state of Fogg Dam, which she criticised. In particular, she referred to the overgrowth of weeds, an apparent lack of birdlife and the poor condition of the road access. The government is aware that there are management problems at Fogg Dam and, to this end, the Conservation Commission engaged special consultants some time ago to examine relevant management issues including hydrology, weed control, access, recreational use and aesthetics. The final draft master plan has just been submitted to the commission and is under consideration.

Vegetation growth in the dam has become a problem, partly as a result of the low water level resulting from the poor wet season and partly as a result of gradual silting up over a period of years. The consultant has recommended a possible solution to the control of weeds. The cost of that solution is estimated at between \$350 000 and \$425 000, comprising \$75 000 for the hydrological study and \$350 000 for sluice-gate water level control, partial drainage and creation of several small islands to cover the major weed areas as an alternative to drainage and removal of silt. Plant growth has possibly caused a minor shift in bird species from diving species such

as pygmy geese, to inhabitants of reeds such as rails and crakes. It should be borne in mind that there are significant seasonal changes in bird assemblages. Nevertheless, the dam remains an important breeding and refuge site for a wide range of bird species, most of which can be observed on any visit.

A contractor has already been programmed to grade the access road from the Middle Point village end, and to repair the culverts across the dam wall. It is anticipated that this work will be completed this month. Fogg Dam has been an important tourist destination for many years as evidenced by current visitor numbers, which are approximately 25 000 people per year.

Skycom

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What action, legal or otherwise, has the Trade Development Zone Authority taken to recover moneys owed to it by a former Trade Development Zone tenant, Skycom, and how much money is owed to the authority by Skycom?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that, in fact, Skycom never actually started up in the Trade Development Zone although a factory was built for it within the zone. I would rather not say anything further on the Skycom issue as the last correspondence that I have seen in recent times suggests that legal action will be taken in this regard.

Mr Smith: By whom?

Mr COULTER: By Skycom itself.

Mr Smith: Against whom?

Mr COULTER: Against the Northern Territory government. Therefore, I would not care to comment. However, I will be happy to provide a briefing to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter if he so desires.

UNESCO Conference

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

I believe that, recently, the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs hosted an international UNESCO Conference. Could the Chief Minister advise the House of the Northern Territory government's involvement in the conference and of any outcomes of that conference?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the UNESCO Regional Seminar on Technology for Community Development in Australia, South-east Asia and the Pacific was held in Alice Springs between 9 and 11 July this year. The conference was sponsored jointly by the Northern Territory government, the University of Melbourne and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau which, as honourable members will be aware, is the organisation which fosters much of Australia's aid to developing countries around the world. It is an authority of some significance and influence.

I am advised by the Director of the Centre for Appropriate Technology, Dr Bruce Walker, and the conference organiser, Clive Scollay, that the conference was an outstanding success. In fact, Dr Kurrupu, the UNESCO program specialist from Jakarta, stated that the seminar exceeded all of UNESCO's expectations. In his concluding remarks, Dr Kurrupu claimed that, in terms of the number of delegates attending and the high level of organisation and content of the seminar, Alice Springs was highly desirable as a UNESCO seminar venue.

Mr Bell: Did you read the paper I gave, Marshall?

Mr PERRON: Many delegates among the 150 who attended also had a very positive response to the seminar. Our colleague, the Minister for

Education, opened the seminar and I understand that the member for MacDonnell presented a paper to the seminar.

Honourable members may be aware that the Centre for Appropriate Technology is an annexe organisation under the Alice Springs College of TAFE. Under the guidance of Dr Bruce Walker and his staff, CAT has grown up primarily to serve the needs of outback communities, particularly Aboriginal communities and, in doing so, it has created a whole new philosophy of what technology in the development context should be all about. I am sure that many honourable members have had the opportunity to visit the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs and that they will have been as impressed as I have with the design work that has been undertaken there and the production work involved in its various items for use in the community.

Honourable members should be aware also that the Northern Territory government sponsored 4 of the international delegates to Darwin after the conference. Before their leaving Australia, we thought it appropriate to give them the opportunity to visit relevant facilities here. They inspected the Northern Territory University, the Menzies School of Health Research and the Royal Darwin Hospital, and they took a great deal of interest in the new wheelchair project which has been designed in the Territory and will be produced here.

In conclusion, it is clear from the response to the seminar that interest in the development of appropriate technology in the Territory is very high. Indeed, the seminar has shown that CAT is among the national and international leaders in an emerging area of considerable value, not only to the Northern Territory but to those many developing countries around the world that have populations far in excess of ours but which have similar problems, particularly in regard to the health and hygiene of indigenous people, water supplies and the like. I commend Dr Bruce Walker for his initiative in having this conference held in Alice Springs. On behalf of the Northern Territory government, I was pleased to approve the degree of sponsorship that we put towards the project.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to Mr Frank Alcorta's announcement in Saturday's edition of the NT News that anybody could approach Mr Robert Mulholland. In fact, Mr Alcorta gave Mr Mulholland's telephone number and his postal address. Will the Chief Minister confirm that, as he announced in this House and elsewhere last week, people are not able to approach Mr Mulholland direct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not think that the honourable member would find recorded anywhere words from me that people cannot make their own personal approaches to Mr Mulholland. Certainly, I do not encourage it. Obviously, any person can write to any other person whose address they can find. Indeed, they can ring any other person who might answer a telephone in this country. Therefore, there is nothing to stop anybody attempting to communicate with Mr Mulholland directly. I am not encouraging it, Mr Speaker. I have said in this House on a number of occasions, as honourable members well know, that anybody with genuine concerns about possible malpractice in the Northern Territory has adequate and perfectly reasonable avenues through which to pursue their complaints. Those avenues

have been enunciated in this House and I am happy to enunciate them again and again if honourable members wish me to do so.

At this stage, it is appropriate to mention the role of the Ombudsman, who is an independent statutory officer of this parliament. Except in relation to his budgetary requirements, he does not report to the government or to the Chief Minister. He reports to this House. He has a specific role in matters concerning the investigation of complaints against the police. His role is that of an independent investigator. His powers are very wide-ranging and honourable members might like to refresh their memories concerning those powers when they deal with constituents who are a little concerned about placing their trust in the Commissioner of Police, the Secretary of the Department of Law, or the Solicitor-General. I might say here that it is interesting that such people seem to be more willing to place their trust in reporters than in the senior officers of the government.

However, the Ombudsman is independent of those senior officers of the government. He has substantial investigative powers, and he reports to this parliament. If persons are still of the mind that they believe that they cannot trust senior government officers, they have the opportunity to write directly to Mr Mulholland because this is a free country. We do not control Australia Post and we cannot intercept mail. Whilst I do not condone that avenue in these circumstances, obviously it is one that is available to people.

Local Film Production for Government

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Criticism has emerged recently from Territory film production houses about government work disappearing over the Territory's borders. Can the minister give some indication of the amount of work generated by the departments and authorities under his stewardship that is done by local production houses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be happy to provide to honourable members the general figures that I have available. In the 1989-90 financial year, the Department of Mines and Energy spent a total of \$370 242 on public relations and promotional material ranging from pamphlets, brochures, booklets and maps through to film and video production and placement of advertising in the Territory, interstate and overseas. Of that, \$280 752 or 75.8% of the total was spent locally with Territory companies. In relation to the \$89 490 spent interstate or overseas, the great bulk was for the placement of advertisements in publications like The Australian, The Financial Review, and on special Northern Territory features in the Hong Kong Standard during last year's NT Expo. The remainder was for purchase of existing, specialised material such as maps and mineral databases. There was not a single case of an interstate firm being selected for a job that could have been done in the Territory.

The Power and Water Authority spent a total of \$433 814 during the 1989-90 financial year on similar exercises. All of that money was spent with local firms. The 1989-90 budget for promotions by the Department of Industries and Development totalled \$746 840. This included assistance to industry generally for promotional activities interstate and overseas. For example, the department picked up some of the costs, a figure of \$65 000, associated with a prime time, 1-hour special on the Northern Territory shown

on Japanese television. Even so, 90% of the department's budget on these and related activities was spent with Territory firms. Of the total budget of \$746 840, only \$74 336 was spent interstate or overseas. Apart from the television special, other spending was on interstate and overseas advertising or on work associated with interstate trade exhibitions.

It should be clear, Mr Speaker, that any suggestion that promotional and public relations work is not overwhelmingly done in the Territory is very wide of the mark. The facts and figures indicate that Territory companies have been supported very strongly. To summarise, local expenditure was 76% by Department of Mines and Energy, 100% by the Power and Water Authority and 90% by the Department of Industries and Development. That meant that \$1.5m to \$2m of work went to local Territory companies.

Northern Territory Rural College

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The NT News reported last Saturday that the Katherine Rural College is facing closure. As the college was once the flagship of the Department of Education, can the minister advise the following: is the report in the newspaper correct, what has caused the fall in student numbers at the college, and what steps is he taking to ensure that the college continues its role as a support base for the cattle and horticultural industries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that the Katherine Rural College, now the Northern Territory Rural College, is a project which this government developed. We have been behind it and the Commonwealth government has also given a great deal of support to it in the past. The letter referred to by the NT News and by the honourable member was sent to the college in February of this year. To bring members up to date, I will give some details concerning the situation at the Northern Territory Rural College at that time. I was concerned that there appeared to be a decline in student numbers at that institution.

In September 1989, a forum was held at the college to examine current and future rural education and training needs in the Northern Territory. I opened the forum which was attended by representatives of industry and by training providers. I believe that some members of this Assembly were present also. From the forum, the college council requested the minister to approve a change in the name of the college in order to emphasise its Territory-wide responsibilities, and to commence discussions with the Northern Territory University with a view to establishing formal course links at the associate diploma level. Subsequently, development of 2 associate diploma courses has commenced. Ideally, the Associate Diploma in Applied Science will begin in 1991, subject to arrangements with the NTU in relation to staffing. This course is likely to attract some 20 full-time students. The Associate Diploma in Horse Husbandry, offered in association with Roseworthy Agricultural College, is scheduled to begin in March 1991. A number of informal agreements have been reached with staff scheduled to commence in 1991, and this course is likely to attract some 12 full-time students.

Evidence from interstate suggests that there is a need to upgrade certificate-level programs to associate diplomas in order to attract students. The college has embarked on this policy which will be implemented in 1991 and beyond. We believe that the situation in respect of

certificate-level courses has been a major factor in the low attendances at the college. It is a very good college with wonderful facilities that are comparable to those in other agricultural institutions throughout Australia. Unfortunately, there is no associate diploma on offer. I should mention here that we accepted the DEET proposal to become the principal off-the-job trainer for the Rural Australia Traineeship Scheme in the Northern Territory.

A number of matters were not addressed in the newspaper article and I think it is important that, for the information of members, I cover those here. The 13-week certificate in stock and station skills has received system-wide accreditation and is 50% sponsored by the pastoral industry, commercial enterprise and participants. The pre-vocational trade course is a 40-week program jointly funded by DEET and DOLAS. In 1989, all graduating students - and there were 10 of them - gained employment by way of apprenticeship. In terms of overseas training courses, the college has conducted two 13-week courses for Indonesian animal husbandry graduates. The last course finished on 3 August and had 7 participants, all senior employees of the Directorate-General of Livestock Services in Jakarta. Aboriginal special courses have also been offered. Honourable members would be aware of ongoing skills instruction for 8 Conservation Commission trainee rangers, mechanical trades courses at Daguragu for 10 CDEP employees, and mechanical trades courses held at the Northern Territory Rural College campus for 8 of the Kalano Community Association employees. A whole range of courses have been offered and have been producing results.

Discussions have been held with DEET in relation to the conduct in 1991 of 2 bridging courses for the Rural Australian Traineeship Scheme. The estimated target for 1991 is 10 full-time students per course. In adult education, the college has continued to offer animal husbandry and trades skills training programs in modular format. This program has been supported by 2 Commonwealth innovative rural education and training programs. In 1989, the cost for a full-time TAFE student - and this relates to a minimum of 540 hours - was approximately \$11 500. At present, 1 staff position is unfilled and we are awaiting decisions on new courses to be offered in 1991.

Every effort is being made by the Northern Territory Rural College to ensure that the courses that are offered are of benefit not only to people in the Northern Territory but also to people throughout Australia. The situation is the same with the university and our TAFE colleges. We are developing a network here that will be able to be utilised by people in other parts of Australia and it is important that the programs be fostered. We will continue to promote the Northern Territory Rural College. My concern was that an award needed to be offered which was of value and which people could use in future life, and that was the reason for the development of the associate diplomas.

Since that time, we have produced a series of brochures which will be distributed throughout the Northern Territory and in other parts of Australia. An example is: 'It takes more than just grooming to make a career with horses'. That relates to horse husbandry. Another example is: 'When it comes to managing cattle, it doesn't pay to be a duffer'. The brochures give the appropriate details.

Mr Ede: This sounds like really serious stuff.

Mr HARRIS: There is room in the Northern Territory for trained jackaroos and jillaroos. The contents are written in Indonesian as well, for our overseas students.

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: It is not a laughing matter, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ede: It is!

Mr HARRIS: It is about time that the member for Stuart tried to get his colleagues to support us in the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: Listen sport, if you can't organise your own department, get out and let someone get in who can!

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is one of those people who say: 'It is not going to work. Let's chuck it all in. To hell with what has been put into the place'. In the Northern Territory, the Country Liberal Party government is interested in ensuring that our students have the best possible opportunities. We have Taminmin High School which is developing. The Northern Territory Rural College at Katherine will continue to be developed to look after the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory, and we will continue to develop courses that will have substance. I believe that, as a result of the actions that have been taken by the rural college, it will be able to attract students, and not only from the Territory but from the states of Australia.

Darwin Aero Club

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he confirm that the Darwin Aero Club is considering selling its fleet of aircraft in an effort to raise the finance that a move to the new north-side general aviation area would require?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, sadly, that is true. Recently, the aero club circulated a questionnaire to all financial members seeking their views on such a proposal and, of course, such a proposal is necessary, in their view, to gain ...

Mr Bell: I have not got mine yet.

Mr FINCH: I did emphasise that this had gone to financial members.

Mr Bell: When did you get this?

Mr FINCH: A week ago, Mr Speaker. Of course, I answered my questionnaire saying, in somewhat angry terms, that it was regrettable that aero club members should be faced with such an impost.

Last week, I mentioned in the Assembly that the club was facing an increase of some 300% in rental fees. Unfortunately, that is not true. It is some 560% increase in the area rate and, of course, not only does the club have now to rent the space for the club facilities and hangar/workshop, but also it has to pay rent for the apron space in front. Of course, that news was quite catastrophic in itself.

Mr Bell: What effect will that have on hire fees, Fred?

Mr FINCH: In response to the member for MacDonnell's interjection, the questionnaire asked how much more members would be prepared to pay in rental rates. The real crunch will come when the club is faced with the 10-year lease which will require that the newly-developed \$300 000 facility be relinquished to the FAC at no cost return. From the end of that lease period, rent will be charged based on the improved value of the new club house, paid for with the accumulated assets collected over 20 years in the form of some 8 aircraft - and I believe that another is on the way - owned by the members of the aero club. They will have to be sold so that the club can make the compulsory move to the north side.

The other night, in the adjournment debate, the member for Stuart went to great pains to suggest that I had misled this House in regard to these matters and in regard to comments made by Senator Collins to the Vice-President of the aero club at the recent opening of the FAC facility in response to a question, not about deregulation but about moving the general aviation people to the north side. In response to a question - and the Vice-President of the Darwin Aero Club is quite happy to confirm this publicly or otherwise - Senator Collins said: 'There will be some casualties'. He then walked off, to the amazement not only of the Vice-President but of the President of the Darwin Aero Club. That is a fact that is not to be treated lightly.

Of course, the member for Stuart suggested also that I made some inaccurate statements about the \$5m that was to be put into the small aircraft operators' transfer. It was, in fact, \$5m and, in a letter to Senator Gareth Evans on 26 February 1988, copies of which went to his colleagues, and another letter of 6 April 1988 to the new minister, Peter Morris, copies of which went to Senator Collins and Warren Snowdon, we said quite clearly that the Territory government proposed to subsidise to some 50% a move of general aviation to the north side. It will cost them \$8.2m to move to the north side and we were proposing a 50% subsidy.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr FINCH: I am quite prepared to table this for the benefit of the honourable member so that he can see for himself. I am happy to table the letter to Gareth Evans and a letter from the Department of Transport and Works to the Deputy Secretary, Transport. This was when we were looking to the federal government to transfer funds to us, and the latter letter indicated that \$4.1m was considered to be an appropriate general aviation relocation subsidy.

Mr Ede: You table yours and I will table mine.

Mr FINCH: Mine are tabled.

In actual dollars, we were looking for some \$27m. Those documents will verify that that was to be negotiated. Some 2 years later, the aero club is being forced to sell off the assets that it has built up over 20 years. It is shameful. The response from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition here and that of Senator Collins are also shameful.

Back to Dhupuma Celebrations

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of Back to Dhupuma celebrations which are to be held on the Gove Peninsula this weekend to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the

closure of that institution? Will the minister be attending those celebrations and will he assure those present that his government has finally heard and will act on the request of Aboriginal people to re-establish a post-primary educational boarding facility in east Arnhem Land, or will he ignore those celebrations and the educational needs of the Aboriginal people in that area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the celebrations, as the honourable member chooses to call them, that are taking place at present. It is not my intention to attend those activities. The whole issue of secondary education is being addressed in my review which will be out in September.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

As minister responsible for the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, I remind him that last week was the anniversary of the new sacred sites legislation. Can he provide some details of the authority's performance during that period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Territory government's new Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act came into force on 16 August 1989. I am sure all honourable members would recall the controversy that this legislation generated. In conjunction with various stage-managed demonstrations, a range of outrageous claims were made that the intention of the legislation was to let this government destroy sacred sites. In fact, the legislation was the strongest and the most far-sighted sacred sites legislation in Australia. That fact was lost in the rush to abuse the government made by various groups with their own political agendas.

Mr Bell: The rush by various groups! What about the rush by your crowd?

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell was one of the main instigators of pushing totally incorrect information - lies actually, Mr Speaker.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Lands and Housing referred to the purveying of lies. I would suggest that, in relation to myself and other Territorians about whom he made the allegation, it is unparliamentary and he should be asked to withdraw it unreservedly.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I ask the Minister for Lands and Housing to withdraw that comment regarding lies.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the comment and the word 'lies'.

The member for MacDonnell was responsible for promoting information throughout the community which had no basis in truth, which had no basis in fact and ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker. I would put to you that, if the Minister for Lands and Housing wishes to suggest that I or anybody else in this Assembly has misled this Assembly by consciously and wittingly telling untruths, he must do so by way of a substantive motion. He must be

asked to withdraw that. He may believe that, if he uses some different form of words, he can suggest that. The fact is that what he has said was, once again, unparliamentary. I would have thought that the first law officer of the Northern Territory would do a slightly better job in answering a question in this Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Any observer could see members opposite were totally incorrect in their information and in the scenarios they painted. It is disappointing that they are not men enough to admit that they were wrong and that the government was very effective. However, we expect that from the people opposite because, obviously, the facts never come into any assessment they make of a situation.

The new act has been operating now for just over a year and I am sure that all members would have to agree that, during that period, the much-feared Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has been able to operate quietly, without fuss and without conflict. Until 16 August 1990, exactly 1 year from the commencement of the act, the authority had received 151 applications for certificates to allow the applicants to use or work on areas of land which contain sacred sites. Of those applications, 19 were withdrawn by the applicants and, of the 132 applications remaining, 22 are still being negotiated. Certificates were issued in 108 cases and 2 were refused.

It is disappointing that the member for MacDonnell is not listening to the answer because, as I pointed out earlier, he was one of the people who had his facts totally incorrect. Obviously, he does not wish to avail himself of any information which might help to correct some of the apparent misconceptions in some of the statements he makes.

Mr Bell: Simple smear with no substance, Daryl. It does you no credit at all.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, we are used to this sort of attitude from the member for MacDonnell.

That means that about 82% of applications have been resolved and certificates have been issued, 17% are still being negotiated and 1.5% have been refused. I understand most applications are resolved in a matter of weeks. Some take a little longer, and the more complex ones can take some months of negotiation. However, that is not surprising, given the sensitivity of these matters. It is very clear that the authority is operating exceptionally well, especially when one considers the controversy such issues have generated in the past. I am aware that, in pursuance of their own political anti-government agenda, some groups are eager to label any sacred sites question which crops up these days as proof that the Territory government's new sacred sites legislation is not working. That is not true. Despite all the opposition to it, the new legislation and the new authority are operating extremely well.

I do not suggest that there will never be any sacred sites disputes in the Territory. Obviously, it is a subject that is sensitive and which involves complex issues. There will be occasions when there are some problems. However, it is very clear that the Territory government has put in place an excellent framework through which sacred sites matters can be addressed and, in most cases, settled very quickly and quietly. I believe the authority's achievements over the past 12 months should be simply the

start of a far more sensible and a far more reasonable approach by all parties to sacred sites matters in the Territory.

I ask members to cast their minds back 12 months. The media coverage of this matter gave an impression which was totally incorrect. I remember that a particular current affairs program broadcast live from a corroboree where the bone was pointed at me among claims that the government was out to destroy sacred sites and take land away from Aboriginals. As a matter of fact, I gave a 20-minute interview of which a 20-second segment was shown and that segment was contrary to the whole gist of the program. I wonder if media commentators would like to look at what has occurred in the last 12 months and possibly do a program indicating what the legislation has achieved, and how successful it has been, pointing out that those earlier claims were totally incorrect.

Assistant Teachers in Remote Aboriginal Schools

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What action has he taken to stop the practice of using assistant teachers as janitors and cleaners in remote area Aboriginal schools?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member did raise with me a concern that he had in relation to a janitor's position at Warruwi, and I have given him an indication that I will look into the matter. My understanding is that there is some conflict relating to teachers and matters concerning the Warruwi community, and we have put in place a program which will resolve the issues, hopefully, reasonably quickly. I am quite happy to keep in contact with the member for Arafura in relation to these processes which, hopefully, will help to resolve the unfortunate circumstances which have arisen at Warruwi.

Excisions on Pastoral Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he confirm that, over a month ago, he signed more than a dozen approvals for the granting of excisions for Aboriginal people on pastoral leases? Would he confirm that none of these excisions has been gazetted? Would he advise the House as to why this delay has occurred? Will he inform the House as to whether or not he has conducted an investigation and, if not, why not? Could he advise the House of the purpose of the delay, and will he give the House a guarantee that the gazettal notices will appear in the very near future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm the number of excisions involved, but certainly I have signed a number of them over to Aboriginal communities. I have done so for a number of years, and the government's record in this area is second to none. However, there has been an ongoing problem. Attempts to negotiate with the land councils have been very one-sided. We have tried to approach negotiations with as much good faith and goodwill as possible. However, the approach of the land councils has been constantly obstructionist, even contrary to the wishes of the actual communities involved in relation to such matters as Territory title. The views of communities are overturned regularly by the land councils.

Another relevant factor is the undertaking which the land councils gave in relation to excisions that they would withdraw claims over stock routes. Unfortunately, although the Territory government and the pastoralists have proceeded in good faith, the land councils have not withdrawn the claims that were in place. Under these circumstances, it is extremely difficult to deal in a fair manner and to negotiate in good faith. That does not mean that the government has changed its attitude. We will not do so, because we are concerned about the Aboriginal people who are affected directly, the people who have the problems. The land councils are playing political games but, to suggest as the member for Stuart seems to be doing, that I am attempting to slow down the granting of excisions ...

Mr Ede: I have heard people in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs saying nasty things about you.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart wants to answer the question himself now. I do not know why he bothers asking if he does not want to listen to the answer.

Mr Speaker, I am unaware of the details of when gazettal of those lands will occur. The fact that I have signed them means that they are in the system and being dealt with in the normal way. The government is making no attempt whatsoever to hold them up, but I reiterate that the land councils must honour their agreement. If they do not, there will be problems. The government cannot be expected to enter agreements in good faith and then to carry out its side of such agreements when the other side totally ignores its own commitments and continues on its merry way. If the member for Stuart and members opposite want to champion people who do not stand by agreements they make, that is fine.

Mr Ede: We are championing the people for whom you signed the excisions. Now you won't gazette them. I am talking about the people on the ground - my constituents.

Mr MANZIE: However, the community should be fully aware that they are doing so to the detriment of all people in the Territory.

Esplanade Foreshore - Alleged Damage to Historical Sites

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I preface my question by saying that, as one who spent a considerable number of the days of his boyhood scrambling around the cliffs on the Esplanade foreshore, it was a matter of some surprise and wonder to me when a Mr Ellis alleged that roadworks being undertaken on the Esplanade had destroyed a set of historic steps and a wartime bunker. What measures were taken by the minister's department to ensure that damage to historic sites there was contained to a minimum?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Transport and Works has a very comprehensive process for assessing its projects in terms of environmental and heritage implications and this project was no exception. The member for Karama referred to Mr Ellis, the so-called and self-proclaimed Green Independent convenor who has once again cried wolf in his over-enthusiastic attempts to bag the government. The steps he referred to as 'historic' and, in his words, 'probably the oldest structure in Darwin', were built by the Conservation Commission 7 years ago as part of a

CEP program which involved the provision of access to the foreshore. The steps were not exactly heritage material. As I stated in a press release a couple of weeks ago, we took the precaution of contacting local government in order to assure ourselves that the steps would not be missed and would not be needed.

As far as the wartime bunker is concerned, military historian Peter Dermoudy is aware of a report of a gun emplacement in an oral history account given by an old-timer. As a comprehensive search is being carried out for the bunker, not just by Mr Dermoudy but by departmental officers, I suspect that the bunker is a bit of a dug-out, located somewhere around the cliff face, that some old-timers wandering around town looking for something to amuse themselves with dug out during the war. I doubt that it is a major installation. It is not recorded anywhere and, according to all the evidence we can find, certainly it is not in the vicinity of the Esplanade construction site. Once again, Mr Ellis has cried wolf and it is time that the people of the Territory and the media woke up to his nonsense.

Taminmin Rural Farm School

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

With the continuous financial help being directed at the Northern Territory Rural College at Katherine, despite its less than ideal running of its educational and financial affairs, can the minister assure me that this situation will not disadvantage the Taminmin Rural Farm School at Humpty Doo in any funding or staffing for agricultural studies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have given details on the Northern Territory Rural College. I believe that efforts are being made and that they will be successful. There will be no impact on Taminmin High School, and I think the honourable member will be pleasantly surprised in relation to activities at Taminmin.

Mangrove Management Plan

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

The Mangrove Management Plan, which has been referred to on a number of occasions in this Assembly, still does not appear to be a public document. When will this document be available for the public to scrutinise instead of it just being referred to by ministers in this Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Mangrove Management Plan has been a long-standing issue. It is part of the overall Coastal Management Plan and, in particular, the Darwin Harbour planning process that is taking place. The matter is under discussion at the moment, directly between myself and the Minister for Lands and Housing, on its interrelationship with planning laws in the Northern Territory. When these matters have been resolved, the plan will be available for public release. We are seeking to get it into the public arena as soon as possible.

Access to New Darwin Airport Terminal

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

There seems to be considerable confusion about the route of the access road from McMillans Road to the new Darwin Airport terminal. As I understand it, there are 2 options: Henry Wrigley Drive or a new road off Rothdale Road. Has a decision been taken and, if not, when will a decision be taken on this vital matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no decision has been taken other than the standing arrangement which is access via Henry Wrigley Drive. The interim access that has been available for some time into the airport is quite adequately provided for at Henry Wrigley Drive. Although, in the longer term, there may be some traffic implications, particularly at Rapid Creek Road and to and from McMillans Road as the traffic builds up, they are but part of the deliberative considerations.

The other option was to come through to match Rothdale Road. There are a number of downsides to that, including the impact on traffic moving to and from the sporting area. That is the major planning consideration that we have at the moment. We are in the process of looking at future traffic arrangements to and from the Marrara complex to assess whether it would be possible to match the traffic leaving the airport. The other consideration is the impact on the adjoining suburb.

Whilst there is still some work to be done, there is no panic about it in terms of time. The airport is due for completion late next year and even then, with some minor upgrading, the current Henry Wrigley Drive will be adequate for those purposes for some time. I anticipate that, by early next year and certainly by the middle of the year at the latest, we will have reached a decision on the overall planning, not just for the airport but also to take in the sporting facilities at Marrara.

Panorama Guth

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

In recent days, it has been announced in Alice Springs that the owner of Panorama Guth, Mr Hank Guth, is planning to move to Melbourne and that he is afraid that the building may be bought and developed for a different purpose because it is in the CBD and is on a very valuable site. Has the minister been approached by Mr Guth, and will the government take on board very seriously this important art gallery, with its 360° painting, which is a real asset to Alice Springs, to ensure that it is preserved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have had correspondence from Mr Guth in relation to the potential sale of this property in Alice Springs. That correspondence was directed to the Museums and Art Galleries Board and suggested that consideration be given to the government purchasing the facility as a permanent display area for the museum. Whilst we do understand the significance, particularly the tourist significance, of the Panorama Guth in central Australia, it would be inappropriate for the total facility to be purchased by the Museums and Art Galleries Board, quite apart from the very serious financial constraints that are inevitably on government at present.

However, we are quite concerned about some parts of the collection there which do have archaeological and historical heritage significance for the Northern Territory, and we have advised that, if any attempt is made to relocate that outside of the Northern Territory, we will be utilising our powers under the necessary legislation. Certainly, we would be interested in protecting and retaining that collection for the Northern Territory but, as to the building and its facilities, it is more appropriate that it be operated by a tourism-type organisation. We have put it to Mr Guth that we would not be interested in purchasing the building, although we have a particular interest in the archaeological and historical collections that he has there.

Repeal of Dog Act

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Over the weekend, I spoke with many people in Palmerston and read an article in the newspaper in which the Palmerston Town Council complained about the proposed date for the repeal of the Dog Act. Is there any way that the minister can bring that date forward to allow the town council to provide relief to the residents of Palmerston?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was a little dismayed to see the concern expressed by the Mayor of Palmerston with regard to the timing of the repeal of the Dog Act. After all, the repeal of the Dog Act was an action taken largely to fit in with the desire of local governments to take control of dogs in their own areas. The setting of 1 July 1991 for the repeal was to allow local governments enough time to put by-laws in place should they choose to do so. I pointed out to honourable members last week that it will not be mandatory for local governments to pick up any provision under the Dog Act if they and their constituents thought that to be unnecessary.

In fact, it will not be a simple matter to put in place by-laws which will pick up all of the requirements of local government overnight. However, I am quite happy to bring forward the date of repeal if local governments decide that an earlier date would be better for them. I have had approaches made to me also by a number of community governments asking for more time. They do not think the 1 July date gives them enough time to put by-laws in place. In fact, we can prepare a set of model by-laws which should be able to be picked up by most councils, perhaps with some modifications. However, we need a little time because the Parliamentary Counsel's office is very busy and this is not necessarily of the highest priority. Of course, the Palmerston Town Council can put by-laws in place under the present act. I understand that, in the past, it has not taken the same level of action as the Darwin City Council has taken in relation to controlling dogs. If local governments can get together and decide on an appropriate date, we will make every effort to fit in with their requirements.

Competition for Land by Mining and Pastoral Industries

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, for some years, tension has increased in the mining and pastoral industries over competing interests for land and access to that land. Has the minister addressed this issue and, if so, what has he done to

alleviate the tension and misunderstanding that has been created between these 2 industries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I note the honourable member has described correctly what used to be the situation between pastoralists and the mining industry. I have taken great pains in recent times to attend meetings of pastoralists and the Cattle Council to try to resolve the issues that have arisen from time to time. It is true that, in years past, considerable friction developed between the mining and the pastoral industries, mainly over rights of access to pastoral lands and the rights under legislation of both parties. Both sides had extremists who raised the level of tension. On the one hand, the occasional pastoralist acted like a medieval feudal lord with the absolute right to put any trespasser to death. On the other hand, the occasional miner/explorer charged his truck onto pastoral land without notice, left all the gates open, dug a few holes and left all the mess behind him.

I called the industry bodies together to address the concerns being expressed on both sides, and the members for Katherine and Victoria River will recall the discussions that took place in a series of meetings. As a result, better lines of communication were established between the 2 industries. The mining industry produced a code of behaviour for its members entering pastoral land. It initiated a system of notice for mineral explorers that could not fail to be brought to the attention of the pastoralist so that the pastoralist had every possible chance to raise legitimate objections to access rights. Many landholders were unaware that the Mining Act gave mining companies the right to explore for mineral deposits on their land, subject of course to certain conditions. Landholders are required to give access to mineral explorers if a company has been granted an exploration lease. However, the explorer is required to work within strict guidelines, and is required to protect the property of the landholder.

It really boiled down to both sides being aware of their rights. Once the 2 parties came together for discussions, most of the tension faded. Recently, I attended a meeting of the Katherine Branch of the Cattlemen's Association and I can report that the 2 industries are now working together much more cooperatively. In its efforts to continue the consultation process, the Department of Mines and Energy has just produced an attractive and informative calendar. I will circulate the 1990-91 calendar for the benefit of honourable members. This calendar sets out what those rights are. I have often argued that a bill of rights should be written on rice paper so that, if you were jailed, you could eat it and so at least it would be of some use to you. The calendar carries an 8-page booklet containing plain language hints and guidelines for landholders if a mining company is granted an exploration lease. It is to be circulated throughout the pastoral industry and I commend it to all honourable members.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, in response to the request from the Minister for Transport and Works, I seek leave to table an extract from the Northern Territory government's airport proposal entitled, 'Darwin Airport Redevelopment of Civil Facilities'. This clearly states the government's indicative cost of general aviation land site and air site as \$10m and the vague expectation that, for the redevelopment, the Commonwealth would be expected to put in somewhere between \$20m and \$40m.

Leave granted.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Excisions on Pastoral Leases

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I would like to provide some further information in relation to a question asked by the member for Stuart relating to excisions. I inform him that notices of acquisition for living areas on 13 pastoral leases have been prepared for gazettal and the issue of titles to those areas will follow. That process is going through the normal channels. I point out that there is legal doubt as to the effect of amendments to the Land Rights Act. The Aboriginal Land Commissioner is of the view that formal withdrawal of the claims over the stock routes etc is necessary to overcome the provisions of section 67A which prohibit dealings with lands subject to claim. That is the particular area that I was talking about where there has been a lack of cooperation in the spirit of the negotiations and the agreement.

Cost to Community of Territory Budget

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Yesterday, the Treasurer again raided the petrol pump to pay for this government's management decisions. On our calculations, the average Territory motorist now loses about \$90 a year to this practice. Obviously, that figure is significantly higher for the productive rural sector in the Northern Territory which has been hit even harder than the 1¢ per litre.

A member: What about the federal excise?

Mr SMITH: If you want to justify yourselves in terms of the federal excise, go for it.

Mr McCarthy: What is it in the Labor states?

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, in Queensland ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is question time and the Leader of the Opposition should be asking a question, not making a speech.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has had some difficulty this morning in putting his question because of interjections from the government side of the House.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In Queensland, which has a similar geographical shape to that of the Northern Territory, motorists pay no state-imposed excise duty on petrol. Has the minister calculated the inflation factor that is built into this and other taxing decisions made in his budget? In other words, what will it cost the community, not only directly - because that figure is available in the budget - but indirectly through flow-on effects in terms of increased prices for goods and services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition well knows that the Northern Territory is one of the lowest taxed areas in Australia. It is still one of the lowest taxed areas in Australia despite the increases that I announced yesterday in the Northern Territory government's budget. No doubt honourable members are aware that, in regard to the specific issue of state petrol taxes, as they are called, which are actually petroleum licence fees, in state terms, the Northern Territory was late in imposing this impost at all. At present, Queensland is the only state in Australia which has never had a state petrol tax, but every other state in Australia has had one for many years. From recollection, it was only about 3 years ago that the Northern Territory introduced such tax at all. We introduced it at the lowest rate in Australia and, even after the impost introduced yesterday, the rate is about mid-range. The highest tax is in Tasmania which has 7¢ per litre state duty on petrol, and that is prior to its bringing down its 1990-91 budget. Of course, we are talking about a state that has just borrowed \$50m to pay redundancies for the public service. We can well expect that Tasmania may be having a hard look at its 7¢ a litre impost on petrol.

Mr Smith: What is the inflationary impact of your decision on the Northern Territory?

Mr PERRON: The Leader of the Opposition knows that not only do we have the lowest impost of state-type taxes on our citizens but we have one of the lowest CPI rates of increase as well, which we are pleased to note.

Mr Smith: What is the inflationary impact of this?

Mr PERRON: To answer the honourable member's question specifically, I have not had calculations done to see what the impact will be on the local CPI. In order to overcome the deficiency left with funding in the Northern Territory by allocations from the federal government, which are down 2% in real terms - and the Northern Territory is the only place in Australia to receive any cut in real terms - we found it necessary to raise a number of state-type taxes and charges in a minimal way. I am sure that Territorians well understand the situation that the Territory finds itself in. I have found the reaction to the budget to be one of complete understanding.

Kenbi Land Claim

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to a report in the Sunday Territorian of 12 August in which the Northern Land Council claimed that it wanted to settle the Kenbi Land Claim. What is the government's attitude towards settling the claim and what is the present status of negotiations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Territory government does view the Kenbi or Cox Peninsula Land Claim very seriously. Unlike many land claims, this is not over land in some remote part of the Territory. The Cox Peninsula is just across the harbour, and it is the most logical site for the future expansion of Darwin. If we are to avoid the urban disasters which distance has brought about in the southern capitals, it is vital that this area be available for Darwin's inevitable expansion. I note that, in the Sunday Territorian of 12 August, the Chairman of the Northern Land Council, Mr Yunupingu, stated that the Northern Land Council was willing to negotiate a settlement of the claim with the Territory government. In the article, he went on to accuse the government of not wanting to settle the claim because it had gone cold on the idea. I would like to put the record straight in relation to that allegation.

During the past 15 months, serious attempts have been made to settle the claim. The Territory government has been taking the initiative in those talks. This initiative was taken because the Territory government regards settlement of the claim as a high priority. It is not something that we have gone cold on. The government accepts that the settlement must be on reasonable terms which can accommodate legitimate Aboriginal interests and the future needs of Territorians generally. An offer was made by the Territory government to the Northern Land Council in June last year. That was rejected and a counter offer was put forward by the claimants in October 1989. The Territory government regards the area sought by the claimants and their offer as being incompatible with the obligation to provide for the future growth of Darwin. Accordingly, we have had to reject that. However, we made a further counter offer to the NLC which was rejected by it. Since then, the NLC has continually put the original but unacceptable offer. No one in his right mind could say that that was

negotiation. It is just a simple intransigent restating of a position which the government, on behalf of the community, cannot accept. The attitude that is blocking the efforts to settle the claim has been further complicated by the fact that the Northern Land Council may no longer represent all the claimants.

It seems that the best hope that the government can have to make any progress on settlement negotiations will come when the Aboriginal Land Commissioner hands down his findings in relation to traditional ownership. That is expected to occur before the end of this year. His findings could clarify whether there are any traditional owners as per the requirements of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and, if so, for which areas of land on the Cox Peninsula. The increased certainty that results from defining those areas and from the identification of various traditional owners, if any, should allow settlement negotiations to recommence early in the new year. I hope that those negotiations can be completed quickly and successfully for all parties. In any event, I would like to assure honourable members that settling the Kenbi Land Claim remains a very high priority for this government and we will continue to monitor the situation very closely on behalf of all Territorians.

Public Service Numbers

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, during the term of this government, public service numbers have increased from 15 112 in 1987-99 to 16 002 in 1990-91. The major increase has been in the last 12 months with over 460 additional public servants being placed on the payroll. In light of the position taken by the government at the time of the last election, when it said that there would be a virtual freeze on public service numbers, what new services are being provided by the public servants recruited during the last 3 years, numbering almost 1000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have before me specific details of what authorities and departments the additional staff are working in. Off the cuff, I imagine that a substantial number are employed at the Northern Territory University which has gone through a period of substantial growth since its establishment by this government a few short years ago. Each year, it becomes more and more successful as it adds new courses and enrolls more and more local and overseas students. In addition, I am sure that the figures would show that there has been growth in the number of staff providing services in health and education, in many cases to Aborigines.

If the honourable member would care to place the question on notice, I would be quite happy to answer in some detail. Quite clearly, public servants are contributing to the economy and to the range of services provided to Territorians. Whilst they are all slotted into specific departments and authorities, I do not happen to have the detail of that information before me at present.

Australian Safari

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he advise the House of details concerning the Australian Safari which, I understand, is now heading towards Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I speak, competitors in the Australian Safari, formerly known as the Wynn's Safari, will be starting to cross the Northern Territory border. Over 165 vehicles left Sydney last Saturday morning including motor bikes, 4-wheel-drives and sedans. This event is now the premiere car rally in Australia and is rated internationally as No 2 in the world, immediately behind the Paris-to-Dacca Race. In addition to the 165 vehicles - and I am not exactly sure how many have crossed the border into the Territory - the contingent includes about 800 people comprising drivers, crews, officials and over 100 representatives from international media agencies who are travelling with the rally.

After discussions, the rally organisers, Automotion Australia, agreed to re-route the safari so that it would take in each of the major Territory towns. Tonight, it will be overnighing at Ayers Rock. It will overnight in Alice Springs on Thursday, in Tennant Creek on Friday and, on Saturday 25 August, it will overnight just outside Katherine. There will be a very spectacular finish to the rally in Darwin on Sunday.

The international rating body has indicated that, by 1992, the Australian Safari will displace the Paris-to-Dacca Race and it will be not only the No 1 event in Australia, but No 1 in the world. I am delighted that the organisers agreed to re-route the rally so that the Territory towns will gain an economic benefit from having 800 people stop over for 1 night as well as the entertainment benefit. In addition to this good news, I advise the House that, next Tuesday, together with Automotion Australia, we will be making an announcement about another major international car rally which is to be held in the Northern Territory next year.

Northern Territory Debt Servicing

Mr LEO to the TREASURER

I note that the Treasurer expects that debt servicing this year will blow out by some 12% to \$173m. Since the budget contains no measures to retire debt, he should be able to tell this House how much we will owe next year. What will the debt bill be at the end of this budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the honourable member should need to ask this question unless he has been out of the Assembly during these sittings. On the first sitting day, I tabled a comprehensive paper examining exactly how much debt there is in the Northern Territory, its justification, the servicing arrangements, and comparisons with all states in Australia in regard to our debt servicing capacity and our accumulation of debt over a period. I note his cute use of the term 'blow out' in his question because, quite clearly, the Northern Territory government is legitimately and purposefully accumulating more debt each year in providing the infrastructure and services that are required of this government by its citizens. As the honourable member will know, if he has yet learnt how to read a budget paper, an \$80m new Australian Loan Council borrowing program has been attributed to us this financial year. With that capacity to borrow, we will assume the responsibility to service it. I do not know of a government in Australia that has been through a year in office and has not borrowed more money. Quite clearly, we will be increasing our debt servicing payments over a period as a percentage of our income. If I recall rightly, our percentage is one of the lowest, if not the lowest, in

Australia. The paper that I tabled indicated that the Northern Territory had a considerable capacity yet to accumulate more debt - probably a capacity beyond that which we will be able to accumulate debt because of the Loan Council global borrowing limits. The honourable member could obtain the answers to the questions he asked if he cared to study the budget papers properly. There is no blow out in the Northern Territory government's debt servicing arrangement. There is simply an increase which is expected every year.

Ludmilla Supermarket Liquor Licence Application

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

Is he aware of concerns raised by the residents of Ludmilla over the Ludmilla Supermarket at Lot 4940 Bagot Road, Ludmilla? Will he introduce legislation to provide relief to those residents from constant repeat applications?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware not only of the current concerns of Ludmilla residents, but also of those previously expressed and relayed through the member for Ludmilla. He has represented the interests of his constituents in a constructive manner. I must say that the intrusion by the member for Millner, from the adjoining electorate, on that issue in the Ludmilla electorate has not been at all constructive, according to information I have received. In that, I include his most inappropriate advice to constituents of Ludmilla that they have to pay a \$20 fee to lodge an appeal with the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission.

I am aware that the member for Millner did not speak to the amendments made to the Liquor Act in November last year. He did not take any interest and therefore it is probable that he does not realise that there is no fee to be paid. He has the residents of Bagot running round collecting 50¢ pieces to raise \$20 to lodge an appeal with respect to which they need pay nothing. Of course, that is typical of the lack of intellect and knowledge of the member for Millner.

Mr Ede: Does this mean that I will get my 10¢ back?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, as honourable members are aware, that is exactly what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is worth - his contribution of 10¢.

Let me say that the application that is before the commission at this time is legitimate under the act. The opportunity exists for people to reapply and naturally, from time to time, there are circumstances that warrant reapplication. Where the commission sees that such a reapplication is frivolous and does not provide any new, substantive argument, it can simply reject that application. However, as it is written - and, as I indicated, the Leader of the Opposition did not contribute to its amendment last year - the act provides that, if an objection is brought against a reapplication, then the commission must hold another hearing. That is a point that needs to be addressed and the member for Ludmilla has raised this issue quite correctly. I am not sure what the practical solution is, but we will examine the situation seriously. In the meantime, those residents of Ludmilla who have an objection have simply to indicate, as they did previously, that they want the argument from their first hearing carried forward as their substantive argument.

Mr Smith: Why should they have to do it time after time?

Mr FINCH: They do not have to pay 1¢ to do it.

Mr Smith: Why should they have to do it at all?

Mr FINCH: They do not have to collect any new petitions. They have simply to say to the commission that they want their original arguments carried forward. The commission will hear those arguments and determine whether the applicant has some new basis for his application. It will make an independent decision. This where the ALP and the CLP differ dramatically and people ought to know it. The liquor commission, which has been appointed from members of the community who have experience and integrity, will take on board the opinions of the community in reaching its decision, a decision which will be based on community interest alone. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware that we amended the act to remove the commercial argument in any liquor application. As a consequence, the decision focuses on community interest alone.

The big difference between the ALP and CLP is that I will not be the arbiter of whether somebody should have a licence or not have a licence or should have a licence taken away. That is the job of the liquor commission. The policy of the Labor Party, and statements in the media by the Leader of the Opposition, indicate that he would decide on each individual application. That would be most inappropriate. Constituents in the Northern Territory need to know that. He might leave it to some bureaucrat.

With the current system, the community has direct access to an independent commission which has guidelines laid down in accordance with the act. That is all that is required. We will not politicise the liquor commission as the Leader of the Opposition would do. I commend the member for Ludmilla for his constructive approach. We will take his suggestions on board for consideration.

Increases in Ministerial Staff

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister has said that the public service must survive this year with no increase in numbers and severe restraints on funding. Why, as is shown in the budget papers, has approval been given for the luxury of a substantial 20% increase in ministerial personal staff, from 61 to 74?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am glad the honourable member has brought this to my attention because the matter he is talking about includes staff to the opposition as well.

Mr Ede: It has not increased.

Mr Smith: I do not have 13 staff.

Mr PERRON: It may well be that my attention needs to be closely drawn to this matter in order to scrutinise it. Without any prior notice of this question ...

Mr Ede: What! You do not even know what your ministers are up to?

Mr PERRON: ... and being mindful of the fact that there are 6 papers in the budget documents and some thousands of figures, I do not have at my fingertips the exact area to which the honourable member is referring. Unlike members of the opposition, members on this side of the House are getting on with running the Northern Territory and we have much more on our desks than yesterday's papers.

AIDS Cases in the Northern Territory

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Yesterday, I gave the minister an indication that I would ask this question. Will he provide the figures on AIDS cases in the Territory, preferably for the northern and southern regions and categorised according to the various stages of the disease so that we can be aware of what progress is being made to curb the spread of the disease?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the exact numbers in front of me, but I will seek to obtain the information and answer the question before the end of question time.

Conservation Commission - Limited Tenure Employment

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer the minister to the lack of employment in Aboriginal communities in central Australia which has been the subject of debate in this Assembly on many occasions. I refer the minister also to the number of Aboriginal people working as rangers in the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, many of them on limited tenure employment. Why has the minister slashed limited tenure employment in the Conservation Commission, and can he confirm that 60 such positions have been removed from the commission's establishment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is inaccurate to say that the establishment has been slashed. For the benefit of the honourable member, establishment or MSL sets out the approved level of staffing which any department or authority is allowed to have. That number is a maximum staffing level, and it does not necessarily mean that staffing will be maintained at that level at all times. Limited tenure positions are maintained in respect of a number of parks and within the commission generally. Usually, they are provided because the commission increases park staffing during peak visitor periods, particularly during the Top End dry season and the centralian winter, when most tourists visit our parks. Limited tenure positions are used to lift staff numbers to cope with additional visitor numbers in the areas and, during quieter periods, staffing numbers are reduced. That is a prudent management strategy.

Nobody is making any secret of the fact that this is a tight budget year. Obviously, the Conservation Commission is managing its staffing establishment appropriately. I do not know the specific numbers of staff in particular areas, but I can obtain the details for the honourable leader. I can say that there will be some restrictions on the availability of staff in particular areas during the course of this year as the commission seeks to manage a very tight budget in an appropriate manner.

Effect of Tax Changes on Timor Sea Oilfields

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Following last night's federal budget, wherein the Treasurer indicated that he will be changing tax arrangements for the oil industry, what effect will those changes have on the Timor Sea oilfields?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to answer the honourable member's question. We have advocated these changes to the tax regime for nearly 12 months and I pay particular tribute to the Treasurer, who was highly regarded as a spokesperson for the resource industry in his former capacity as shadow minister for resources.

Mr Perron: More highly than as Treasurer.

Mr COULTER: Much more highly than he is as Treasurer. However, he is concerned for the industry.

As current Chairman of the Council of Resource Ministers, which will be meeting in Darwin next Monday, I have been tireless in putting the case for meaningful taxation review for the oil industry. I have put that case at every possible forum, including the special ministers' meeting which I called in Canberra to discuss the taxation proposal for natural gas, which was then mooted by the previous Minister for Resources, Senator Cook.

On 26 July, the Chief Minister wrote to the Prime Minister saying that it would be appropriate to allow post-mining rehabilitation as a taxation concession. I am pleased to say that the federal government will now allow this provision to apply to the dismantling of drilling platforms and so on. I congratulate the Prime Minister for taking notice of the Chief Minister and allowing that to happen.

Mr Smith: I am sure that it happened just like that.

Mr COULTER: It is more likely to have happened that way than because of the efforts of the federal member for the Northern Territory, Mr Snowden. He would have us believe that he personally negotiated the Timor Gap agreement, although he could not produce a single document or speech in which he said anything about it. He would have trouble negotiating the gap in his mouth, let alone the Timor Gap.

I am pleased to say the federal government has realised at last that it has been holding back oil exploration and development in Australia, and in the Timor Sea area in particular. At last, it has heard the call for action in this regard. As true Territorians, all honourable members should have a deep and compelling interest in the Timor Sea oil development. It provides substantial employment and beneficial support for Territory business. Such honourable members will know that I have been calling for changes to the federal tax regime for years. The most recent public occasion was at the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association National Annual Conference which was held in Darwin 2 months ago.

Basically, in last night's federal budget, the Commonwealth did the job that was required. It has amended the structure of the resource rent tax to allow deduction of exploration costs Australia-wide. This means that development costs, for example at the BHP Jabiru well in the Timor Sea, can

be offset by exploration costs incurred elsewhere by the company. Previously, the system limited such offsets inside what was generally known as a ring fence. In other words, they applied to a particular lease or project area. The changes announced last night will result in the reintroduction of a genuine incentive for oil exploration in Australia, particularly in Australia's most exciting exploration area, the Timor Sea. This is an item of solid good news for the Territory

Other taxation changes are welcome but are unlikely to have the same immediate beneficial effect in the Territory. They include taxation deductions for oil platform removal and for mine-site rehabilitation. Already, the Territory includes mine rehabilitation costs as a legitimate deduction against assessments for Territory mining royalty payments. Recently, the Chief Minister called on the Commonwealth to allow such deductions against income tax assessments. This has now been done. An alteration to the resource rent tax will make secondary drilling of minor oil deposits more viable economically. Honourable members may not be aware that BHP has been paying some 80% tax on its production from some wells in the Bass Strait. That has made those projects totally uneconomical, and BHP has walked away from any further exploration or development of those wells because of the impost placed on it by the federal government.

As I said, this is directed mainly to the Bass Strait field. I said earlier that I had been calling for such changes for a long time, along with the oil industry, but I do not want to claim that this has resulted from my efforts alone. I congratulate the federal Treasurer, the new Minister for Resources, Mr Griffiths, and that lone battler in the Commonwealth parliament, John Kerin, because he too has been fighting for this for a long time. I will be saying more in direct terms at the meeting of Australian Ministers for Mining and Energy which I will be chairing in Darwin next week.

The current Middle East crisis has shown clearly that Australia needs to move swiftly to full self-sufficiency in the production of oil. We are about 85% along the track today, but we need to go to 100% as quickly as possible. The changes in the tax regime announced last night will most definitely help to achieve that.

Mr Speaker, before I sit down, I will say this. We have to go a step further now. We need to realise the potential of the trillions of cubic metres of gas that are locked up in this country. Personally, I am moving away from nuclear energy because I realise that, whilst the Labor government is in power, the federal government cannot come to grips with nuclear energy or the mining of uranium in Australia. I think Labor will continue in power federally for the next 2 or 3 years. However, we need to move quickly into gas. I believe that, in the near future, in Taiwan, Korea and Japan, which are the big markets for uranium, there will be a more readily-accepted approach to gas than there is to uranium.

I am not saying that markets for uranium do not exist nor that there is no need to dig it up, nor yet that Pancontinental and Koongarra should not be allowed to go ahead immediately. I am saying that the intransigence of the federal government will not allow it to happen. I would like it to look immediately at the synthetic fuel propositions that we put to the federal Treasurer almost 2 years ago which would allow us to bring the Bonaparte Gulf gas on-shore and tap into those markets. Korea and Taiwan will import 2.5 million tonnes and there is expected expansion into Japan. I do not believe that the Indonesian fields can produce past the sixth platform that they are proposing. The market is open, but we need incentives to get into the gas business. We cannot sit back and allow it to be locked up.

I recall a story that was told to me recently by Sir Bruce Watson. This resembles our history with gas. The story involved an area in the Baring Straits that cost \$100m to drill. The geologist went back to his boss and said: 'We have some bad news and some good news'. This occurred at a time when mineral prices were very low. When asked what the bad news was, he said that they had spent \$100m on the well and got nothing. When asked what the good news was, he replied: 'We did not get copper either'. Gas has been wrongly regarded in this country as a problem. It has a market and those people need a meaningful taxation review of the gas resource in this country. We need that now, not in 12 months time. There are projects around Australia that could go ahead today. I will be fighting for that at next week's conference in Darwin. Last night was the first step in a very long march to recover this country from the doldrums into which it has fallen. I hope that I have the support of all state ministers and the federal minister in this regard.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In respect of the proposed flood mitigation dam in Alice Springs, when will the final environmental impact study be made available to the public, and how much money is likely to be spent on the dam during this financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we are considering the replies to the draft EIS very seriously. Last week, we obtained a copy of the Webb Report prepared by consultants engaged by the Central Land Council. We are examining that document at the moment. If it had been forwarded to us when the council received it, instead of its embarking on a media campaign, that would have enabled us to assess the document much earlier. I am not sure of the actual cash allocation in this year's budget. In his budget speech, the Chief Minister highlighted his commitment to commence construction of the dam immediately after any matters arising from the EIS have been dealt with in a proper manner. I have no doubt about his commitment to the construction of that dam this financial year. A very large cash allocation will enable that project to start. As soon as the EIS has been completed, I have no doubt that the construction of the flood mitigation dam will commence immediately.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr BAILEY to TREASURER

On the Treasurer's own estimates, the taxpayer must pay \$24.4m to prop up Yulara and the Sheratons this year. That is \$500 000 a week. Last year, the budget estimate was \$17m. We know it blew out then because of the pilots' dispute. What is the cause this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course, as they are entitled to do, members opposite make as much play as they can of the government's contribution to the financial structures that support the Yulara Resort and the 5-star hotels that were built in Alice Springs and Darwin. They continually purport that this is a drain on the public purse that should not be there and, on a regular basis, the Leader of the Opposition makes great play of how he will wave his wand and remove the Northern Territory from these contractual

arrangements. He has not indicated whether he will do that by way of legislation, or what effect walking away from contractual arrangements might have on the Northern Territory government's credibility.

The government is proud of the 5-star accommodation that exists in the Territory and of the Yulara resort. These projects were built at an original cost in excess of \$200m, much of which flowed into the Northern Territory economy. They employ about 1750 Australians who pay Commonwealth and Northern Territory taxes of over \$20m a year. The payroll bill that is flowing is in the order of \$30m per year. Perhaps the honourable member opposite should obtain a briefing on these matters. Unfortunately, I do not think he has had the good fortune to be nominated to the Public Accounts Committee which receives, on behalf of this Assembly, briefings from time to time on the very complex financial structures behind these financial arrangements.

The payments to which the honourable member referred support complex financial structures to the extent that the returns from those projects are not able to meet the financial costs of the projects. The arrangements have termination dates which may vary with each of the projects. At that time, they will be sold or, in the case of Yulara, will be inherited by the Northern Territory people. That will be a very handsome asset. It will be even more valuable at the time that it is handed to the Northern Territory people and taken out of the hands of what one might call the mortgagees.

The figures that he referred to and the increase in those figures reflect the difference between the financial structures at present and the returns that are expected from the resort and from the hotels. If he cannot understand that, it is probably because he does not understand the financial structures. He might seek a briefing on the subject if he is really interested in finding out the information rather than trying to score a political point.

Mr Bailey: The purpose of question time is to obtain information.

Mr PERRON: Perhaps he could raise the matter with 1 or 2 of his colleagues who have been on the Public Accounts Committee. If they choose their words carefully and do not breach PAC guidelines, they may be able to convince him of the worth of the financial structures that brought these handsome assets to the Northern Territory. They are not liabilities; they are assets.

Local Court Rules

Mr TUXWORTH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I wrote to him recently about the introduction of Local Court Rules. When are the Local Court Rules likely to be commenced in the Northern Territory, particularly for the advantage of the smaller centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, contrary to the member for Barkly's suggestion that it would advantage people, the proposal would have placed a higher cost on the smaller business operators and on ordinary Territorians. In fact, a revision of the rules is under way to ensure that we obtain a far fairer system of costs for ordinary Territorians. When that process is completed, the matter can proceed. Contrary to his assertion, what was proposed would have been more expensive for people, and we did not wish that to occur.

Hong Kong Recruitment Campaign by DOLAS

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Last year, the Department of Labour and Administrative Services conducted a recruitment campaign in Hong Kong. What was the success or otherwise of this campaign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have some information on the Hong Kong recruitment campaign. As honourable members would be aware, we sought in Hong Kong professionals whom we found difficult to recruit in Australia. There have been 2 offers of employment made by the Northern Territory Treasury. Both of these offers have been accepted and are currently undergoing immigration processing. Mines and Energy has made 1 offer of employment, and that has been accepted. Transport and Works has made 12 offers of employment, mainly for engineers and architects, and 8 of those have been accepted. In relation to Health and Community Services, 1 offer of employment has been accepted and 1 further offer of employment has been made to a medical practitioner but it has not been accepted as yet. Approximately 30 nursing candidates have been short-listed and they are being assessed.

It had been hoped to recruit about 50 professionals in the first intake of people from Hong Kong. The reason for that was that there was economy in numbers because these people are provided with an intensive induction program. Some people have come already, under their own steam, and have been provided with first-hand knowledge of what to expect in the Northern Territory. They have returned to Hong Kong and formed an association of people who are likely to come to the Northern Territory to live and work. That self-help organisation provides information and support in respect of what is a major move for them.

I think the work done by the Department of Labour and Administrative Services over the last 12 months or so, in getting these people organised and bringing them to a position where they feel comfortable about coming to the Northern Territory to work, has met with a great deal of success. Obviously, there is a need for these people. The fact that we have been able to persuade the Commonwealth government to enter into a tripartite agreement to allow these professionals into the Territory indicates that the shortage of such people is being experienced Australia-wide. I am looking forward to the chance to meet with some of these people. I have no doubt at all that they will bring a great number of benefits to the Northern Territory through their expertise. Equally, I have no doubt that the Territory will be attractive to them. In many ways, it is not unlike the area they are coming from although, of course, it is much smaller and without some of the comforts that they may have been used to in Hong Kong. However, some things are cheaper. They are coming to much cheaper housing and a much less costly standard of living in many ways, yet still a very high standard of living. Those who have been here to date have indicated that it is very attractive to them.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to his answer to the previous question relating to the Sheratons and Yulara. Some 3 or 4 years ago, I was briefed on the

operations of the Sheratons and the Yulara Resort. Something that has remained in my memory is that the Territory government's commitment to those projects was expected to decrease over time and to conclude in 1996 or thereabouts, with a complete clearance of the operations in one way or another. Last year, the budget commitment was \$17m and that blew out as a result of the pilots' dispute. However, this year, \$24m has been budgeted without any good reason being offered. What has happened to the projections that said that our contributions to the Sheraton Hotels and Yulara would decrease over time, and why has so much been allocated in this budget to cover our contributions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it should be obvious to the Leader of the Opposition that the projections for income by way of occupancy and dollars returned through those organisations is insufficient to service the debt.

Mr Smith: So our projections were wrong?

Mr PERRON: I guess there is probably an ongoing ramification as a result of the pilots' dispute. The Leader of the Opposition seems to think ...

Mr Smith: So it is the pilots' dispute, is it?

Mr PERRON: I am saying that there is probably an ongoing effect from the pilots' dispute ...

Mr Smith: Is there or is there not?

Mr PERRON: I will let you know, all right!

Mr Smith: You do not know now?

Mr PERRON: It is an assumption.

Mr Smith: You spend \$24m and you do not have a clue why you are doing it, or what the justification for it is?

Mr PERRON: Come on! The member for Disneyland can do much better than that, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: Well, this is Disneyland stuff.

Mr PERRON: I am speaking without being briefed on the subject. I am happy to be briefed on the subject and to inform the Leader of the Opposition of further details in this regard, but I suspect that there is an ongoing effect on occupancy and cash flows through the 5-star hotels and the Yulara resort as a result of the pilots' dispute.

If the Leader of the Opposition thinks that everything returned to normal the day the pilots' dispute ended, I am afraid he has much to learn. However, the Deputy Chief Minister is full of information and has just indicated to me that it will probably take until 1992 before the situation is expected to return to 1987 levels.

Mr Smith: Where?

Mr PERRON: In the Territory's tourism industry.

I am prepared to obtain detailed information for the Leader of the Opposition on this matter and to provide an answer to him on the next sitting day.

Mr Smith: That is not what the minister told the House last week. He said they had been covered already. 1992 - that is very interesting.

Mr Coulter: For the Sheratons, in terms of ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Northern States Cooperative Tourism Market

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TOURISM

Is he aware of a recent statement by the Leader of the Opposition that, if he were in government, he would set up a joint or cooperative tourist market with the northern states? Would it be possible to implement such a proposal?

Mr Smith: I do not recall saying that.

Mr FIRMIN: You have been saying so many things lately that you cannot remember what you have said.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I read what the Leader of the Opposition said in one of his policy releases, and it was to the effect that he would set up a joint marketing or promotion arrangement with a northern Australian state. I read that with some interest, and the kindest thing I could say about the Leader of the Opposition is that all he has done is to reinvent the wheel. His statements are almost as ill-informed as are those of his parliamentary colleague from Nhulunbuy who said that the tourism industry was fragile.

For some years, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission has had in place joint promotion with Queensland. In fact, in New York, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and the Queensland authority co-share office space. In addition, they have been working with the Western Australian government. In fact, several months ago, I had a meeting in my office with officers from the Pilbara Shire and tourist officials from that area. We discussed additional joint promotion of northern Australia. We go a little further than the Leader of the Opposition. At my request, the Chairman of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, Bob Doyle, met several months ago with his counterpart in South Australia to discuss joint promotion of central Australia and the northern part of South Australia.

The kindest comment that I can make about the Leader of the Opposition is that he is illiterate, ill-informed or ill-read. Not content with crisscrossing the continent in a desperate search for initiatives and ideas, and adopting and then dumping the policies of the Dowdings, the Burkes, the Gosses and the Cains, he then returns to the Territory and adopts what we have had in place for years. The Leader of the Opposition is so slow that he could best be likened to a witchetty grub with super glue on its boots.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
AIDS Cases in the Northern Territory

Mr HATTON (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen asked me to provide some figures in respect of the number of notified AIDS cases in the Northern Territory. I am pleased that I took the precaution of double-checking the figures prior to answering because the most recent briefings I received before these sittings contained different information from that which I have received today. I believe that the figures which I have now received are accurate. They indicate that there have been 6 AIDS cases in the Northern Territory - 5 in the Darwin region and 1 in the Alice Springs and Barkly region.

Honourable members should be well pleased at the work that is being carried out by our staff in relation to communicable diseases, particularly the AIDS unit. In terms of combating AIDS, and particularly in terms of the excellent work being done in Aboriginal areas, that unit is probably the best in the country. Its success is measured by the fact that there is a very high awareness and understanding of HIV infection throughout the Northern Territory, particularly in the bush areas. It is measured equally by the fact that, despite the fact that 25% of our population is Aboriginal and very young, and lives in communities which are very susceptible to sexually-transmitted diseases, there has not been 1 case of HIV infection in the Territory's Aboriginal population. This is despite the fact that cases have been identified among the Aboriginal populations in our 3 bordering states. Our monitoring programs are at least as efficient as those in the states. That record speaks volumes for the work of the communicable diseases and AIDS teams, for the Aboriginal communities and their health workers, and for everybody in the field who works on education and awareness programs and on practices which will avoid the spread of AIDS. As I said, there are 6 recorded cases of HIV infection in the Northern Territory. I understand that the indications are that, in all of those cases, the infection was contracted interstate.

Teaching Staff Cuts

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

While the minister was on leave, the acting minister was the member for Katherine. By vigorous interpretation of formula, the acting minister was able to cut 44 teacher positions and relocate only 24. On his return, the minister realised that there had been no consultation before the cuts, and that many were simply not justifiable. As this is very important, I urge honourable members to show tolerance when the minister replies to this question which is as follows. Which of the following school cuts has he been able to reverse: Darwin High School lost 1 Band 2; Dripstone lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 3; Driver High School lost 1 Band 3; Nightcliff High School lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 3; Taminmin High School lost 2 Band 2s and 1 Band 3; and Sadadeen Primary lost 1 Band 4 ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's question is very long. It may have been better and more appropriate had he placed it on the Question Paper. I would not expect the Minister for Education to answer the question unless he has been forewarned of its content.

Mr EDE: I have given forewarning.

Mr SPEAKER: That is fine. Continue.

Mr EDE: Alice Springs High School lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 3; Anzac Hill High lost 2 Band 2s; Sadadeen Secondary College lost 1 Band 3; Darwin Central, Jingili lost 1 Band 4; Ludmilla lost 1 Band 2; Millner lost 1 Band 4; Tiwi lost 1 Band 2; Wulagi lost 1 Band 3; Gray lost a Band 3; Jabiru lost 1 Band 3 and 1 Band 2; Amoonguna lost 1 Band 2; Ti Tree lost 1 Band 3; Yuendumu lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 4; Katherine South lost 1 Band 4; Mataranka lost 1 Band 4; Katherine High lost 1 Band 3; Numbulwar lost 1 Band 2; Ramalinging lost 1 Band 3, Yirrkala lost 1 Band 2; Nhulunbuy lost 1 Band 2; Oenpelli lost 1 Band 3; and Elliott lost 1 Band 3. Would the minister advise which of these quite incredible cuts, made without any consultation, has he been able to reverse?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, again we hear the opposition spokesman on education putting forward a view that we are cutting staff irresponsibly from schools. What a load of nonsense! The reality is that staffing is based on formula, and the member representing the education portfolio on the opposition benches knows full well that that is the situation. In the situation that he refers to, the matter has been examined in some instances. Yuendumu is one which I examined specifically. The reason why there was a problem there was that Yuendumu does have that Community Education Centre up and running and there was a need for us to look at that.

Let me come back to staffing generally. The forewarning given to me by the member for Stuart was handed to me 2 minutes before you walked into the Chamber, Mr Speaker. Clearly, it is not possible for me to provide that type of detail at such short notice. I will endeavour to obtain the information that he has requested and to provide him with the answers during the course of these sittings.

The so-called sacking of staff is a load of nonsense. I can recall that, some time ago, the member for Stuart issued a press release indicating that 36 positions would be lost throughout the Northern Territory, and that

the government would sack staff and do all sorts of things. The reality is that 36 promotion positions will be reduced from some schools, whilst 24 promotions will be increased in others. These fluctuations are due to variations in student enrolment numbers in these schools. There is nothing unusual about these enrolments or staffing entitlement fluctuations. Such pluses and minuses occur every year. It has not happened on this occasion only. On this occasion, as in past years, where the minuses have exceeded the pluses, we will be able to relocate any displaced staff in vacant positions as they arise. Through a provision in the Northern Territory Teaching Service known as the Excess Officers Provision, any teacher displaced receives priority for placement in vacant positions as they arise.

It should be noted that Territory schools are provided with teaching positions on the basis of student numbers, according to a detailed formula. The members opposite know that. It has been something that has been occurring for years. We knew that things would be tight this year and we knew that we wanted to maintain the very good formula which governs student-teacher ratios in our schools. We wanted to maintain the best possible facilities in this country and we needed to ensure that the formula was adhered to. There is no secret about that. In fact, in 'Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory', we talked about above-formula positions. This matter has not suddenly happened. It has been public information and the member for Stuart knows it, but he keeps promoting the idea that this government is interested only in chopping teaching staff and kicking people out. In order to maintain the best staffing formula in Australia and the best facilities, whilst keeping our budget flowing, we have to be responsible on this issue.

To return to the above-formula positions, we have made it very clear that the policy in relation to formula will be adhered to strictly. We have adopted a process which will ensure that that can occur with a minimum amount of disruption. In respect of above-formula positions, 'Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory' says:

Strict application of formula staffing has always been supported by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, but problems related to enrolment fluctuations which could result in transfer or voluntary demotion have meant that many above-formula positions have remained in schools for a further 12 months to enable staff to apply for transfers or promotion should they wish in the following annual promotion round.

It is proposed that, for 1991, above-formula staff other than agreed special needs staff will not remain at a school beyond the end of the year in which the position is reclassified. This will be achieved by earlier identification of formula entitlements and streamlined placement procedures.

That information has been available for some time and the member for Stuart knows it. Indeed, all teachers know it. We are aiming to ensure that we are able to maintain the formula in our schools to ensure that they are able to cover the core subjects or the approved curriculum as set by the Northern Territory Board of Studies. That is what this is all about. In some situations, there is the possibility ...

Mr Ede: What about consultation? The demographers were supposed to go around. They did not visit the schools at all.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, when we talk about consultation, we are looking at the entire staffing of the school. We consult the teachers and, where

there are problems in relation to their positions, these are identified and those people are counselled. The councils are involved. Where there is genuine concern by a council that the school cannot carry out its responsibilities in relation to core subjects or curriculum in the next year, those matters are further investigated.

In the case of Taminmin High School, I attended a public meeting there and listened to a lot of the nonsense that was being put forward by some. They were promoting the idea that we would sack 36 people. That needed to be discussed in more detail. I spoke to some students at Taminmin High School and I indicated that, where there is concern, that matter will be looked at responsibly.

In relation to above-formula staff or the proposed adjustments to staffing this year, we will establish a group that can look at the issue and ensure that the Northern Territory Board of Studies' approved curriculum can be covered. There are some 7 schools that have contacted my office or the department at this time that do have problems in relation to next year's staffing. As I said, a process is in place to examine those schools and to ensure that they are not being disadvantaged. It is acknowledged that some of the principals will have a greater workload placed on their shoulders because of the Master Teachers Program and the need for them to be involved in panels. There will be an increased load also as a result of the devolution of powers and the development of school improvement plans at the various schools. We will be looking at that matter.

I will endeavour to provide the honourable member with the information that he desires. However, may I indicate very clearly to the teachers and to the public that the opposition is continually employing scare tactics and suggesting that we are sacking people left, right and centre. That is not the case. The schools are looked after. In the Northern Territory, we will maintain the best formula and we will maintain our facilities. However, a little responsibility has to be taken to put all that in place. We must ensure that schools are not overstaffed and that teachers work the appropriate time. In relation to the process of award restructuring, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation has tried to be responsible in its approach. I thank it for the way in which it has gone about its work. There has to be give and take. We want to maintain the best system in Australia and, in order to do that, we have to keep to formula. I have indicated that I will listen to the concerns of any school that has a problem to ensure that those concerns are looked at in a responsible and proper manner.

Instrument of Reconciliation with Aboriginals

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

I noticed an item in Tuesday night's federal budget papers which allocated \$4.5m towards the development of an instrument of reconciliation - that is, a treaty - between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians. Is the Chief Minister aware of this item and would he care to comment on it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware that there is an allocation of \$4.5m in the federal budget supposedly to convince us all of the federal government's or the Prime Minister's point of view. It is disturbing that the taxpayer

should have to foot the bill to convince people that Australia really needs a treaty with Aborigines.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, it has been called many things. Initially, it was referred to as the Barunga statement wherein the bid was first made to the Prime Minister. Following that, it has assumed a variety of names. The definition of all the various names is probably the same. Call it what you like, I do not believe that there is any community support for the premise that Australia was stolen from Aboriginal people. I do not think that today's Australian citizens believe that they should shoulder some terrible guilt about how this nation was originally settled. It is a shame that such a large sum of money has been allocated obviously for a publicity campaign aimed at non-Aboriginal Australians, if I understand correctly the flavour of the press release from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Tickner, which was issued yesterday.

We know that Northern Territory ALP policy spells out clearly its attitude on the subject. Thus, I suppose it is wrong to say that there is no support for it in the community. I quote from the Northern Territory ALP's policy document:

The Northern Territory Labor Party recognises the need for the Australian government to provide appropriate compensation for Aboriginal people who have had their land stolen and who have been alienated from their culture and heritage. The NT ALP, acknowledging the absence of any treaty or agreement with Aboriginal people over compensation for dispossession, supports the call for federal legislation to address this question of compensation.

The federal government has revised its intention of entering into a treaty with Aboriginal Australians to something like the year 2000. If it intends to allocate amounts in the order of \$4.5m every couple of years to convince us all that it is a good idea, it will cost the Australian taxpayer a lot of bread. I think that the present allocation is for a 2-year campaign. No doubt, at the end of that period, an assessment will be made of whether it was successful or not. If we all remain unconvinced that it is necessary to have a document filed away in a bank somewhere in order that non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians can comfortably work together as Australians, I suppose it will revamp the campaign and intensify it. It has until the year 2000 - that is, of course, if anyone believes that the Labor Party will be in office in Canberra until then. Perhaps there is some saving grace for us there.

Taminmin High School - Redundancy of Positions

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

A couple of months ago, a meeting was held at Taminmin High School. At that meeting, the minister promised that a committee would be formed to assess the situation in relation to the redundancy of certain positions. Has the committee been formed? If so, who is on the committee and what assessments has it made to date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I indicated in answer to the question asked by the member for Stuart, in cases in which schools indicate that they have concerns, we will look into those concerns. I will outline the process because I think that it is important. We want to ensure that required curriculum areas are covered. We are not talking about personalities. It is not a matter of schools saying that they need a particular position because they believe that, without it, the school would be unable to function. Each principal and assistant principal will prepare a general outline of management for 1991. That will be discussed with the regional superintendent to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the government. By the end of week 9, the principal, assistant principal and senior faculty staff will have completed that management plan for 1991, showing the staff allocation and teaching loads. The plan will then be scrutinised by an advisory panel, which is the panel to which the honourable member refers. This panel will comprise a secondary principal, an assistant secondary principal ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Of the school concerned?

Mr HARRIS: No. They will come from other areas. The other member of the panel will be a senior officer of the Department of Education. The panel will look at the management plan to determine whether it is possible to cover the curriculum with the staffing allocation put forward. It is a fair process. I have given a commitment on behalf of this government that, if the Northern Territory Board of Studies core curriculum is not able to be taught satisfactorily with allocated staffing levels, I will ensure that the necessary staff will be put in place. I have made that commitment very clear and I repeat it now. We have to ensure that the process of looking at the courses and subjects is carried out responsibly, and that the emotion is taken out of it. As we have seen from this morning's comments by the member for Stuart and others, it is very easy to create the impression that we intend simply to scrub people. That is not the case. The government has a responsibility to ensure that it covers the areas, and it will meet that responsibility, but that will be done in a proper manner.

As I indicated earlier this morning, the process has been put in place. A letter will be sent to the Taminmin High School outlining the process that is to be followed. The process will consider the issues realistically and not emotionally. I hope that, by using a panel comprised of people from outside the school concerned, that panel will be able to say that those programs can be covered with the staff that have been provided.

Barkly Highway at Tennant Creek

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What progress has been made on the proposed deviation of the Barkly Highway into Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in March this year, I received correspondence from Maggie Hickey, the convenor of the working party in Tennant Creek, seeking that we put a stop to ...

Mr Ede: The next member.

Mr FINCH: It is true that Maggie Hickey is the Labor Party candidate for the electorate of Barkly. Of course, for her, this issue has really become a bit of a ...

Mr Ede: Cause celebre.

Mr FINCH: Yes, one of those.

Mr Bell: French not too flash, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the Department of Transport and Works and the Northern Territory government were prepared, not necessarily to stop the highway project, which is what she was seeking, but at least to defer to the end of the current construction program the actual intersection at Threeways which was to be located adjacent to the Shell service station. Since that time, in a spirit of cooperation, the department has put together all of the technical surveys to assist that working party to make an economic evaluation of whether the project would be viable and justifiable or not. After many months of origin-and-destination surveys, submissions from all sorts of companies and organisations in Tennant Creek, and surveys of freight companies etc, a technical appraisal was forwarded to the working party some 2 months ago.

Given the urgency of this matter, I am concerned that the final report, which now needs to have the social impact and political aspects built into it, is still not to hand. The federal budget has now been brought down, and I emphasise that because, naturally, any funding of a deviation of the Barkly Highway would be a federal government responsibility and would need to be funded specifically by it. Lots of noise has been drummed up by the Labor candidate for Barkly, allegedly on the basis of her good contact with Senator Collins, Warren Snowdon, Minister Kerin and Minister Brown etc, accompanied by a proliferation of phone calls and winks and nods indicating that it will get the green light.

However, following a visit to Tennant Creek a short time ago, when officers of the federal department indicated quite clearly that the economic feasibility of the proposal was in extreme doubt and that they could not undertake to recommend any support at that stage, I am wondering whether the Labor Cabinet has gone cold on the issue. I have sought that the mayor should pursue this matter. I have said all along that, if the \$8m-worth of work involved in such a project stacks up viably, and the federal government is prepared to support it, then naturally enough it will receive our wholehearted endorsement. Very simply, of course, Tennant Creek is in an economic slump. If this project proved to be viable, it would be of some assistance to people there.

There has been considerable politicking on the matter, with many winks and nods and hints about what Senator Collins and Warren Snowdon will and will not do for them, and I can only assume that some bad news has been passed to them and that they are holding off. The Department of Transport and Works needs to proceed and, of course, Shell needs to know what the outcome will be. The company has an investment there of some \$3m. The project is demonstrated to lie \$9m on the negative side following a cost-benefit appraisal. That does not include the \$3m or \$4m that would be required to compensate Shell, and that would appear to be a fair figure. Shell and also the Department of Transport and Works need to make business decisions, and it is time that we saw some action from the working party led by, as the member for Stuart advises, the Labor candidate for Barkly.

Police Investigation of Alleged Police Corruption

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to the extraordinary comments made by the Chief Minister this morning in respect of the police investigation into police corruption. I point out to the Chief Minister that I regard myself as fair game in terms of an upcoming debate. However, I do not regard people outside this Assembly as fair game. Will the Chief Minister apologise to Geoffrey Barbaro, following the libellous comments the Chief Minister made about him on the ABC program to which I referred? Secondly, in respect of the investigations themselves, what guarantee is there that information given to police by people such as Mr Barbaro's client will be passed on to Mr Mulholland?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the first part of the first question, I do not recall saying anything that was libellous against a solicitor in town on the radio this morning. However, if I did, I am sure that I will be communicated with by that individual. Certainly, I would not think him to be a man who would need to seek advice on such a matter. I will re-examine what I said to see if I said anything that was offensive or damaging to him. If I did say any such thing, at least it was not said under privilege in this House, as has occurred in certain instances in the past.

The honourable member's second question is a little absurd. He is implying is that Mr Mulholland QC, the acknowledged senior criminal lawyer in Queensland and a man of considerable standing in the view of the Leader of the Opposition and the Queensland Premier etc, is a man who needs to be told how to do his job. He has been given a broad brief by the Northern Territory government which includes the ability for him to advise the Northern Territory police investigating teams that certain actions should be taken - and he would take a pretty dim view if they were not - in respect of the 3 matters included in his brief.

For the honourable member to ask what guarantees there are that any information provided by any person to police will be forwarded to Mr Mulholland underrates Mr Mulholland's standing. It certainly underrates the police investigators, the Commissioner of Police etc. What the honourable member is implying really is that nobody can be certain that anything that is provided to the police will ever be passed on to anybody else.

Mr Bell: Exactly.

Mr PERRON: In my view, that is an absurd statement having regard to the procedure which the honourable member knows has been established in the details of the brief given to Mr Mulholland. If he does have any concern in this regard, he might urge the Leader of the Opposition to take the opportunity, which is still open to him and has been open to him for 2 or 3 months, to receive a personal briefing from the Commissioner of Police and, if necessary, the Secretary of the Department of Law. The Leader of the Opposition could be briefed in considerable detail as to where the investigations are and what procedures are being followed to ensure that all information that comes into this system is passed on appropriately.

The Leader of the Opposition has refused persistently to allow himself to be informed of these matters on the basis that he is not prepared to know

anything that the rest of the public does not know. That is a shame. I think he is avoiding his responsibilities as a supposedly senior person in this community. People ought to be able to place some trust not only in him but also in his opinion. If he were prepared to accept a confidential briefing, at least then, even if he were not prepared to go public, he could assure his colleagues of his satisfaction or otherwise with the procedures that have been established. He is afraid that he might be convinced and he might have to say that he is satisfied with what is happening. He will not take that chance. He would rather dodge his responsibility and not know what is happening because that would remove his opportunity to score political points. He ought to be ashamed of himself.

Road Transport and Road Safety

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Members will be aware of the Commonwealth government's determination to divert to rail much of the freight currently carried by road transport. One of the underlying principles of that action is that road transport contributes inordinately to the carnage on our roads. Is that a valid principle in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, the much-maligned truckie has an excellent record as a result of self-regulation and in close consultation with the law-makers of the Northern Territory. That is particularly apparent when consideration is taken of the many miles that are travelled and the huge tonnages that are freighted by road trains, sometimes on roads such as the Victoria Highway which are far from conducive to road safety. However, we do not know whether the great east coast drama, in which the truckies are portrayed as an evil scourge, is in fact a furphy.

A report called for by the federal government, undertaken by the Monash University Accident Research Centre, and published last Tuesday, would seem to put the lie to all of the suggestions made about road transporters. Even on the east coast, on the Pacific and Hume Highways, the statistics taken over a period of 18 months speak for themselves. On average only 8.5% of fatalities involve - and I emphasise 'involve' - trucks. Of that percentage, only 32% are caused by the truck. That means that, even on that horror stretch, only 2% or 3% of fatalities are the responsibility of truckies.

In the Northern Territory, we are much better off. As I explained, through sensible legislation and a cooperative industry, truckies here are involved in only 7.6% of fatal accidents and are responsible for only 1.6% of the total fatalities. Those figures are based on average numbers over the last 7 years. Therefore, it is clear that one of the fundamental premises, on which is based the argument for the ridiculous national registration fee which is supposed to be introduced, and which will cripple the trucking industry and Territorians, is false. The other premise on which it is based is just as false. It involves deliberately moving freight business from road to rail by penalising truckies.

There is to be a 4-year deferment of the full impact of the fees, but what the Commonwealth did not say was that there is a 6¢ a litre diesel impost. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition carried on about a 1¢ per litre impost in the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth impost is 6¢ a litre on diesel for truckies and 9.4¢ on petrol to motorists. This is all

based on a false premise. It is no wonder that, in the Northern Territory and in Western Australia, people develop the attitude that the east coast portrays centralised decision-making and socialism at its worst. Decisions emanate from Canberra, all favouring the east coast of Australia. However, life exists beyond the railhead.

Wheelie Bins

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Department of Health surveys done previously showed heavy maggot infestations when bins were collected only once per week. Was the minister aware of this situation, or advised of concerns held by health surveyors and the Department of Health and Community Services prior to the introduction of a once-weekly service by the Darwin City Council? As the current situation would appear to be a health risk, does the minister accept responsibility for events as a result of his lack of action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I love the cute epithet at the end of that comment, but I have become used to that type of inane outburst from the member for Wanguri during the last 12 months. Nonetheless, I will respond for the benefit of the constituency, which is particularly concerned about the problems associated with the infamous wheelie bin and the more infamous weekly garbage collection service. I am pleased to see that representatives of the Darwin City Council are present in the public gallery and so are able to listen to the comments which are likely to be made about this matter.

At the time of discussions about the introduction of wheelie bins, I requested and received reports on the potential health effects of the introduction of weekly collections using wheelie bins. Among health surveyors, there was considerable debate as to whether the issues involved were, strictly speaking, health matters, or whether they related merely to odour and discomfort. The reports indicated that, unless appropriate action was taken, there was a possibility of maggot infestation and an increase in the fly population. The reports indicated also that appropriate courses of action could be adopted to avoid that possibility. The health surveyors' reports were made available to the Darwin City Council and, whilst the precise details escape my memory, the general advice from the department was that the introduction of wheelie bins and weekly collections would not, per se, constitute a health hazard. I had correspondence from the community on the subject and I responded to the community in the light of the department's advice.

Whilst I do not denigrate that advice, I must say that I have never been a supporter of weekly collections of garbage in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt about the unique odour which is a consequence of once-weekly garbage collection. The effective requirement to triple wrap and freeze or refrigerate garbage until the collection day is an outrageous imposition on the community. The Minister for Transport and Works addressed this matter quite comprehensively in the adjournment debate last night. He indicated that the council is charging residents \$105 a year per household in garbage collection rates. In fact, the contract rate for the collection service is in the order of \$50 a year per household, which gives the council \$55 per year per household for overheads.

I might note that, when the bins were introduced, the ratepayers did not obtain any of the increased productivity benefits in terms of reduced

garbage collection rates. That occurred not only because of the bins but also because only 1 person is required on the truck. Not only has the service been halved, but also fewer workers are engaged on the work. I understand that the rules require that the driver shall not leave the truck. If, at night, smart Alec kids decide to reverse the bins or push them a couple of feet away from the kerb, the householders miss out on that collection.

Mr Bailey: Or if someone parks nearby.

Mr HATTON: Or if somebody parks nearby. It would then become a fortnightly collection.

I believe that, out of its overhead component of \$55 or thereabouts, the council ought to be able to meet the \$21 additional cost for a second collection per week. As Minister for Conservation, I would be happy to discuss with the council how we could integrate kerbside collection of recyclable materials with the garbage collection service. That would provide some efficiency measures for the council in its land-filling and dumping costs and, at the same time, assist in the process of collection of recyclable materials. I do not accept responsibility for the flies that are creating a black tinge to the light across the northern suburbs of Darwin. That fairly and squarely rests on the shoulders of the Darwin City Council, and I believe it has the financial capacity to do something about it.

Government Printing Office - Use of Recycled Paper

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand the Government Printing Office has produced several publications printed on recycled paper in recent months. How many government publications are now printed on recycled paper and what other moves are under way to ensure that as much wastepaper as possible is being recycled?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, the recently tabled budget papers were printed on recycled paper. That follows the policy adopted by various government departments recently to ensure that, where possible, recycled paper is utilised. It has been said that recycled paper is more expensive than other papers and therefore it is necessary to weigh up the difference in cost and decide whether the cheaper option should be taken and other types of paper used. I am told that the paper used for the budget papers was marginally cheaper than the paper that we would otherwise have used. Thus, things are changing in that regard.

About 15 or 16 regular publications are printed on recycled paper. These include the Government Directory, the Equal Opportunity Survey results, the Environment 1990 folders, Guide to NT Parks, the brochure 'Introducing the Mines Environment Directorate' - and it is pleasing to see the Department of Mines and Energy utilising this facility - the Conservation Commission letterhead, public service circulars, business cards, award restructuring booklets, the Conservation Commission's corporate folders, Land Care letterheads, the Annual Report of the Conservation Commission, envelopes, the Feral Animal Conference leaflets, and the ozone protection leaflets. Those are some of the current publications that have and are utilising the recycled paper.

The other part of the question related to the recycling of paper out of the Northern Territory. As honourable members may be aware, the Government Printer had been utilising the services of Vital Recycling prior to its closing down. Following the demise of that company, we were left in a bit of a quandary as to what to do with wastepaper. Initially, we reached an agreement with APM in Queensland to send the wastepaper in sacks. That continued for a short time. Since that time, we have started to compact the paper and ship it to Queensland. In fact, about 50 t of paper from the Northern Territory government is passed through the Government Printing Office and shipped to Queensland for recycling. I understand the Minister for Conservation will have a little more to say about that later today.

The other day, I took the opportunity to visit the Government Printing Office when the budget papers were being produced and I talked with a number of the people there. I am pleased to say that the Government Printing Office has turned the corner and has become a very lean, mean machine. It is operating extremely well. During the evening, whilst the budget papers were being printed, I returned to thank the people at the Government Printing Office for their efforts. I took a couple of cartons of beer around and had a drink with them.

I would like to commend the last 2 Government Printers. Since I have had responsibility for the Government Printing Office, Mr John Cossons and Mr Graeme Carswell have been the Government Printers. Both have done an excellent job in changing the Government Printing Office from an organisation which carried a bit of fat to one that is now functioning extremely well. It is able to respond extremely quickly to the needs of government. In fact, it has been able to put a very substantial portion of its work out to the private sector.

The Government Printing Office is now under review again. When we started the process of trimming it down a couple of years ago, I promised that we would review it again with a view to determining the direction it would take in the future. I sincerely commend the efforts of the Government Printing Office and the efforts its officers are putting into using recycled paper and reducing the costs of its utilisation. I commend also the fact that we are continuing to recycle paper through the Government Printing Office.

By-laws in Relation to Dog Act

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In answer to a question asked earlier in these sittings, the minister said that local government councils and community government councils can make their own by-laws in relation to the Dog Act. Legal advice given to the Darwin and Palmerston councils indicates that this is not so. What is the true position?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker I am not aware of the legal advice that the councils have received. Quite clearly, councils do have the capacity to make by-laws under the current Dog Act and they have the capacity to fulfil their obligations for the control of dogs in the Northern Territory under the auspices of that act. I have promised to repeal that act to allow councils the freedom to create their own by-laws without any restriction which may be imposed by that act so that they can pick up the problems that they have in policing dogs outside of those areas designated as public places.

The Darwin City Council has been controlling dogs in Darwin for some considerable time. Other councils have not gone as far as the Darwin City Council has in utilising the current act, but there will be no restrictions on councils once that act is repealed. If community government councils and municipal councils would get together and make a decision on where they want to go with this, I would quite happy to look at the repeal of the current Dog Act as soon as possible. It does not have to be effective from 1 July 1991. That date was selected only to allow people enough time to have their by-laws in place if they chose to create by-laws. Of course, being a former councillor and president of a community government council, the honourable member will be aware that the Northern Territory Community Government Association has sought a longer period of time before the repeal of the act comes into effect whereas, generally, municipal councils would prefer a shorter time lapse. I would like the 2 arms of local government to get together and decide what they really want.

Palmerston Bus Service

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Why was the Palmerston Bus Service granted to Buslink without the contract being put out to public tender, what is the period of the contract and what is the anticipated overall cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there were good logical reasons for not putting the contract out to public tender. Within a few days of the last major disputation within the Darwin Bus Service, the residents of Palmerston suggested rather strongly that they would like an integrated service for Palmerston.

Mr Coulter: They petitioned this parliament in fact.

Mr FINCH: Yes. They petitioned this parliament, through their local member. They stated quite specifically that they wanted Buslink. Naturally enough, the basis for their request was that Buslink already operated the local service. They wanted an integrated service so that, whenever possible, they could be picked up in the suburbs of Palmerston and be driven along the trunk route to Casuarina or the centre of Darwin without having to change buses. The Darwin Bus Service examined that option in terms of economic viability and practicality. At the same time, we were reviewing the need for expansion of other routes within the northern suburbs. As a total package, the most economic course of action was deemed to be the extension of the terms of the existing contract to give Buslink the major routes.

The existing 10-year contract, which has 7 or 8 years to run, was based on competitive tenders. The allocation of the additional integrated routes to Buslink was based exactly on those competitively-won tenders. It was not a big deal. The other option was to terminate the existing contracts for the suburban routes, which would have resulted in a cost penalty and some unfairness to Buslink, the private company which held those contracts. Of course, the routes being offered were within the jurisdiction of the Darwin Bus Service and therefore there was no conflict with any other contractor.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: There was.

Mr FINCH: In response to the interjection from the member for Koolpinyah, the Darwin Bus Service is currently looking at further integration of services in the rural area, where there is a mix and where it would make sense to arrange some localised integration, if it can possibly be negotiated.

In my view, there was no disadvantage to other contractors. The decision was made on the basis of competitively-won contracts. To have done otherwise would have been totally unfair to the incumbent contractor and it would have cost the government dollars. As for the cost of the contract to government, I do not have the figures before me. As I have said, it was based on the previous rates. It applies for the balance of the current contract for Palmerston. There were some marginal long-term savings to government. We were due to examine the purchase of some new buses and we were saved the necessity of meeting the capital costs of replacement buses. All in all, it was a good deal on behalf of the taxpayer.

Honda Central Australian Masters Games

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

Would the minister provide the House with an update on the third Honda Central Australian Masters Games which are due to commence in early October this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, reports from the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation in central Australia indicate that this year's Honda Central Australian Masters Games will be even bigger and better than they were in 1988, when about 2000 competitors took part in the games and generated an estimated \$1.4m into the economy. It is estimated that, this year, 2500 competitors will take part. The value to the central Australian and Northern Territory economy will be around \$2m. That figure is based on estimated enrolment figures. The nomination figures are up by about 25%. Currently, 1500 people have nominated formally. In the corresponding period in 1988, 1075 people had nominated. On a sadder note - and honourable members may have heard about this - the oldest entrant in the games, a gentleman born in 1897, a 93 year-old walker from Melbourne, was knocked down by a car in Melbourne 2 or 3 weeks ago, and died.

I would like to pay tribute to Honda, which is once again the major sponsor for the Masters Games. Honda has indicated that it will sponsor the Masters Games again in 1992. The Northern Territory is delighted to have the continuing support of Honda Australia. I would like to pay tribute to the company, and particularly to one of its directors, Mr David Morwood, who has been a strong supporter of the games. Some honourable members might be aware of the fact that Mr Morwood's daughter, Amanda, works for the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation. The Attorney-General might be further interested in the fact that David Morwood is an uncle of Shane Morwood, the well-known Collingwood footballer. In conclusion, let me say that the continuing support of Honda and other sponsors, together with the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation, will enable the Honda Central Australian Masters Games to continue as the premier masters games in Australia.

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