

The Estimates Committee convened at 8.30 am.

MINISTER PRICE'S PORTFOLIOS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Madam CHAIR: Good morning everyone, and welcome to our listeners at home and at work. For the benefit of Hansard, we have Nathan Barrett, member for Blain; Gary Higgins, member for Daly; me as Chairperson and member for Drysdale; Ken Vowles, member for Johnston; Gerry McCarthy, member for Barkly; and Alison Anderson, member for Namatjira.

I welcome you minister, as Minister for Community Services and Minister for Women's Policy, and invite you to introduce the officials accompanying you today.

Mrs PRICE: Good morning, Madam Chair, and good morning to everyone else. I would like to introduce Mr Michael Chiodo, Chief Executive of the Department of Community Services, and to my right is Mr Ken Tinkham, the department's Chief Financial Officer.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Minister, I will invite you to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes, and you may also choose to table answers to written questions. I will then call for questions relating to the statement. The committee will then consider any whole-of-government budget and fiscal strategy-related questions before moving on to output specific questions and finally non-output specific budget-related questions.

I will invite the shadow minister to ask questions first, followed by committee members. Finally, other participating members may ask questions. The committee has agreed that other members may join in on a line of questioning pursued by a shadow, rather than waiting for the end of the shadow's questioning on the output.

Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement regarding the Department of Community Services?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I present the budget from my department and will outline the activities it supports from its inception in September 2013 through to 31 March 2014.

In general, my department undertakes two main functions directed towards regional and remote communities, being whole-of-government coordination and the provision of services.

A major focus of my department's activities is directed towards services in regional and remote locations in the Northern Territory to ensure services improve and people who live there share and participate in the opportunities that emerge as the Northern Territory grows.

The department has key functions in purchasing essential services across 72 remote communities, coordination of infrastructure development in remote communities, purchasing municipal and essential services and home maintenance across approximately 500 homelands and town camps, provision of language services to support all areas of the Northern Territory, remote engagement and coordination in providing support to engage women and men to advance their interests in participation in the response to major initiatives.

The activities incorporated in these functions are directed towards engagement and support of regional and remote communities to give them a voice to government and an opportunity to participate in developing the Northern Territory.

Madam Chair, many of my department's activities are directed towards supporting and ensuring Indigenous Territorians in regional and remote communities are engaged in our society and take an active role and responsibility in framing their future.

My department has a key function in the planning, development and purchasing of essential services across 72 remote Indigenous communities. These services are purchased from Indigenous Essential Services Pty Ltd, a not-for-profit subsidiary of the Power and Water Corporation under a rolling three-year agreement.

The department also funds the provision of municipal and essential services, and home maintenance services to approximately 500 homelands across the Territory, delivered by 35 service providers, 31 of which are Indigenous organisations.

Provision of these services across such a large geographic area is a challenge, and the last 12 months has seen a process to better focus services where people live and to increase accountability for performance.

The Homelands Extra Allowance program, which was an election commitment of this government, provides funding for repairs and maintenance of homeland dwellings. Items included under repairs and maintenance include installing and repairing doors and locks; repairing windows; painting, repair or replacement of hot water systems; boundary fencing; security screens; fans, plumbing works; lighting; fitment of rainwater tanks; toilets; kitchens; and roofing.

Homelands Extra Allowance funding is not available to purchase any appliances, whitegoods, televisions, entertainment or audiovisual equipment, or for the installation of new air-conditioning systems. The Homelands Extra Allowance program will continue in 2014-15 and 2015-16 with \$4m and \$6m respectively being available to improve homeland housing across the Territory.

In partnership with the Commonwealth, my department facilitates the employment of 137 full-time equivalent jobs for Aboriginal people. These jobs engage in municipal and essential services activities in remote communities, including homelands. Recently I have reached agreement with the Commonwealth government to undertake an assessment of all homelands to get a census of the infrastructure that exists to guide future funding. I look forward to making a joint announcement, in the near future, with the Commonwealth government on the timing and scope of the assessment, as it will guide not only the estimated \$300m that will be provided to homelands over the next 10 years, but a further \$40m that the Aboriginals Benefits Account has earmarked for homelands in the Northern Territory.

The above assessment of homelands will dovetail into the Northern Territory infrastructure study in which my department is working closely with the Department of Transport and the broader northern Australian study to ensure that people living in the regional remote communities are not forgotten and their infrastructure needs are recognised so they are given an opportunity to participate in regional economic development.

Developing infrastructure in regional remote communities presents its own challenges. My department, through the Remote Program Office, plays a role in the progression of infrastructure developments in remote communities by applying a place-based approach to inform agencies of all infrastructure developments targeted to specific communities to ensure the capabilities of communities are not overwhelmed and that adequate land tenure arrangements are put into place, that the essential services in communities can cope with the extra demand and to influence the delivery of projects to maximise local employment and support for local business.

The department is also delivering special one-off projects, such as the asbestos removal program from community buildings in 34 remote communities, the Ilpiye-Ilpiye infrastructure upgrades and support to the Jabiru Town Development Authority to upgrade essential services. My department is now delivering on mainstream land administration and management initiatives. These initiatives will deliver easy access to remote land dealings, and remote land transactions are now being logged with the Lands Titles Office. Through the department's remote engagement and coordination activities we are making sure that regions are engaged in expressing their views on local development.

My department is leading the coordination of Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement, which will invest \$3.56bn over 10 years into the Northern Territory, and provides valuable long-term support for services to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, particularly in remote communities, to live strong, independent lives where communities, families and children are safe and healthy. Officers from the Department of Community Services work closely with officers from the Australian government and from a range of Northern Territory government agencies to ensure coordinated action from the Stronger Futures investment.

My department is the lead agency for two of the nine implementation plans: municipal and essential services, with \$246.762m in funding over 10 years; and remote engagement and coordination with \$37.126m in funding over 10 years.

Language services provide a critical service for government clients who do not speak English as their first language, particularly for those who require health, justice and welfare services from government agencies.

The provision of Aboriginal interpreter services has been delivered by the Aboriginal Interpreter Service for close to 14 years now, and continues to expand every year, with an increase in the total number of hours of interpreting this year of almost 10% above the previous year.

The ethnic language interpreting and translating service of the Northern Territory continues to provide an important service for residents, tourists and migrants to the Northern Territory. The Aboriginal Interpreter Service continues to invest significantly in the training and professional development of Aboriginal interpreters, with at least 11 interpreters gaining a national accreditation during the current year, with a number of National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters examinations currently being assessed.

The Aboriginal Interpreter Service is also developing in-house tools to assist with the development of interpreters, including a Windows and Android app that will enable self-paced learning and online assessment of interpreting skills, and a dictionary app to further improve interpreter skills.

The Aboriginal Interpreter Service is due to commence a trial project with ABC radio in 2014-15, which will result in the daily recording of the news bulletin in two Aboriginal languages, Warlpiri and Djambarrpuyngu, to be available for live streaming on the ABC website. This project will provide great opportunities for regular work for interpreters, and access for Aboriginal language speakers to ABC news bulletins in language.

My department also takes a lead role in advancing the interests of women and men in programs that cover gender equality, leadership and participation of women in the Northern Territory. This role is to ensure that family violence programs are community based and driven, and will be supported to ensure that ceremonial and cultural obligations are employed to commit to non-violent strategies in Northern Territory communities.

My department has engaged the Northern Institute of Charles Darwin University to provide governance and leadership support to the communities of Milingimbi, Gapuwiyak, Ramingining ...

Mr VOWLES: Sorry, minister, just a point of order around the five-minute statement. Can I ask if the minister has much to go, in the interest of time?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, could I have some extra time? Thank you.

Madam CHAIR: If you are still reading your statement, then ...

Mrs PRICE: I am still reading it. This project aims to provide two years of intensive assistance to individuals and decision-making groups, such as local reference groups, local corporations, school councils, and a range of others, to improve the understanding of Aboriginal and Western governance systems and to grow knowledge and skills in governance and leadership in remote communities.

This innovative Northern Territory project uses a distinctive ground-up approach which engages project participants in designing learning activities appropriate to their governance and leadership needs. It has been enthusiastically received by committee members and organisations.

First Circles is a new level of engagement, which is about identifying, mentoring and supporting emerging Indigenous leaders in the remote communities. My department has responsibility for implementing First Circles out bush, which will commence in the second half of this year. The term 'First Circles' combines two concepts, 'first' being acknowledgement of first peoples, and 'circles', which represents collaboration between people and communities as the main drive behind improving outcomes. First Circles is founded on the principle of respect for Aboriginal culture, knowledge, history, language and culture, which is intrinsically linked to the Northern Territory government's strategic framework, Framing the Future, and building on our confident culture that celebrates the diversity of all Territorians.

Emerging leaders will be required to build strong, collaborative relationships with traditional owners, local authorities and other agencies in supporting policy development and community and regional projects. It is important that emerging leaders understand and respect consultation and due process as determined through traditional culture and democratically elected bodies.

One of the key components of First Circles is that emerging leaders will be asked to explore economic opportunities for their respective community region, and to develop projects for improved outcomes. Emerging leaders will be assisted by departmental staff who will be on hand to facilitate projects and to ensure relevant stakeholders are consulted.

Under First Circles, emerging leaders have an opportunity to attend the NT Cabinet meetings, and to openly discuss the development of policies and programs. First Circles has funding to support emerging leader initiatives, including community-based projects and attendance at special interest group forums.

Through the activities of my department, supported by the 2014-15 budget, we are moving towards creating stronger regions with strong people to build a strong Territory.

Madam Chair, before I hand over to you for questions, I have a few issues I need to inform the committee of. With regard to my department's role in the Stronger Futures package, I can only provide responses to facets of that package that my department delivers. Questions about implementation plans, or IPs, should have been directed to the relevant ministers.

My department is mainly responsible for collating and reporting completed information, but information is not interrogated or analysed by my department in any way.

With regard to Indigenous Essential Services, my department's role, via contract, is in funding IES Pty Ltd for the provision of essential services for 72 remote Indigenous communities. The assets-free structure, and revenue rising from its operation is administered by Power and Water under the Deputy Chief Minister as the shareholding minister. The operation of those assets and services sits under the Minister for Essential Services, Hon Willem Westra van Holthe.

My department's role is to pay invoices for provision of works and services. I am working with my colleagues to better streamline how this is delivered this financial year.

With regard to town camps, my department's role is to provide municipal essential services, such as garbage collection and limited housing repairs and maintenance. This is undertaken through service providers.

Any other questions should have been directed to the responsible portfolio minister, the Minister for Lands Planning and the Environment.

I would like the committee to note that I have received written questions from members of the opposition and the Independent members. I am more than happy to orally answer your written questions during these proceedings, but I will not be tabling written responses to those questions.

I am happy to take questions from the committee now.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. Are there any questions on the minister's statement?

Mr VOWLES: So, you are not tabling the global questions, particularly answers to No 178? You are going to give those answers orally? Is that correct?

Mrs PRICE: That is right, that is correct.

Mr VOWLES: Okay. We will get straight back into it. Thanks for your opening statement. Considering you will not table those answers- most ministers have done have tabled those global questions so we can save a lot of time - can you give me an explanation of all variations and discrepancies between commitment and policy announcements made within government media releases, and the actual implementation of government policy and funding decisions?

Mrs PRICE: Can you just give us a minute?

Mr VOWLES: I am happy if you want to table those, minister.

Mrs PRICE: Attachment A outlines the progress on all commitments and policy announcements made within Northern Territory government press releases ...

Mr VOWLES: Yes.

Mrs PRICE: ... and media statements made from 1 July 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Mr VOWLES: You will table those? Sorry, is that what you said?

Mrs PRICE: I will read them out for you, member for Johnston. Media releases – Indigenous Men Make a Stand against Violence that was 23 September 2013; Indigenous Men Say No to Family Violence was the other one, on 9 October 2013; the new Men's Advisory Group, 21 November 2013; the new Men's Policy

Unit was established in September 2013. The Chief Minister will look at how government can respond to the issues raised by the Indigenous Men's Forum – commitment to take the strategies discussed at the Indigenous Men's Forum to the Minister for Community Services, me, who is responsible for the new Men's Policy Unit under my department.

The other commitment is, following the Indigenous Men's Forum, the Northern Territory government established a permanent Aboriginal Men's Advisory Group to suggest strategies for reducing family violence and child abuse. I am happy to say the Aboriginal Men's Advisory Group first met during this month.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister. Can you detail all government tenders, contracts and grants awarded or granted since 1 July 2013, including where the recipient is a member of the Country Liberal Party? This includes full location details for companies and organisations.

Mr HIGGINS: Can we add to that contracts awarded to members of the Labor Party? Thank you.

Mr VOWLES: I thought I asked the questions.

Madam CHAIR: It is on a line of inquiry so he can.

Mrs PRICE: Can you repeat that question?

Mr VOWLES: Please detail all government tenders, contracts and grants awarded or granted since 1 July 2013, including where the recipient is a member of the Country Liberal Party? This includes full location details for companies and organisations. If it is an extensive list I am happy for you to table it.

Mrs PRICE: Details on all government tenders, contracts, grants awarded or granted since 1 July 2013: first, we do not ask for political affiliation of memberships in our documentation. This data is for the Department of Community Services for the period 1 July 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Tenders and contracts: all tenders and contracts within the APRO system have been reported on. The process used is a Tier 4 type of procurement. Public title of requisition purpose: assist the Department of Community Services in implementing and managing the asbestos removal program 2013-16, including assisting with tender preparation and management of contracts. The contractor was Coffey Projects (Australia) Pty Ltd, and the contract value was \$1 833 243. It was awarded on 2 December 2013.

Tier 2 quotation: provide advice and assistance for the development of the asbestos removal program 2013-16 under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory initiative – was Ross Neumann Directions, and the costing was \$79 453.44. That was awarded on 1 October 2013. The second one – Tier 2 – to review the existing Power and Water Corporation's Indigenous community engineering guidelines and provide recommendations, was awarded to GHD Pty Ltd, and the cost was \$49 214. That was awarded on 3 October 2013.

Going onto grants, the Department of Housing has paid grants to the following recipients for the period 1 July 2013 to 31 March 2014: IES infrastructure delivery capital works are delivered under contract by Indigenous Essential Services, a wholly-owned not-for-profit subsidiary of the Power and Water Corporation ...

Mr VOWLES: Excuse me, minister, sorry to interrupt, but is that an extensive list that could be tabled?

Mrs PRICE: I am going to read through all that I have here in front of me.

Mr VOWLES: Is it an extensive list? If it is, can you table it?

Mrs PRICE: I have made a recommendation, I have read out that I am going to go ahead and read all my notes.

Mr VOWLES: So you are not going to table anything in this three hours, is that right?

Mrs PRICE: No.

Mr VOWLES: Okay, then you continue.

Mrs PRICE: Infrastructure: \$44 720 607 was allocated to IES. In Stronger Futures – municipal and essential services grant program to homeland services providers to deliver municipal essential services to homelands. Alawa Aboriginal Corporation: \$71 869 was received. Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation \$284 453.91 was received. Barkly Regional Council – the member for Barkly should be glad to hear this – \$470 218 was awarded. Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation – \$750 331.36 was awarded to them. Canteen Creek – \$207 509 was awarded to them. Central Desert Regional Council ...

Mr VOWLES: Excuse me, minister, I will ask again, is there an extensive list, because this is clearly time-wasting. In the interests of open and transparent accountability, you could table that and we could go onto other questions under your portfolios.

Mrs PRICE: This is transparent and accountable. You wanted to know the amount of money that has been ...

Mr VOWLES: Madam Chair, I ask for a ruling on this. If there is an extensive list ...

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston, you have asked the minister if she will be tabling answers ...

Mr VOWLES: In the interests of not time-wasting, and open and transparent accountability, she could simply table this and we could go through it.

Madam CHAIR: I do not know that 'time-wasting' is appropriate language. As I said yesterday ...

Mr HIGGINS: The time-wasting accusation is offensive.

Mr VOWLES: What is offensive?

Mr HIGGINS: You have asked a question and the minister is now giving the answer. If there is time-wasting, it would be the question.

Madam CHAIR: As I mentioned yesterday with a previous minister, the Leader of Government Business wrote to all members and explained that it will be in the hands of the minister as to how they approach the questions that were provided on notice. The minister has stated several times this morning that she will be reading. That is her position and her prerogative. We will proceed on that basis. Thank you, minister.

Mrs PRICE: These grants were awarded to these communities because they badly need the works and the maintenance done because of the neglect of these communities. I am happy to go through each one of them to inform you what is happening in the communities, and the regional and remote area. You asked for them. I will do it. I will read everything.

The Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries – \$710.91. Demed was given \$383 464 and Gebie Civil and Construction Pty Ltd was given \$136 618. The Ilpurla Aboriginal Corporation – I think the member for Namatjira will be happy to hear this – was given \$63 606.09. Another one which might interest the member for Namatjira is that Ingekerreke Outstations Resource Services received \$977 966.

Julalikari Council in the Barkly was given \$814 493.

Ms ANDERSON: Madam Chair, can we verify? Minister, did you say there was money given to Primary Industries ...

Mrs PRICE: That is correct, and it was the amount of \$710.91.

Kalano community was given \$168 816, \$738 768 went to Lanhupuy Homelands and \$889 138 was given to Mabunji.

The MacDonnell Regional Council was given \$1 040 684m and MacDonnell Shire received \$7343. The Marngarr Resource Centre Aboriginal Corporation was given \$64 402, and Marthakal received \$740 424 82.

The Milingimbi Outstation Progress Resource Association was given \$324 630 and the Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation received \$219 552. Mutitjulu was given \$194 677, Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association received \$478 807, Ngurratjuta Pmara/Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation was given \$161 020 and Numbulwar homelands received \$360 287. The Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association was given \$39 474.

The Roper Gulf Regional Council was given \$672 154, the Savanna Alliance – I think that is in Katherine – was given \$186 555, Thangkenhareng Aboriginal Corporation – I think that is in Barrow Creek – received \$266 142, the Tiwi Islands Regional Council was given \$185 392, Jiwaranpa received \$358 332, the Victoria Daly Regional Council was given \$466 746 and the Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation – that is in Kakadu – was given \$354 217. Yantjarrwu Aboriginal Outstation Resource Centre Corporation was given \$305 437 and Yilli Rreung Housing was given \$280 344.

The Northern Territory jobs package to homeland service providers to assist with creating real full-time employment opportunities in the area of municipal and essential services – Alawa Aboriginal Corporation, was given \$60 729; Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation was given \$80 972; same to the Barkly Regional Council; Bawinanga was given \$101 215; Canteen Creek \$121 458; Central Desert Shire \$242 916; Demed \$161 944; Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Aboriginal Corp was given \$121 458; Julalikari was given \$202 430; Kalano Community Association was given \$161 944; Laynhapuy Homelands was given \$242 916; Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association was given \$931 178; MacDonnell Regional Council was given \$202 430; Marngarr Resource Centre Aboriginal Corporation was given \$20 243; Marthakal Homelands and Resource Centre was given \$242 916; Milingimbi Outstation Progress Resource Association was given \$60 729, Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation was given \$101 215; Mutitjulu Aboriginal Corporation was given \$20 243; Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association was given \$283 402; Ngurratjjuta Pmara/Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation was given \$40 486; Numbulwar Homelands was given \$80 972; Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association was given \$20 243; Roper Gulf was given \$202 430; Tangentyere Council was given \$161 944; Thangkenhareng Aboriginal Corporation \$40 486; the Tiwi Islands Regional Council was given \$30 364; Tjuwampa Outstation Research Centre was given \$202 430; Victoria Daly Regional Council was given \$60 729; Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation was given \$40 486; Yantjarrwu Aboriginal Outstation Research Centre Corporation was given \$182 187; and Yilli Rreung Housing was given \$161 944.

With homelands housing, Alawa Aboriginal Corporation was given \$8907; Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation \$129 603; Barkly Regional Council \$256 530; Bawinanga was given \$182 065; Canteen Creek was given \$8596; Central Desert Regional Council was given \$294 906; Demed was given \$141 799; Gebie Civil and Construction was given \$33 871; Ilpurla Aboriginal Corporation was given \$10 688; Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Centre was given \$272 698; Julalikari was given \$275 344; Kalano was given \$135 498; Laynhapuy Homelands was given \$280 701; Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association Inc was given \$480 381; MacDonnell Regional Council was given \$408 615, Marngarr Resource Centre was given \$19 595; Marthakal was given \$241 056, Milingimbi Outstation was given \$129 217; Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation – I think that is Robinson River – was given \$25 120; Ngaliwurru was – that is Timber Creek – was given \$89 522; Ngurratjjuta was given \$75 826; Numbulwar Homelands Council Association was given \$114 011; Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association was given \$4866; Roper Gulf was given \$250 503; Savanna Alliance was given \$30 363; Thangkenhareng was given \$32 942; Tiwi Island Regional Council was given \$76 601; Tjuwampa Outstation was given \$102 327; Victoria Daly Regional Council was given \$140 590; Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation Kakadu was given \$193 862; Yantjarrwu – an Aboriginal outstation resource centre corp – was given \$107 607; and Yilli Rreung was given \$247 000. All up that \$4.802m.

The town camps for municipal and essential services: Alice Springs Town Council was given \$239 002; Barkly Regional Council was given \$84 388; Ingkerreke Outstation was given \$268 717; Julalikari Council was given \$35 161; Kalano was given \$107 243; Longitude 133 Pty Ltd – a plumbing service – was given \$157.73; Mabunji was given \$316 456; Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association was given \$7032; Roper Gulf Regional Council was given \$28 129; Steve's Electric Pty Ltd; was given \$180.91; Tangentyere Council was given \$216 244; Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation was given \$42 194; and Yilli Rreung was given \$251 406. All up that was \$1 596 312.

Homelands Extra Allowance Program: Barkly Regional Council was given \$46 800; Demed was given \$5200; Gebie Civil and Construction was given \$57 200; Ingkerreke was given \$20 800; Laynhupuy was given \$624 000; Mabunji was given \$156 000; Marthakal Homelands and Resource Centre was given \$20 800; Ngaliwurru-Wali Association was given \$130 000; Numbulwar Homelands Council Association was given \$93 600; Roper Gulf Regional Council was given \$31 200; Savanna Alliance was given \$10 400; Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation was given \$10 400; Yantjarrwu Aboriginal Outstation Resource Centre was given \$109 200; and Yilli Rreung Housing Aboriginal Corporation was given \$15 600. The total paid out was \$1.331m.

Women's Advancement Group...

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, did you miss Julalikari then in the Homelands Extra section?

Mrs PRICE: I will just check. Barkly Regional Council was given \$46 800 ...

Mr McCARTHY: And Julalikari Aboriginal Corporation, minister?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, I am aware of that. I will get that information for you.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, minister.

Mrs PRICE: The Office of Women's Advancement provides grants to organisations and community groups to advance the social, political and economic status of women in the Northern Territory.

Arrulka Business Aboriginal Corporation was granted \$18 181; the Charles Darwin University Chief Minister's higher education scholarship was granted \$20 200; Miss Monica Lesley Stuart was granted \$500; Palmer Higgs publishing services was granted \$3218.18 and; Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation was granted \$9090. The total paid was \$51 190.

The Office of Women's Advancement provides grants to organisations and community groups to assist them to participate in and to celebrate International Women's Day, and to promote gender equality and human rights. The United Nations Association of Australia NT was granted \$909; the Central Australian Women's Legal Service was granted \$909; the Northern Territory Women Lawyers' Association was granted \$1000; NPY Women's Council was granted \$1818.18; the Sudden Infant Death Association of the Northern Territory was granted \$527.27; the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame was granted \$772; the Girl Guides Northern Territory Incorporated was given \$909; Dawn House Incorporated was given \$454.55; the Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory was granted \$909; the Katherine Regional Cultural Precinct was granted \$636.36; the Roper Gulf Regional Council was granted \$1090.91; the Tennant Creek Women's Refuge was granted \$909; the Northern Territory Women's Centre was granted \$909; and the same amount was given to the YWCA of Darwin. All up it was \$12 663 for the International Women's Day Grants program.

Asbestos Removal Program is a grant program to undertake asbestos removal from non-government buildings in remote communities. Coffey Projects was the company paid to do this, and it was given \$30 344 all up.

Small CDEP fencing programs are still in some of the communities, and the Department of Housing was granted \$5.196m.

The Ilpiye-Ilpiye grant program is for the development and subdivision of the Ilpiye-Ilpiye camp into a suburb of Alice Springs. Alice Springs Town Council received \$21 030; Cardno (NT) Pty Ltd was given \$136 028 and Cost Plan was given \$9764.62. The total was \$166 823 27.

We now reach the Gunbalanya Water and Energy Efficiency Program. Under the Northern Australia Sustainable Futures initiative, IES received \$20 000 for this program. This takes the total to \$76 068 798m. That is all of the program.

Mr VOWLES: That is 35 minutes wasted. You could have just tabled the document.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston, you cannot say time is wasted.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister. I will not waste any more time.

Mrs PRICE: I made my point, member for Johnston. I will read through all of these programs so you can get an idea of what we are doing out there in the bush for these communities.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston, I ask you not to use the term 'wasted'. There are people sitting at home and work who have now heard the answer. You asked the question, the answer has now been given. That is the estimates process.

Mrs PRICE: It is good for the public to hear what money is being spent on in communities that need it.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further questions on the statement?

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, I would like that figure for Julalikari, because I have some questions for you about Homelands Extra. It was also very interesting – you have often asked in parliament what Labor has done, and you talked about the Stronger Futures investment, locked in over ten years by the previous Labor government. Do you have a global figure for those resources going into Aboriginal self-determination in the Northern Territory?

Mrs PRICE: Although it was in my statement, any questions regarding Stronger Futures do not come under my portfolio, Madam Chair and member for Barkly. All I will say, as I outlined in my opening statement, is that the question should have been asked of the Chief Minister, who is the responsible for that area.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, minister.

Ms ANDERSON: Minister, in your opening statement you made remarks about infrastructure and coordination in remote and regional communities. Can give the committee a brief outline of what is happening to all of the houses in Barunga in your electorate. It has been a year since they were built, and people have still not moved into those houses.

Mrs PRICE: I have been to Barunga and seen those houses with fences around them. Obviously people have not moved in yet, but as I mentioned earlier in my statement, that question should have been directed to the appropriate minister responsible for the portfolio.

Ms ANDERSON: Minister, you said in your statement that you are happy to answer questions on regional development coordination between other agencies and you. This is in line with the opening statement you made.

Mrs PRICE: I made it clear in my opening statement that any questions that do not fall under my portfolio should be directed to the appropriate ministers who hold the portfolio. In my statement I made it clear I am here to talk about remote. I do not think I mentioned anything about regional.

I have been to Barunga, and I understand why you are directing that question to me because, as I said, I have seen the houses. I have seen that people have not moved into those houses. The minister with the appropriate portfolio would be Mr Conlan, who it should be directed to.

Ms ANDERSON: Thank you, minister. The other question is to do with men's policy and domestic violence. You have outlined in media releases and comments you made in your opening statement how important it is for people to consider what is happening with domestic violence. Now you have an opportunity, with the Chief Minister and you working together, to ensure men are fully informed of how bad domestic violence is in our Territory communities. I am wondering if you can tell this committee, minister, who Robin Granites works for?

Mrs PRICE: How does that fit in? You can ask about domestic violence and men's policy when appropriate – when we have the men's policy.

Ms ANDERSON: In the global area, in the introduction you gave, you mentioned something about the ability in this committee to ask you questions, so we do not have to wait for that output group, minister.

This is a vital question in the sense that you are, with the Chief Minister, highlighting violence against women in the Northern Territory. Has this person who I named through this estimates process ever been to gaol for violence in a community, and do you employ that person?

Mrs PRICE: I am not prepared to answer that question, but I am committed to stop the violence against women. I am willing to give people a second chance to prove they can change. Robin Granites does not work in men's policy. He works for me, as you used to employ Leo Abbott.

Ms ANDERSON: Minister, I did not employ Leo Abbott. This is an estimates process where we question you. It is not about you getting cheeky to the Estimates Committee.

Mrs PRICE: I am not getting cheeky. As we all know, Aboriginal people spend half of their time in prisons. All our relatives have been in and out of gaols for domestic violence, for other offences as well. It is not appropriate that we should raise that in estimates because we all have relatives who have been in and out of gaol for domestic violence.

Ms ANDERSON: Minister, I am the first one to give any person a second chance, but you have made it your business to talk nationally, if not internationally, about violence against women. I am asking you, as a part of this committee process, whether you employ a person in any role in this government who has been a perpetrator of violence and has been to prison.

Mrs PRICE: I have answered that question.

Ms ANDERSON: Thank you, minister.

Agency-Related Whole-of-Government Questions on Budget and Fiscal Strategies

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to consider the estimates and proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2014-15 as they relate to the Department of Community Services. Are there any agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, Madam Chair.

Minister, *The Australian* has reported that this week you told the North Australia Development Conference, in relation to *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*, 'It is clear it is a hindrance to moving forward in our communities'. You are the Northern Territory minister responsible for coordinating whole-of-government work in many of our major bush towns. What do you think are the hindrances, what aspects of community development do you think have stalled as a consequence of the ALRA, and can you provide me any examples?

Mrs PRICE: What was the specific question out of the global questions you have in mind.

Mr VOWLES: What do you think are the hindrances? You are the minister responsible for coordinating whole-of-government services in our major bush towns, so what are the hindrances and what aspects of community development do you think have stalled as a consequence of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act? Can you provide any examples or do you have any proposals in mind for amendment to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act?

Mrs PRICE: I mentioned ALRA at the conference, but I will not go into that detail. I am here to talk about how we are helping people in the bush who need the services.

Mr VOWLES: You publicly stated it is a hindrance to moving forward. You are the minister responsible and you will not comment on that? You are happy to comment in a public forum but not happy to comment in the estimates process?

Mrs PRICE: I have read out what we have done for remote communities. We have done a huge amount of work whilst I have been the Minister for Community Services. I have been in the job since September last year and have done my bit. There is much more to do and there, as the member for Namatjira ...

Mr VOWLES: In regard to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, what is your bit? What are you doing?

Mrs PRICE: ... has always stated that people out there are dirt poor, asset rich.

Ms ANDERSON: I did not say dirt poor. I think you have the quote mixed up. You need to get it right.

Mr VOWLES: I am not asking the member for Namatjira, I am asking the Minister for Community Services. You said, and I quote, 'It is clear it is a hindrance to moving forward in our communities'. This is in regard to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, so what do you think are the hindrances, and what aspects of community government do you think have stalled as a consequence of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act?

Mrs PRICE: I mentioned in the conference the other day that we, as Aboriginal people, need to get together and change it to benefit our people in the bush.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister for that answer. Do you have any proposals to amend the Aboriginal Land Rights Act?

Mrs PRICE: As I mentioned, we all need to get together and work as one group of people to make it a better place for our people in the bush ...

Mr VOWLES: So you do have proposals in mind? What are the amendments?

Mrs PRICE: ... to give them the opportunity to sit here like you and me and talk for themselves.

Mr VOWLES: This is the estimates process, minister. I appreciate your answer but, you clearly have some ...

Mrs PRICE: I am just saying that is why I made the comment.

Mr HIGGINS: A point of order, Madam Chair! This is the process of looking at NT estimates, we are venturing off into federal legislation, which I find a waste of time.

Mr VOWLES: It is the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*.

Mr HIGGINS: It is federal legislation, if you know where the legislation sits.

Mr VOWLES: I am happy to move on. What other steps have you considered in regard to your concerns, and have you spoken to the land councils about your concerns and the amendments you want to bring to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*? What was its response?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, that was not a global question.

Madam CHAIR: Minister, it is up to you if and how you answer questions, I will not be entering into that debate. Are there any further questions on agency-related whole-of-government?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, minister, you told the same conference, 'It is clear this piece of law is now forcing our people away from their traditional lands'.

Could you give some examples of that movement, and what you are doing about the issues relating to mobility you are most concerned about?

Mrs PRICE: I have already given an answer.

Mr VOWLES: What answer was that, to which question?

Mrs PRICE: My previous answer.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister. You have been reported as saying, 'When Aboriginal people are free to trade and deal with their lands, social, business and economic opportunities will flow'.

What do you mean by 'trade their lands'?

Mrs PRICE: I have answered that question.

Mr VOWLES: Madam Chair, I ask that the minister repeats the answer she says she has provided.

Mrs PRICE: I made a statement about ALRA, and ALRA is federal.

Ms ANDERSON: It is appalling to see, through an estimates process, the CE of the agency trying to answer policy questions the minister should be answering. We go through this process to make sure our constituents and Territorians understand the policy direction of this government. The CE should not be answering your questions, minister.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Namatjira, you understand the process, that comment is unfair and unfounded. Are there any further questions for the minister?

Mr VOWLES: Last week in estimates the Chief Minister suggested it would be good for the NT Land Development Corporation to hold long-term leases on Aboriginal land to facilitate business and development opportunities on that land. Do you agree with that approach, and what are the differences between the land council administration of leases, the Commonwealth Office of Township Leasing and the newer arrangements being proposed by the Chief Minister?

Mrs PRICE: As I outlined in my opening statement, that question should be addressed to the appropriate minister with the responsible portfolio. Minister Chandler should be asked that question.

Mr VOWLES: Earlier this year, the Chairman of the Central Land Council said your government is strangling bush communities to help encourage the movement of people from the bush to our larger regional centres. What do you say in relation to that comment, have you discussed those comments with the Chair of the CLC and do you share any common ground on this issue?

Mrs PRICE: The Chair of the Central Land Council and I talk about a lot of issues to do with Indigenous affairs, and he knows how I feel. We have often talked about how best we can help each other in making sure our people in remote communities have a better life and as good a living standard as everybody else, because we are all Australians. I am sure the Chair of the Central Land Council will want to talk to me to make sure we both understand the need to make a difference for our people in communities.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks, minister. The last two questions I have asked have not been about ALRA or anything like that. It is about the mobility of remote community people moving into larger regional centres. Do you have any comments on that? Are you encouraging remote people to move to larger town centres?

Mrs PRICE: Our people have to move to places like Alice Springs because they are service centres. They need to go there to see doctors. There are huge renal problems amongst my people; a lot of Warlpiri people need to have that access. They have to move to places like Alice Springs or Katherine to access renal dialysis, and the moves have always been there. If we do not have jobs for our people in communities, they will not hang around. They will move to places where they have access to whatever services they want. This is what is happening now.

Mr VOWLES: So, when the Chair of the Central Land Council said your government is strangling bush communities to help encourage the movement of people from bush to larger remote centres, he is correct?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I have answered that question already.

Mr VOWLES: I would still ...

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr VOWLES: So the Chair of the Central Land Council is correct to say that you are encouraging people, regardless of health, to go to larger cities and towns?

Mrs PRICE: I cannot speak on behalf of the Chair.

Mr VOWLES: I am not asking you to speak on behalf of the Chair. He said your government is strangling bush communities to help encourage the movement of people from the bush to ...

Mrs PRICE: The members for Namatjira and Barkly know why people move into towns, because they come from remote communities. We all know why they move into towns.

Ms ANDERSON: Minister, which sections of the Land Rights Act hinder development in remote and regional communities, as you suggested yesterday at the forum?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I think I have answered that question.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Ms ANDERSON: I did not hear the answer. Can I hear it?

Madam CHAIR: You have answered the question, minister?

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further questions on whole-of-agency?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair and minister. In March 2011 the now Treasurer told the Legislative Assembly that:

I cannot imagine wanting to grow up in a remote community; to raise kids in those places. What hope do people have? There are no jobs, no one works, and there is a lack of education and health services.

The reality is the only way many of these people have any hope at all is to get into an urbanised environment.

That was in March 2011. Do you agree with the views of the Deputy Chief Minister?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I really cannot make comment on what the Deputy Chief Minister has said.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Are there any further questions?

Mr VOWLES: I would like to keep going on that. You are the Minister for Community Services. You are in charge of regional services, Indigenous Essential Services, remote infrastructure, coordinated homelands, outstations, town camps, and you do not have a comment on that? You do not agree or disagree with your Deputy Chief Minister?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I am not the minister for regional services or town camps.

Mr VOWLES: I am just reading from the output groups. I did not say town camps, I said homelands and outstations. It is in your output group.

Madam CHAIR: Minister, have you answered the question?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, I have.

Mr VOWLES: You are the minister responsible; it is in your output group.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further agency-related whole-of-government questions.

Mr VOWLES: You are! Yes, Madam Chair. Obviously, you have no policy initiatives to support the movement of people from remote communities to an urbanised environment? You do not have any policy or policy development going on with that? When I mentioned that the Chair of the Central Land Council said your government is strangling bush communities to help encourage movement of people, you sat on the fence, but your comments suggested that do. That is correct. Do you have any policy initiatives, or are you developing any policies, to support the movement of people from remote communities to urban environments?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I have already answered the question.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr VOWLES: A yes or no answer is all I am after. Are you or your government developing any policies to support the movement of people from remote communities to urbanised environments? A yes or no. Yes, you are doing that, or no you are not? Are you in the process? I would love to hear about it if you are.

Mrs PRICE: I said all that in my opening statement. That question needs to be directed to the Deputy Chief Minister.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr VOWLES: Are you suggesting that for policy development in your area, I have to go to the Deputy Chief Minister? Is that correct? To develop remote Indigenous community support mechanisms – obviously, your support of the migration from ...

Mrs PRICE: My department focuses on its policy for remote communities, to help support remote communities.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister, for that answer. You mentioned before – and I am happy to go back to *Hansard* to clarify that – Indigenous people moving into town to access services. If that is correct, you surely must have a policy. Are you encouraging people to stay in their communities or to go to town?

Mrs PRICE: We know Aboriginal people need to have access to services. Towns like Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, and Darwin have the services that are not provided in these communities. Whether it is health, housing – health is the important one for Aboriginal people because we do not have the facilities to cater for the number of people who are sick. So, yes, people will move, but it does not need a policy to move people around these communities. People move because they are sick, because they want to live somewhere else where it is better for them to live their lifestyle. We cannot have a policy to tell people where to go and what not to do.

Mr VOWLES: I have not suggested a policy to tell them what to do. Are you developing a policy to support ...

Mrs PRICE: You are saying a policy needs to move people around, but people move around because they are sick or because they need to move places like you and I.

Mr VOWLES: No to support – I specifically said are there are any policy initiatives ...

Mrs PRICE: That is what it is like.

Mr VOWLES: I did not say about staying – I asked if there is a policy to support the movement of people? What support is there? If there is policy development, is it around supporting people?

Mrs PRICE: We support people with the delivery of service to move them around, but I want to go back to the questions, Madam Chair.

Mr VOWLES: That was a question, and I finally got an answer. I appreciate that. Thank you, minister.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further questions?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. The Chief Minister said his Indigenous policy is all about jobs, jobs and jobs. As part of the Labor government's work delivering A Working Future for our bush towns, we were undertaking an annual review of available jobs and uptake of those jobs by local Indigenous people. Why have you not continued with that work?

Mrs PRICE: We, as government, support jobs for Indigenous people wherever they may be. It is our business to make sure we encourage and support growth. The Chief Minister is right in trying to make it better for Aboriginal communities and give them the opportunity to develop or go into partnerships with businesses. That is the government's stand: to encourage people to find and create employment.

Mr VOWLES: The previous Labor government was undertaking an annual review. Have you continued that work? Has a review been undertaken?

Mrs PRICE: There is a review being undertaken to do with homelands, how best we can help people live on their homelands and how best we can help, as government, whether it is federal or the Northern Territory government. I am looking forward to announcing in detail one of the more important initiatives we, as government, are trying to develop to improve service delivery. Homelands have been important since people spoke about country, independence and moving back to look after where they are from, look after country and look after their families. We are doing as much as we can, as government, for people in remote communities to make sure they have the services, and we do our best to help them.

Madam Chair, can we have a break?

Madam CHAIR: Yes, minister. We can have a five minute break if you need one.

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Madam CHAIR: We will resume at 9.55 am.

The committee suspended

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister, we are still on agency-related whole-of-government questions. Member for Johnston.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, does your agency have any access to any information on the number of available jobs in each of our major bush communities and the extent of Indigenous uptake of those jobs. How is that information informing the work of your agency?

Mrs PRICE: We will get the answer for you in a minute; I am getting information on the member for Barkly's question about Julalikari as well, which I am sure received funding for outstations.

Mr VOWLES: Will you provide them in this time frame or do we need to put it on notice? Thank you, minister and thank you Mike. What are you or your agency doing to contribute to the Chief Minister's priority of jobs, jobs, jobs for Indigenous Territorians?

Mrs PRICE: The Northern Territory jobs package funding agreement between the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth forms part of the Commonwealth's Indigenous housing infrastructure program, which commenced on 1 July 2014, with a scheduled completion date of 30 June 2017. Funding provided to the Territory in 2013 under the NT jobs package was \$5 546 582, and funding amounts for the remainder of the agreement are determined by the Commonwealth on an annual basis.

The Northern Territory jobs package funding agreement was negotiated in 2012-13 for a four-year period. There is no plan to renegotiate the agreement prior to expiry of the current one. Thirty-two Northern Territory organisations were recipients of funding under the Northern Territory jobs package in 2013-14. The Department of Community Services does not maintain data on staff turnover for staff employed by service.

Mr VOWLES: So, that is the jobs, jobs, jobs answer. Thanks, minister.

Given your publicly stated interest in the development of economic activity and jobs on Aboriginal land, what continuing role do you have in relation to the development of new Indigenous tourism products on Aboriginal land?

Mrs PRICE: That question would be best answered by the Minister for Tourism, who is minister Conlan.

Mr VOWLES: You do not have any comment on Indigenous tourism on Indigenous land, giving Aboriginal people the opportunity to have economic growth and financial independence through those opportunities or partnerships?

Mrs PRICE: If you want my opinion, yes, I would like to see more jobs for Aboriginal people and involvement with tourism or parks, as long as it is creating employment on the ground for people who do not want to move away.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister.

Mrs PRICE: Going back to the member for Barkly's question, I will have my chief executive answer that.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Barkly, the figures read out earlier were for 2013-14, up until 31 March this year. At that point no applications had been received from Julalikari, and the majority of applications have been dealt with by the Barkly Shire during that period of time.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks, Mike and minister. Minister, do you have any role in assisting the Minister for Business with consideration of projects on Aboriginal land being funded on the Indigenous Business Development Program?

Mrs PRICE: Thanks for that question member for Johnston but I do not have anything to do with that. It is the Minister for Business. It falls within his portfolio and he would be the best person to ask that question of. I would like to hand it over to my CEO.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, the Indigenous Business Development Program sits within the Department of Business; however, our agency, through infrastructure projects, has been working closely with the Department of Business in all procurements and tender processes to ensure we support that program and every opportunity is taken to ensure that Indigenous employees are a part of the contract and

tender process, specifically the delivery of those services. But the program you speak of does sit with the Department of Business.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks very much, Mike. Thanks, minister. Minister, what support do you or your agency provide the Chief Minister with his develop the north policy agenda?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair I will direct my CEO to answer that question.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, very agency within the government is committed to supporting the northern Australian development process, and we do so through the identification of specific projects, particularly when it comes to service delivery and infrastructure projects in remote communities, homelands and outstations. We ensure all of that information is fed into the database that has been created. The minister said earlier in her opening statement that our agency is, in partnership with the Department of Transport, heavily involved in the infrastructure study that is taking place, managed by a consortium of organisations. Again, all the information and data collected through that review and study will, by definition, feed into the northern Australia development program.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks very much, Mike. Thanks very much, minister. What involvement do you or your agency have in the Regional Economic Development Fund?

Mrs PRICE: I will ask my CEO to answer that as well, Madam Chair.

Mr CHIODO: Mike Chiodo, Department of Community Services. Member for Johnston, the Regional Economic Development Fund is managed by the Department of the Chief Minister. As in my previous response, our department works closely with the Department of the Chief Minister, but that question needs to be directed to that department.

Mr VOWLES: Okay. Minister, have you ever had any discussions with staff in the Department of the Chief Minister or the Chief Minister about your daughter receiving a \$10 000 grant from the Regional Economic Development Fund to produce a music CD entitled *Dry River*?

Mrs PRICE: Where in the budget is this question coming from?

Mr VOWLES: There is a print out of the REDF grants of 31 March, and it says – I will not say her name – ‘Launch of solo album, CD *Dry River*, \$10 000’.

Mrs PRICE: We are talking about budgets for 2013-14.

Mr VOWLES: Have you had any discussions with staff in the Chief Minister's department or with the Chief Minister ...

Mrs PRICE: We are talking about budgets 2013-14.

Mr VOWLES: ... about a \$10 000 grant given to your daughter out of the Regional Economic Development Fund?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I have made it clear ...

Mr VOWLES: Have you had discussions with the Chief Minister?

Mrs PRICE: ... that this took place before this budget we are talking about.

Mr VOWLES: It cannot be because it is in the grants of 31 March 2014, so it was this financial year.

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I have made it clear that was not in my time as Minister for Women's Policy?

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr VOWLES: Did you have any discussions with the Chief Minister's department or the Chief Minister about your daughter getting a \$10 000 grant for a solo album?

Mrs PRICE: I might get my CEO to answer that, Madam Chair.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, my understanding is that does not sit in our budget. I am not sure where you got it from, but it sits in another budget. Perhaps that question should have been directed to the minister for the specific output.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks very much, Mike. Minister, you have not had any discussions with the Chief Minister around awarding that grant. Just a yes or no?

Mrs PRICE: (inaudible)

Madam CHAIR: The minister has answered the question, member for Johnston. Are there any further questions on agency-related?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Mike, and thank you, minister.

Minister, has your agency commissioned or considered any recent demographic research in relation to Indigenous Territorians, especially those living in remote communities, and issues relating to mobility?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I might pass that question on to my CEO.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, the specific answer I am waiting for but, as the minister spoke earlier about the work our department is doing through the Stronger Futures program in relation to Charles Darwin University, the statement was made that, in effect, part of that piece of work is a demographic study of remote communities that is broken down into specific regions. I do not have those regions with me at the moment.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you. I pause to acknowledge Marshall Perron who has just joined us this morning, former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mike, and welcome, Marshall. You are probably sick of this place but it is good to see you.

Minister, what are the implications of demographic research in relation to planning for provisions of government services and investments in our bush towns?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I might get my CEO to answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, there are a number of demographic components and responses to that question. The demographics that would interest us as an agency are specifically around the transition of population from one community to another. It would include the language services provided within those communities and the ability of those individuals to make access to those language services. It would also involve understanding the ages, access to education, access to health and all the other related contents of that. I mentioned in your previous question the demographic study being done, and all those factors will be considered within.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Mike.

Minister, the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement supports coordinated work to develop major and remote towns ends this month. How much Commonwealth funding came into the Territory to support development of our major bush towns as a consequence of that agreement?

Mrs PRICE: In regard to local implementation plans under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement, 15 local implementation plans were developed in the Northern Territory under that agreement ...

Mr VOWLES: Minister, I will stop you there, I am looking for a figure. How much Commonwealth funding came in first?

Mrs PRICE: I will read through this and you will get your answer. Fifteen local implementation plans were developed in the Northern Territory under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement. LIPs were originally signed in December 2010. The LIPs provide a whole-of-government approach, informed through community consultation, for improved coordination of the remote services to each remote service delivery location.

Local reference groups comprising community people from across the different clans, genders and age groups were established in each of the 15 RSDNPA sites to work in partnership with government to consult and negotiate community priorities. The Commonwealth, through the government engagement coordinators, led an extensive process of updating all LIPs so they can remain relevant.

Currently, 11 refreshed LIPs have been endorsed by local reference groups which allow the monitoring of community and government agreed actions. The LIP review process was not undertaken in four Northern Territory communities – Maningrida, Yuendumu, Angurugu and Umbakumba – for a variety of reasons, including delayed initial LIP signing and review of the Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island RPA.

The Angurugu and Umbakumba LIPs were not refreshed as it was requested ...

Mr VOWLES: Who requested that?

Mrs PRICE: Let me finish this, I will get to the end of my papers and we will get back to you on that.

The Angurugu and Umbakumba LIPs were not refreshed as it was requested that this took place with the possible Stage 3 of the Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island Regional Partnership Agreement. The Yuendumu LIP was not refreshed due to the unrest in the community at the time the process was under way.

As at 30 December 2013, the Northern Territory government has responsibility for a total of 1231 of the 1840 LIP actions in the Northern Territory. Of these, 651 Northern Territory government actions are completed, 269 are ongoing, 179 are in progress and 41 are yet to commence.

Under the Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Special Account the Northern Territory had a national allocation of \$24.7m from 2010-11 through to 2012-13 to improve services which are not funded through existing government programs in the short or medium term. This funding was used, for example, to construct a multipurpose facility in Galiwinku, internal roads upgrade in Angurugu and a strong women in Wadeye Ngepan Partha Tea House and Neighbourhood Centre.

As of 11 March 2014, 42 IRSDSA proposals, totalling \$19 213 801 have been approved, with a further four proposals being reviewed, totalling \$7 185 172. This is \$1.6m above the Northern Territory's notional allocation. IRSDSA funds are to be expended by 30 June 2014. Given the IRSD MPA is to expire at 30 June 2014, LIPS from this time will be used as reference material, rather than being actively monitored and reported against.

The department is working with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to ensure all LIGs receive information from government engagement coordinators regarding the ceasing of the IRSD MPA and future plans for engagement with their communities.

The Department of Community Services is actively working with the Department of Local Government and Regions to develop the remote engagement coordination strategy. This strategy will pick up from the IRSD MPA process to better coordinate the way government engages with remote leaders and governance groups to reduce the burden of consultation currently faced by a small number of community leaders.

Upskilled public servants will engage with remote residents to improve outcomes from consultation and engagement activity, and to better track and coordinate responses to issues and priorities raised by remote community residents. In particular, the strategy will work with regional councils and the local government sector to underpin the community engagement role of 63 newly-established local authorities.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, minister. How do you expect to win extra Commonwealth funding resources for addressing Indigenous disadvantage in the Northern Territory when they are slicing \$500m from the Indigenous services budget?

Mrs PRICE: I will have my CEO answer that question, member for Johnston.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, as mentioned in the minister's statement, the department is continuing discussions in relation to the Stronger Futures program and the substantive quantum of dollars committed to in the Stronger Futures program, which would ensure the ongoing delivery of those services within the Northern Territory.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mike and minister. Minister, have you met with senator Nigel Scullion, the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, regarding Indigenous service funding issues as they affect the Territory?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, I have.

Mr VOWLES: When did you meet with the minister, and what were the outcomes of those discussions?

Mrs PRICE: I know Nigel as a friend as well as, so ...

Mr VOWLES: Purely in your capacity as a minister speaking to a federal minister.

Mrs PRICE: I have had discussions with him on various issues. The discussions we have had revolve around Indigenous people, because, as you know, he is a senator and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. I am sure our discussions will be ongoing.

Mr VOWLES: So you are saying you are fighting for Territorians ...

Mrs PRICE: I sure am, because I know how much the services need to be delivered in communities ...

Mr VOWLES: ... regarding the extra funding, more than your counterpart Natasha Griggs is?

Mrs PRICE: ... and it gives us a chance to sit with someone who is our local senator and talk with him about ways in which we can help each other out to create better living standards for our people.

Mr VOWLES: The only way senator Nigel Scullion can help us out is by giving us more funding, and it would be great if Natasha Griggs stood up for the Territory as well, instead of saying we cannot deliver outcomes, so we do not deserve any funding. You have met with the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion; were there any outcomes? I know you have had a chat, perhaps at Barunga, but what about official meetings and official outcomes between you, as a minister of the Crown, and the federal minister? Have any figures been put on the table?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, our discussions are ongoing. As I mentioned earlier, the Senator is a person who is up-front and honest, and the discussions we have had are strong and always about how best we can help Aboriginal people in the bush. I make sure he understands ...

Mr VOWLES: By stripping \$500m out of the federal budget on Indigenous issues. Has he actually come to the table with anything?

Mrs PRICE: ... as I have had these conversations, it will always be about Aboriginal people in the bush and how best we can help.

Mr VOWLES: Have you gone to him with this, 'We need this money. Why are you stripping \$500m out?' You, as a minister of the Crown, to the federal minister ...

Mrs PRICE: I have had discussions with the Senator, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs ...

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston, the minister is answering the question.

Mrs PRICE: Just let me finish. It is important that we hold these discussions and have them ongoing.

Mr VOWLES: I would like them in an official capacity, not bumping into each other at Barunga and sitting down having a coffee. I am talking about real outcomes for Territorians.

Mrs PRICE: Did you have discussions with him?

Mr VOWLES: I am not the minister in charge.

Mrs PRICE: It does not matter. You are concerned about Aboriginal affairs ...

Mr VOWLES: I am not the minister in charge.

Mrs PRICE: ... why did you not sit down with him and have a coffee and talk to him about Aboriginal affairs ...

Mr VOWLES: You are in government, he is in government. You are in government.

Mrs PRICE: ... instead of wandering around and doing nothing?

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston.

Mr VOWLES: Can you answer my question, please?

Mrs PRICE: You were there on the day, why did you not talk to him and ask him up front ...

Mr VOWLES: Has he put, or have you put, anything on the table that says this is what we need and what we will provide?

Mrs PRICE: ... the questions you are throwing to me.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston.

Mrs PRICE: You could have asked him those questions as well. He was there to talk to everybody.

Mr VOWLES: You want me to do your job?

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston!

Mrs PRICE: He was there to talk to everybody. Why did you not talk to him as well?

Madam CHAIR: I will put you on a warning, so control yourself. Any more questions?

Mr VOWLES: I have to do your job?

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston, you are on a warning.

Mrs PRICE: Why don't you do your job too?

Mr VOWLES: I am right now.

Mrs PRICE: Well, you could have asked him as well.

Mr VOWLES: Okay. Thank you, minister, I will go on to the next question. Thanks for that answer.

What has the Commonwealth government told the Northern Territory about any intended review of implementation plans and funding agreements struck by the previous government under the Stronger Futures National Partnership Agreement?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I will pass that question on to my CEO.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, the conversations were between our department, the Department of the Chief Minister, and the Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – as I mentioned earlier, we will be entering bilateral discussions in relation to the pre-existing implementation plans in relation to a review of effectiveness of delivery in those IPs.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mike. Which implementation plans are scheduled for review and what is the expected timing of those reviews?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I will ask my CEO to answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: All existing implementation plans, as I said, are scheduled for review. As you may know, member for Johnston, the implementation plans have existed since the inception of Stronger Futures, and have not altered. There are nine Stronger Futures implementation plans, being health, schooling, community safety, tackling alcohol abuse, child, youth, family and community wellbeing, housing, municipal and essential services, the Alice Springs Transformation Plan, and the remote engagement and

coordination plan. I reiterate that the intent is to review all of those implementation plans with a view to the effectiveness of delivery of those services.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mike, a very succinct answer. Minister, what is the role of your agency in coordinating or supporting monitoring of the implementation of the Stronger Futures National Partnership Agreement? What is the support you are providing them? You might have just answered.

Mr CHIODO: Sorry, member for Johnston, the previous answer did respond to that.

Mr VOWLES: If you could elaborate, minister. I am happy to pass it to Mike. Has your agency conducted or contributed to any assessment of risk to the NT of any Commonwealth reviews of their funding to the NT under the Stronger National Partnership Agreement?

Mrs PRICE: I will ask my CEO to answer that question, member for Johnston.

Mr CHIODO: In my previous two responses I specifically made the comment that it was to the effectiveness of services that these implementation plans are being reviewed. That has a lot to do with not the dollars, but ensuring the delivery of program is effectively done in all areas

Mr VOWLES: Thanks, Mike. Have you identified any risks already around those implementation plans?

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I will get my CEO to answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, if I understood your question it was to do with risks to the funding ...

Mr VOWLES: And the LIPS.

Mr CHIODO: They are two different programs. Member for Johnston, LIPs sit with RSVs, Stronger Futures is a separate program. The RSVs are ceasing, as the minister read earlier, at the end of June this year. The Stronger Futures implementation came in just over a year-and-a-half ago. They are two separate pieces of work, member for Johnston. Your question for risks was to do with the LIPS. The RSV piece of work ceases as of 30 June, so the information contained in the LIPs is held by our department. In effect, the purpose of that information is to monitor delivery as per the agreements entered into under the RSV agreement, but can I reiterate that it is two separate pieces of work?

For the LIPs is it not a matter of risks, it is a matter of continuing the piece of work that has been ongoing for a considerable period of time. For Stronger Futures, we are entering into bilateral discussions in relation to that program.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much. Thank you, minister.

Minister, have you or any members of your ministerial staff been involved on a selection panel for any public sector positions? I remind you that the Chief Minister said no, then had to issue an apology because he had been.

Madam CHAIR: Issue a correction.

Mr VOWLES: A correction, sorry, not an apology.

Mrs PRICE: No.

Mr VOWLES: Categorically no?

Mrs PRICE: To my knowledge I have not.

Question on Notice No 10.1

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, could you confirm there have been Homeland Extra applications for the outstation communities of Mungkarta and Corella Creek in the Barkly region up until 31 March 2014?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Barkly, I will take that on notice.

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, if we could put into that question the outstations of Wandangula and Kiana, which are in the Roper Golf area. Madam Chair, the question is can you confirm there have been Homeland Extra applications from the communities of Mungkarta, Corella Creek, Wandangula and Kiana up until 31 March 2014? Minister, have there been any applications from the same communities after 31 March 2014?

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, on notice.

Madam CHAIR: Yes, that question will be No 10.1.

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, the nature of that question relates to a lot of constituents who are still very concerned that the resource centres are not delivering the home repairs and maintenance requests. When I travel to outstations there is always great discussion about housing, as you can imagine. In your opening statement you highlighted an extra \$40m of ABA funding that will come into homelands. I presume that is on top of what the Northern Territory delivers. You also made a comment in your statement that you simply pay the invoices, but how much involvement do you have in the accountability of service delivery when the government pays extensive funds into the resource centres and your job is to make sure those services are delivered to the outstations? Let us keep focused on the Homelands Extra scheme.

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CEO to answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: The question relates to Homelands Extra, is that correct?

Mr McCARTHY: That is correct.

Mr CHIODO: The administration of the program and funding of the grants is managed by our department and is distributed to the service providers. There are many varied service providers, as you know. We are in the throes of conducting an audit program of a number of those service providers. I do not have a specific response to the questions you have asked, but we are getting that answer for you.

It is our responsibility to ensure we audit those services and, as part of the Homelands Extra program, each of the service providers is required to provide two components. One is to acquit the finances as they are expended. Those acquittals are received and executed through our department. The second is our coordination of visits to each of those communities to attest to the delivery of those programs.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, Mike. Minister, while we are on this subject - it is information for you which I share in good faith - the comments you make, such as 'What has Labor ever done?' I always challenge those comments, but we were heading down the same road because we knew this area had to be addressed. One of the situations that has emerged before, and continues to emerge, is what I define as crisis management.

Let's take septic tanks. We know how to manage septic tanks on black soil plains, but if we allow septic tanks to get to the crisis point, then the contractor is notified in town and it becomes a very expensive exercise, delivered under crisis management. When these communities are calling for the possibility of delivering some of these services under their own management - septic tanks it is a good example where there has to be training, equipment, pump out units, and the appropriate sump would have to be developed at their community dumping point. Within that context, I think government could develop a lot of efficiencies and provide jobs. This is a recurrent story. Then we get to the repairs and maintenance around the houses and those non-accredited areas that could be done by local teams.

I have used the estimates to once again raise this point. Thank you for taking this on board. Thanks to Mr Chiodo for assuring the Territory community that this will happen and your government will look at the accountability. In reply to those outstations I have mentioned, they are specific places that have continuing concerns about accountability and service delivery. Thank you, minister, for the opportunity to have the conversation.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Barkly. I am well aware of problems with septic tanks on communities. You would have been aware of Ampilatwatja's septic tank and how it needed to be fixed. It is a big issue in remote communities, particularly with the cost of getting plumbers, bricklayers or contractors who can do the right job for our people. I often come across cases where it has happened time and time

again, and the people who usually suffer the most are the people in remote communities. Ampilatwatja's sewerage problem was very bad. The previous minister for Regional and Remote Services should have done her best to help the people at Ampilatwatja, because it is a health issue as well. As a minister, I will make sure I do my best to help people in remote communities. Thank you for those questions.

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, if you want to talk politics, the previous minister did help and the Ampilatwatja situation has been addressed. I am more concerned with the smaller outstations. The outstations I named were Mungkarta, Corella Creek, Wandangula and Kiana, in relation to that case study and how you could implement policies to drive efficiencies that would create jobs and, essentially, hand over accountability to local people who are asking for that. That is my point; I think we have had successes, and I look forward to your leadership and successes, minister.

Mrs PRICE: Once again, thank you member for Barkly. At Mungkarta, I tried to use local organisations, like Julalikari, which best know the communities around Tennant Creek. With Corella and other outstations near Borroloola, I want to make sure we do the right thing by them and have local outstation resource service centres to make sure things are being looked after.

Mr WOOD: Minister, off the back of what the member for Barkly was talking about, as you know, SIHIP was criticised for what some people believed was a waste of money in administration. What audits do you carry out in relation to the Homelands Extra allowance to make sure the majority of that money, \$5400 per house, is used in upgrading houses which need it, and not absorbed into administration?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you for that question, member for Nelson. I might have my CEO to answer it for you.

Mr CHIODO: The audits log program we are putting in place, the one I mentioned earlier, is specifically for the Homelands Extra program, the \$5200 grant. I break it up into two. There is the financial acquittal which needs to be provided, but as you would be aware, that is more a paper audit than a physical visit to ensure the specific components of works which have been have stated, as per the submission, have been delivered. We are in the process of commencing those audits, and it will be a physical visit to each of the outstations, as our resources allow, that will substantively check the piece of work it claimed to have been done has physically been done, and not just requested.

Mr WOOD: Are you able to table a list of outstation homelands where this policy has been applied? Could you also give us a list of how many houses in each community have received an upgrade, and perhaps you could tell us what the upgrade was?

Mr VOWLES: It is not going to be another 35 minutes is it?

Mr WOOD: No, I have not asked for it to be read out. I have asked for it to be tabled. I knew that it would be ...

Mr VOWLES: She said she will do it orally.

Madam CHAIR: We do not need commentary on what the minister will or will not do. We have an answer to the question?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I shall read the community status ...

Mr WOOD: Minister, I know you are saying that, but I did not ask for anyone to read it. I asked whether it could be tabled. If it cannot be tabled, then I will not accept it. I do not want to spend time listening to you reading out whether you put three nuts and bolts to hold the dunny up in the back of a house somewhere out bush. That is not what we really need to know here.

Madam Chair, when the Council of Territory Cooperation asked for this kind of information we would get a chart given to us. Then we could question people on the chart. We do not expect people to read out every place in the Northern Territory that has received an upgrade.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I am happy to table this information for you.

Mr WOOD: Okay, that would be much appreciated, minister. That makes good common sense.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr VOWLES: It must just be me.

Mr WOOD: Minister, I have the website for the Department of Community Services up on my computer, and it says, 'This page was last updated 26 February 2013'. If I am reading off this, am I reading up-to-date information?

Mrs PRICE: I will pass the question on to my CEO, member for Nelson.

Mr CHIODO: The short answer to that is no, member for Nelson. I requested a review of our webpage when I came on board in the position. We are conducting that review and it will need to be updated. We hope to have that completed by the end of this month.

Mr WOOD: Could I then ask, minister, whether this statement under the heading 'About us' is accurate:

The department's role is to:

- *lead whole-of-government implementation of services delivered under the Stronger Futures and Remote Services Delivery National Partnership Agreements*
- *coordinate whole-of-government Indigenous policy*
- *build regional economies through enterprise development, job creation and infrastructure investment*
- *provide interpreting and translating services to improve access to services for all Territorians.*

Is that still current?

The reason I ask, minister, is in relation to Stronger Futures. I did not quite catch all the question the member for Barkly asked before but, according to the annual report for 2013-14, there is \$1.42bn flowing directly to Northern Territory government under nine implementation plans over 10 years. How much of that has been spent already?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will get my CEO to answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: As per my response earlier, member for Nelson, our department's role has two parts. One, we share the lead in the negotiations with the Department of the Chief Minister. Originally, in the first tranche of negotiations that took place for the Stronger Futures program, and now into the second tranche of negotiations with the federal government which have now become bilateral discussions, it was to conduct a review of all the implementation plans as per the original nine for the delivery of services through those implementation plans.

As to the individual implementation plans, our coordination is a collection of data that comes from the agencies. The quantum of dollars per implementation plan sits with the agency responsible for the management and delivery of that specific implementation plan.

Mr WOOD: As your role is to lead whole-of-government implementation of services, you much have the overarching role to play in how much money goes to each of these plans. It says here, 'lead whole-of-government implementation'. If you are leading, you should be able to say how much money is being spent on these plans.

Mr CHIODO: I reiterate that our role was leading the negotiations for each of these plans and there was a quantum of dollars assigned to each of these plans over a 10-year period. That quantum of dollars was part of those discussions. But the day-to-day management and the expenditure within those implementation plans sit with the specific agency that carries the responsibility for those plans.

Mr WOOD: This clearly says 'implementation' not 'negotiation'. If I was to implement something, I am responsible for its implementation. This is what it says about your role. Is this inaccurate and you do not lead the whole-of-government implementation, you lead the whole-of-government negotiation of services?

Mr CHIODO: It is wrong in its wording. I can only reiterate my original response. Our role is the negotiation of the implementation plans in phase one, and now the joint lead with the Department of the Chief Minister in the review of these implementation plans. However, the major role we have played in the

interim is in the collection of data to ensure we are meeting the performance indicators for delivery of services in each of those plans.

Madam CHAIR: Mr Chiodo, I think Hansard knows your voice now so you do not have to reintroduce yourself every time. Member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the nine plans that are part of Stronger Futures – these are pretty important plans – does your department take a lead role in any of those? We have the schooling implementation plan; the community social and justice implementation plan; the housing implementation plan; municipal and essential services implementation plan; health implementation plan; child, youth, family and community wellbeing implementation plan; tackling alcohol abuse implementation plan; remote engagement coordination implementation plan; and the Alice Springs transformation implementation plan. Do you have any role in any of those plans directly?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will get my CEO to answer that for you.

Mr CHIODO: We have the delivery component of two of those plans, member for Nelson. The first is the municipal essential services implementation plan and the other is the remote engagement and coordination implementation plan.

Mr WOOD: I presume we can get to those in more specific detail later. I noticed, going through the report, that the CEO was Rob Kendrick. Minister, what happened to Rob Kendrick?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, it is a question you will have to ask the Department of the Chief Minister.

Mr WOOD: The Chief Minister removed him, not you?

Mrs PRICE: That question will have to be directed to the ...

Mr WOOD: It is a simple question. Did the Chief Minister step in and remove Rob Kendrick?

Mrs PRICE: The Chief Minister's department.

Mr WOOD: Okay, thank you. My questions all relate to specific areas.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further agency-related whole-of-government questions?

That concludes consideration of agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategy.

OUTPUT GROUP 1.0 – REGIONAL SERVICES

Output 1.1 – Indigenous Essential Services

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 1.0 Regional Services, Output 1.1 Indigenous Essential Services. Are there any questions?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, minister, can you please provide a copy of the current agreement with Indigenous Essential Services Pty Ltd for the provision of electricity, water and sewerage services to 73 remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Johnston. I might give that question to my CEO.

Mr CHIODO: The agreement between the Department of Community Services and Indigenous Essential Services Pty Ltd, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Power and Water Corporation, contains a number of elements that are commercial-in-confidence and, as per the minister's statement earlier, any specific questions in relation to that agreement will need to be dealt with by the appropriate minister.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, can we have a copy of that without the financial details?

Mrs PRICE: No, we will not be able to provide you with what you are asking for.

Mr VOWLES: Why is that?

Mrs PRICE: Because it sits with the appropriate portfolio minister.

Mr VOWLES: But you are the minister responsible for service purchasing and the quality and range of services being purchased on behalf of the the government and Indigenous Territorians, so it fits under your responsibilities, considering you are the minister responsible for purchasing the power, water and sewerage for Indigenous communities.

Mrs PRICE: I will give that question to my CEO.

Mr CHIODO: I reiterate my response to the previous question. That agreement is considered to be commercial-in-confidence and will need to be dealt with by the appropriate minister when that issue comes before us. The minister made an opening statement which clearly said the role of our agency was to ensure and work with IES Pty Ltd for the delivery of those services, so we can provide details of the communities and the types of services being delivered. In the end, our major function is to ensure we are coordinating the planning of that in conjunction with IES Pty Ltd, and providing that grant funding to IES Pty Ltd for the delivery of those services.

Mr VOWLES: I just want to get this straight; we will not talk about how much it is costing Territorians for electricity, water and sewerage in 73 remote Indigenous communities. Does it come across and you simply sign a cheque and away it goes, considering you pay for it all? Do you have no involvement?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, I will get my CEO to answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: As in my previous answer, I understood the question to be specifically around the agreement being handed up, and I reiterate my response in relation to that. As to the quantum that passes between our department and Indigenous Essential Services Pty Ltd, that is something we can discuss. For example, the 72 communities where those services are delivered and what the services are to be delivered in those communities, we can speak about. The previous responses were specifically around the agreement and tabling that agreement.

Mr VOWLES: How much did we spend on the IES in 2013-14, minister?

Mr CHIODO: The budget allocation for that was \$73.125m.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Mike. Minister, how many meetings have you had with the Minister for Essential Services and the Treasurer in relation to changes to the Power and Water Corporation and the future capacity of IES to manage and deliver work in our remote communities?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, I always have ongoing communication with ministers. I have not yet sat down with him to talk about IES, but I look forward to holding more discussions when needed.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, I think it is needed; you should go and tap on his door. I appreciate your answer, and I hope, on behalf of remote Indigenous Territorians, that ...

Mrs PRICE: I do not need you to tell me how to relate to another minister. I will do it in my own due time.

Mr VOWLES: Relax, it is okay. So ...

Mrs PRICE: I do not need you to tell me how to talk to other ministers.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, how will changes to Power and Water affect Indigenous Essential Services Pty Ltd?

Mrs PRICE: Can you repeat that question, please?

Mr VOWLES: How will changes to Power and Water affect Indigenous Essential Services Pty Ltd?

Mrs PRICE: I will ask my CEO to answer that.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, at this point there has been no impact, and to my knowledge IES Pty Ltd still continues to operate as a fully-owned subsidiary of the current corporation known as PWC. As I have said, that review is being undertaken within the specific portfolios responsible for that, and officers of that organisation continue to meet with officers within my department to ensure the standard of services to the 72 communities is maintained.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks very much, Mike. Minister, at present, people using power cards – the main way people purchase power in our remote communities – cannot access pensioner concession rebates for power. Do you think it is reasonable that pensioners out bush cannot claim a rebate enjoyed by Territorians living in other places?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, that is a question which needs to be asked of the responsible portfolio minister, so I do not have to answer that.

Mr VOWLES: Sorry, minister, I was asking that question on behalf of remote Indigenous Territorians about whether you think it is reasonable, considering you are the Minister for Community Services. Have you had any discussions about this? You have raised this issue with colleagues in government and Cabinet, so do you have any plans to try to address the inequity of it?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, as I have said, that question needs to be addressed by the portfolio minister, and I will not be able to answer that for you.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, thank you very much, but do you think it is reasonable that pensioners out bush do not get a rebate? They cannot get a rebate enjoyed by every other Territorian in other places.

Mrs PRICE: As I have said, that question needs to be directed to the portfolio minister.

Mr VOWLES: But, as the minister ...

Madam CHAIR: Member for Johnston, you have rephrased the same question three times, and the minister has answered.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, how many of our remote communities serviced by IES do not have a reliable domestic water supply complying with the relevant Australian standards?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, I will pass that question to my CEO.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, I need to understand the question in relation to reliable water supply. The 72 communities serviced by Indigenous Essential Services have the provision of water as well as electricity to those communities. Within the circumstances that exist for that community, and in those instances, the water supply is as reliable as we can make it, depending on the ability of aquifers, etcetera. Each of those communities is serviced effectively.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mike. Minister, for 2013-14 what was the total estimated expenditure on Indigenous Essential Services for electricity supply, water supply, and sewerage services broken down? I think you gave a figure of \$73m. Is there a breakdown of that into those three areas?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CEO to answer that.

Mr CHIODO: Sorry, member for Johnston, the \$73.125m figure was 2014-15. The quantum for 2013-14 is \$71.279m. I do not have the breakdown into the specific components. It is a question that could be asked of the appropriate minister who has the responsibility for IES Pty Ltd.

Mr VOWLES: Can the minister take that question on notice?

Mr CHIODO: My answer was that it would need to be asked of the appropriate minister.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks, Mike. Yes, \$71.279m. Minister, for towns and communities serviced by Indigenous Essential Services, what is the estimated increase in population for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, we do not have those figures.

Mr VOWLES: You do not collate them. Can you take that on notice? Have you done that forward planning?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CEO to answer that question for you.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, the role of the department is for the delivery of those specific services in those communities. I stated earlier there are demographic studies being done in a number of

communities, but that is not within IES Pty Ltd or Indigenous Essential Services. When we have that data, then those forecasts would be available. But, at this point, they are not ...

Mr VOWLES: I am just going into what your shortfall on budget allocation would be with the forward estimates, to cover the growth factors if that has been discussed or ...

Mr CHIODO: Sorry, I thought the question was about growth in population, member for Johnston.

Mr VOWLES: Yes, that is what I am saying. Following on, my next question will be around whether you have forward estimates of the cost of those population growths into the growth of demand for power and water in communities?

Mr CHIODO: To pre-empt the budget for next financial year, it has been established based on the current parameters that we have as per forward estimates. But it is for that financial year, and that thinking for the years beyond that has not taken place.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mike.

Mr WOOD: Minister, I will ask some broader questions. I asked before what plans were your responsibility. One was the municipal and essential services plan. Does this come under this section?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will get my CEO to answer that for you.

Mr CHIODO: Sorry, member for Nelson, is the question: does MES come within the regional services output?

Mr WOOD: Yes, because you said the municipal and essential services implementation plan was one of your responsibilities. Can I ask questions in relation to that in this section?

Mr CHIODO: Output 1.0 would include municipal essential services, yes, member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Minister, the national partnership agreement for Stronger Futures defines municipal and essential services as power, water and sewerage maintenance; road maintenance; waste disposal; landscaping; dust control; dog control, environmental health activities; and management of infrastructure. Do you have global funding for that service?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will get my CEO to answer that for you.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Nelson, that implementation plan is specifically around homelands, outstations and town camps. A global figure that goes beyond that would come outside the purview of that implementation plan.

Mr WOOD: I have this Commonwealth implementation plan which is, according to your website, still your role. 'This implementation plan supports the delivery of municipal and essential services in homelands and town camps across the NT.' I would rather use the words 'town communities'. Do you have a figure for delivery of municipal and essential services in homelands and towns communities across the Northern Territory?

Mr CHIODO: Yes, we do. Sorry, I misunderstood your question, member for Nelson. That was my point; the municipal and essential services under that IP are specifically for homelands and town camps. Yes, we can get that figure for you.

Mr WOOD: You do not have that there?

Mr CHIODO: I need to find it within the paperwork.

Mr WOOD: Okay. For clarification, if those communities are within a regional council, is there any overlap in the supply of municipal and essential services to those communities, or are these the communities that are not serviced by the local regional council?

Mr CHIODO: That is correct.

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CEO to answer that for you, member for Nelson.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Nelson, your second question is accurate. It is for those that are not serviced by regional councils. It is for the provision of services to homelands and town camps. However, as an extension to that, in a number of instances regional councils do, under this specific piece of work, deliver as service providers on our behalf, but it does not come within their normal purview.

In response to your previous question, in 2013-14, member for Nelson, municipal and essential services grants for homelands and outstations totalled \$19.3m, and municipal and essential service grants for town camps totalled \$2.6m.

Mr WOOD: So you split those up. That is for 2013-14, what do you have for 2014-15?

Mr CHIODO: Effectively, \$19.6m for MES in homelands and outstations, an increase of \$300 000, and \$2.7m for municipal and essentials services for town camps.

Mr WOOD: Thank you. Are you able to break up where that funding goes per community? Are you able to table a document showing where funding goes to those homelands, outstations or town communities? If it is any more than 150 outstations, minister, could we have it tabled please.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I have read out how much each homeland has received.

Mr WOOD: That is okay, thank you, minister. For clarification on homelands outstations versus town communities, are there any town communities not eligible for these funds, for instance, the One Mile Dam in Darwin or the 15 Mile community in my area, compared to the town communities in Alice Springs? Are they all classified as eligible for some of this \$2.7m?

Mrs PRICE: I have been made aware that yes, they are.

Mr WOOD: Do you have to receive back from these service providers an indication of how they have spent that money? When I look at this I see road maintenance, waste disposal, landscaping, dust control and dog control, as well as power, water and sewerage maintenance. Is power, water and sewerage maintenance part of it or is that just a definition?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CEO to answer that.

Mr CHIODO: That was part of the definition within the act, but it is not part of the services delivered. That was provided by the federal government as a broad definition under municipal and essential services, but it is not expected to be delivered with the funding.

Mr WOOD: If any work is done at Knuckey Lagoon, 15 Mile, One Mile or Bagot in power, water and sewerage maintenance, does it not come out of this bucket of \$2.7m?

Mrs PRICE: The services for Knuckey Lagoon are delivered through Yilli Rreung.

Mr WOOD: What about Bagot?

Mrs PRICE: The same.

Mr WOOD: They take that money out of the \$2.7m and have to fight over that money between communities in Tennant Creek, Katherine and Alice Springs, so it is not a lot of money when you break it up into the total number of town communities, I would imagine.

Mrs PRICE: No, I might get my CEO to answer those questions for you.

Mr CHIODO: Considering the allocation, we do the best we can in ensuring we deliver what services can be delivered in those communities.

Mr WOOD: Does the Territory government top that up at all?

Mr CHIODO: No.

Mr WOOD: There are a number of issues there that need addressing, but there is not enough money to do it. They are all the questions I have on that.

Mr BARRETT: I have heard there are some sewerage issues in Galiwinku, can you brief us on what is being done about those issues?

Mrs PRICE: The Galiwinku sewerage system is being upgraded to support new community infrastructure projects, including a new health clinic. The works are scheduled for 2014-15 and the estimated cost of the work will be \$4.9m. The upgrade of the sewerage system will enable approximately \$14m worth of Australian government infrastructure works to proceed in Galiwinku, including the new health clinic. The upgrade will also take pressure off the single sewer line to the ponds, which is currently at a capacity, and improve the reliability of the system by reducing the likelihood of sewerage overflows. These significant works will contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community residents.

The Australian government has committed \$3m to upgrade of the Galiwinku sewerage system. The projects that will be able to proceed following completion of the sewerage system upgrade are: the new health centre for \$6.4m; a new multipurpose centre for \$4.7m; a new trade training centre costing \$1.5m; \$1m of new staff housing that Miwatj can oversee; and a new childcare centre for \$700 000. It all adds up to \$14.3m.

The scope of the gravity sewer and rising main work includes 800 m of DN150 PVC zero-rising main between SBS1 and the police station SBS. There is 1300 m of new DN225 pipe for the gravity sewer main from the police station to the new subdivision, connecting it to the existing one. A connection will be provided to the police station and police accommodation to the new gravity sewer. The other project is to provide sewer connections to the new health clinic, airport complex, new allotments near the airport and to decommission SBS4. Those are the works happening at Galiwinku, which are much needed because of population growth.

Mr BARRETT: We have also heard a lot about the Hermannsburg power station being closed, and they are instead connecting Hermannsburg power to the Alice Springs grid. Would you outline where we are at with that, and possibly the savings which can be made in connecting those two places with the electricity grid?

Mr WOOD: I thought that was a question for the Minister for Essential Services.

Mr BARRETT: I am asking about regional services under Indigenous Essential Services, Output 1.1.

Mr WOOD: That is a technical question for Essential Services.

Mrs PRICE: For your information, member for Blain, a new power line connecting Hermannsburg and Wallace Rockhole to the Alice Springs electricity grid has been completed and went live on 25 May 2014. The project will deliver cost savings of over \$10m across 20 years, due to cheaper energy production from the Alice Springs gas-fired power, in comparison to local diesel generated electricity. The connection of Hermannsburg to the Alice Springs electricity grid ensures sufficient electricity capacity to support future development in the region. The project was jointly funded by the Northern Territory and Australian governments. In addition, new water supply infrastructure has been completed at Hermannsburg to provide adequate capacity for future infrastructure developments. These works provide a significant improvement to the community as this government continues to deliver for the bush.

Mr BARRETT: Thank you.

Output 1.2 – Remote Infrastructure Coordination

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 1.1. I will now call for questions on Output 1.2, Remote Infrastructure Coordination. Are there any questions?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, Madam Chair. Minister ...

Answer to Question on Notice No 10.1

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I want to let the member for Barkly know that I have the answer to his previous question on homelands in his electorate.

Wandangula homeland community service by Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Centre – five applications for the Homelands Extra Allowance have been received for the Wandangula homeland community. Four applications have been approved; one application is being assessed and is waiting on the supply of additional information. All applications were received before 31 March 2014. The Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Centre has been paid \$20 800 for approved Homelands Extra Allowance applications. No applications had been received from Kiana, Mungkarta or Corella Creek, as at 30 May 2014.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. That was a response to a question taken on notice, so that was the answer to 10.1. Thank you

Mr VOWLES: Minister, are there any Commonwealth-funded community infrastructure projects in our remote towns now at risk of the Commonwealth withdrawing funding because they have not progressed as they should?

Mrs PRICE: No, I am not aware of anything.

Mr VOWLES: Do you need to clarify that with Mike? That is fine? Thanks, minister.

What meetings have you had with the Commonwealth minister to ensure there is no more funding taken out of Indigenous services by the federal government? Have you had any other meetings other than with Senator Nigel Scullion?

Mrs PRICE: I have already answered that question and the previous question that you asked me, member for Johnston.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, last week, the CLP member for Solomon, your colleague in Canberra, said one of the issues affecting further Commonwealth investment in the Northern Territory was, 'They cannot actually deliver the projects'. What is the problem and what are doing to fix that problem?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, thank you for that question. I have not, as yet, been able to contact the member for Solomon.

Mr VOWLES: Are you attempting to? Is she refusing to meet with you? I am asking why have you not. Have you sent a request in?

Mr HIGGINS: A stupid question.

Mrs PRICE: Can you just repeat the question?

Mr VOWLES: Madam Chair, I ask for a ruling on that. We all heard that from the member for Blain.

Madam CHAIR: It was not the member for Blain

Mr VOWLES: The member for Daly, sorry.

Mr HIGGINS: Get it right.

Mr VOWLES: Sorry, mate, I have been blamed for a lot of stuff too.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Daly, keep your comments to yourself, please.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you for that ruling. Thanks, minister, if you have an answer to that.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, that has nothing to do with my department. When it comes up in the other output groups I will be able to answer it then.

Mr VOWLES: About sending a request to meet with ...

Mrs PRICE: I have not met with the member for Solomon and I will make sure I meet with her.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister.

Mr HIGGINS: I ask if the member for Johnston knows they have sittings in Canberra at the moment? The member for Solomon is there on important business, fighting for the Territory. Thank you.

Mr VOWLES: I am fully aware she was here last week with the federal Treasurer, doing a promotional tour.

Mr McCARTHY: Member for Daly, I have a mobile phone, a landline and a satellite phone.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further questions on Output 1.2?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, Madam Chair. Thanks very much, member for Daly.

Minister, what is the current Commonwealth funding for asbestos removal from non-government buildings in 34 remote Northern Territory communities? I think you mentioned this a bit earlier. What is what is the total cost, and how much of that funding has been taken up by Northern Territory government administration of the scheme?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, I will get my CEO to answer that question for you.

Mr CHIODO: The asbestos program is a total of \$19.4m over three years. The program currently sits in the set-up phase, which means the design, procurement, and preparation has taken place. The administration costs overall are 8% of the total program. That is not what has been expended to this point, it is 8% across the three years, and that includes consultancies, member for Johnston. We consider that to be a part of that 8% component. It is Northern Territory government administration and management, and includes consultancies that have been put in place.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks very much, minister. I have no further questions on that output.

Mr WOOD: Minister, in your budget for remote infrastructure coordination you show remote communities where remote public housing leases are in place: 2013-14 – 104; and 2013-14 estimate – 59. Why has there been an issue with those housing leases? The budget stated that for 2013-14 there would be 104 remote communities where remote public housing leases were in place, and the estimate was 59.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will get my CEO to answer that question for you.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Nelson, I am sorry, it may just be me, but I am not certain what you mean. Are you saying there has been a decrease in the number?

Mr WOOD: I am saying in last year's budget there was an expectation that there would be 104 remote communities where remote public housing leases were in place. The estimate, which I presume is pretty accurate now, is there will be only 59, roughly half of what was expected. Why is that so?

Mr CHIODO: Negotiations have been taking place. It has not been an issue in relation to those negotiations; it has just been a matter of getting those put through the system. You will see that in 2014-15, in effect we anticipate it will go back to 104.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Nelson, it is 11.30 am. I might call a quick five-minute refreshment break. We will be back in five minutes. Thank you.

The committee suspended

Madam CHAIR: For the benefit of Hansard, we have had a bit of a change in the makeup of the committee. We have Nathan Barrett, the member for Blain; Gary Higgins, the member for Daly; me, the member for Drysdale; the member for Johnston, Ken Vowles; Natasha Fyles, the member for Nightcliff; and Gerry Wood, the member for Nelson. We are in Output Group 1.2 with the Minister for Community Services. Are there any questions under that output?

Mr WOOD: Minister, on page 308 of the budget it says the number of remote towns where all Territory government infrastructure was secured with long-term tenure arrangements was 73, but the estimate was 40. What was the problem? Was it the same problem as happened with remote public housing leases?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, the answer is the same.

Mr WOOD: In regard to remote public housing leases, am I able to ask how many individual leases you have for public housing, and is that complicated because some communities have a whole-of-township lease, distinct from individual leases?

Mrs PRICE: I will have my CEO answer that for you, because it is complicated.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Nelson, yes, it is complicated by the township leases issue. The leases we currently work on – we can provide you a number in relation to the housing leases we obtain on behalf of the Department of Housing, but it is more of a question for them.

Mr WOOD: Okay, but you have to deliver negotiations over that lease. I will leave it at that, thank you Madam Chair and minister.

Output 1.3 – Homelands, Outstations and Town Camps

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 1.2. I will now call for questions on Output 1.3, Homelands, Outstations and Town Camps. Are there any questions.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Madam Chair, I have a few questions. Minister, in regard to – I do not like calling them town camps, but town communities. Last week the Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment said, in answer to an estimates written question, that the government has, 'Approved a framework to create a new suburb at Bagot'.

He says the government has developed a brief outlining planning and housing options. What are those planning and housing options?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, that question will have to be answered by the minister responsible, who is minister Chandler.

Mr VOWLES: You are the minister for the coordination of funding essential services and essential services for remote communities and homelands, so does that not fall under there? Have you seen those plans?

Mrs PRICE: If it is a question to do with housing and town camps, or planning, that should be directed to the responsible portfolio minister, minister Chandler.

Mr VOWLES: Okay, the same answer to the written question said there will be consultation with residents and leaseholders. What is the timing of that consultation and how will that consultation be conducted? Are you the minister responsible for the Bagot community as a town community?

Mrs PRICE: The minister responsible for the Bagot Community is minister Chandler. He is the responsible minister to answer that question for you.

Mr VOWLES: You do not provide essential services to those communities – power, water, sewerage under the ...

Mrs PRICE: I will ask my CEO to answer that for you.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, there are two parts to that response. The minister is accurate in saying the planning for Darwin town camps specifically sits with the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment. We work in conjunction with that department on municipally central services. The question is a specific one that should be asked of the Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Mike. Are all the houses in One Mile Dam community now connected to a safe, reliable town power supply, minister?

Mrs PRICE: Sorry, can you repeat that question?

Mr VOWLES: Are all the houses in the One Mile Dam community now connected to a safe, reliable town power supply?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, we do deliver those services.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister. There is now a safe, reliable town power supply to One Mile Dam and all the houses there?

Mrs PRICE: The minister who holds the portfolio of Power and Water would be the best person to answer that question for you, member for Johnston.

Mr VOWLES: Are there any plans to redevelop the One Mile Dam community?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, that is a question for minister Chandler. I cannot answer that for you.

Mr VOWLES: You have not had any discussions if there are plans around redeveloping Bagot or One Mile Dam? They have not had discussions with you about providing those essential services of power, water and sewerage under your responsibility?

Mrs PRICE: Not to my knowledge, but I will ask my CEO to answer the rest of the question for you.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Johnston, it is the same answer as the one before. We will work with their officers, but the responsibility for the planning falls within the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Mike, and minister. I am done with my questions.

Mr WOOD: Minister, what was the total program for the home maintenance policy the government put forward? How much in dollars and for how long for homelands and outstations?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, can you go on to the next question if you have one, and we will get back to that one.

Mr WOOD: The next question relates to it. I want to know how much money was allocated for the first year and how much was actually spent.

Mrs PRICE: We will take the question on notice.

Question on Notice No 10.2

Madam CHAIR: Please restate the question for the record.

Mr WOOD: I will try to pre-empt, but I might get the same answer. Could you say what the total policy budget was for the maintenance of homes? How much was promised to be spent each year? How much was spent in the first year? Was the money that was not spent in the first year allocated for the next year?

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question.

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Madam CHAIR: That is question No 10.2.

Mr WOOD: I can ask some more questions, but not on that section because they do not have the answers.

Minister, how many homeland and outstation houses would come under the home maintenance policy you have with the \$5200?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, I do and I can provide you ...

Mr WOOD: Do not read that one out; that is dangerous. There are many pages there.

Mrs PRICE: I can read it out for you, Gerry.

Mr WOOD: Are you able to table that document for us?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, we can do that.

Mr WOOD: Minister, how many of those houses have a lease?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, we do not have that information available.

Mr WOOD: If they do not have a lease, are they owned by the land trust on which they are built?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, in the homelands they are.

Mr WOOD: Minister, therefore are they not technically private houses?

Mrs PRICE: That is correct.

Mr WOOD: Minister, how can the government have a policy which provides maintenance to a private house? Do not take this the wrong way, I am not saying you should not be maintaining houses; I am just trying to go through the technical details of how you can do something without other things being in place before you do it.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, that is an important question, and this is why my department wants to do it properly and support the homelands to make sure the condition of the houses is to standard. Previous governments had not really looked into how best we can help the homelands to look after their houses better. My department is doing that.

Mr WOOD: It also begs the question as to how you can charge someone rent on a house owned by a land trust? A service provider – I will use Yilli Rreung as an example; there are plenty of other providers – collects rent for homes on outstations and homelands if they provide a service, is my understanding. I am not saying they should not pay rent, but if the house belongs to the Aboriginal Land Trust, where do they get the power to do that?

Mrs PRICE: The policies are different for homelands and town camps.

Mr WOOD: I am just talking about homelands and outstations; I will not talk about town camps. Yilli Rreung looks after some outstations. I am only using that as an example because I presume other service providers do similar work in other parts of the Territory, or am I wrong?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CEO to answer that question for you, member for Nelson.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Nelson, I believe the confusion may exist – the reason we are speaking about homelands and outstations as opposed to town camps. You are correct, Yilli Rreung provides services to both, but the rental component sits within the town camps space, not the homelands space.

Mr WOOD: I might ask you a question later, because that sounds like it does not work in practice, especially with Yilli Rreung. What concerns me is that you have not put in place leases for these houses, but we are doing work on what is, basically, a private house. Does the government intend to look at putting leases on outstation houses?

Mrs PRICE: Not that I am aware of.

Mr WOOD: How can you then, legally, spend money on a private house? Is that the normal process, because it does not belong to you?

Mrs PRICE: That is correct; money is being given through the Homelands Extra Allowance to the occupants who will ensure maintenance work is done to upgrade the houses they live in.

Mr WOOD: I do not have a problem, because I know those houses need maintaining, but what has happened since the leases? They were on seven-year leases before, under the government intervention, correct? Those leases dropped off.

Mr CHIODO: Not homelands and outstations.

Mr WOOD: I thought some of them were. This could get too complicated, but I make the point that I think there is an issue there in relation to funding.

Minister, do you also have an issue in relation to whether people own a house in an outstation or homeland, and own a house in a town? Is there any policy the government has on that, or does it have no control over it?

Mrs PRICE: Our department works in partnership with Housing to find out if these people have a house in Yuendumu, for example, or have an outstation house as well, so they are checked.

Mr WOOD: What concerns me is that people who want a house cannot get one because some people have two houses. Does the government have a policy in relation to that?

Mrs PRICE: I might get my CEO to answer that for you.

Mr CHIODO: Rather than a policy, we are talking about the criteria put in place to make a resident, through a service provider, eligible for the \$5200. One part of the criteria is that they do not hold another dwelling, especially within our public housing system. As the minister rightly said, the criteria are checked with the Department of Housing to try to ensure there is no duplication of households.

Mr WOOD: Do you check whether they have a private house?

Mr CHIODO: Again, it is part of the criteria that we ask that question. The complexity is getting the response. But our major concern was with the public housing component, and we have done that through the Department of Housing.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, I could go on, but I will not.

Mr HIGGINS: There has been a lot of talk about leases in communities and so forth. I want to know whether the minister can outline if this is making any difference in the communities. What benefits are they getting? How is it assisting land management? You might want to touch a bit on home ownership if that comes into it.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Daly, for that question. Leasing the land occupied by government infrastructure recognises and respects traditional owners' land rights. Leases deprive the traditional owners of the use and enjoyment of their land. Lease payments are appropriate and generate an income for landowners, the same as for any other landholder across Australia. Lease payments for parcels of land occupied by government assets are now being paid to traditional owners. The land councils are working with traditional owners to contribute to community benefit programs with this new income stream. These leases have underpinned unprecedented new investment for infrastructure in remote communities. Fifty new Northern Territory government infrastructure projects are complete for services relating to police, health and education.

The Department of Education has constructed five children and family centres and three trade training centres. Police, Fire and Emergency Services has constructed one new police overnight facility and three new police stations. The Department of Health has constructed three new health clinics.

We have significantly improved the lives of residents in these communities through improved housing conditions. This investment is underpinned by leases over community housing. History shows that improved housing conditions will assist with better health and education outcomes. These leases provide residents of remote communities the opportunity to purchase their own homes and participate in the economic growth of their communities, so it is going on.

Mr HIGGINS: You may not know the answer to this, but when these leases are set up, is it a dollar amount which is then paid back to traditional owners, if they are not physically receiving the money, and they make the decision as to where it is spent, or is building health and education infrastructure part of the lease agreement itself?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Daly. I will have my CEO answer that question.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Daly, there are two parts to the answer. It is accurate that with infrastructure leases in particular – it has often been misunderstood, but the lease payment is for the land, not the infrastructure which sits on the land. That goes back into the community; the community then spends that for the benefit of the community. It is usually spent to improve existing infrastructure, such as a sports oval, or for existing events.

Mr WOOD: It is a roundabout way of doing things.

Mr CHIODO: Sorry, member for Daly, what was the second part of the question? The first was to do with leases and money going back into the community.

Mr HIGGINS: The question was whether it was just all money going around in a circle or whether part of the agreement is that they would build, for example, health, education or childcare facilities.

Mr CHIODO: The answer to both is yes. The first component depends on the quantum within the community, and it is spent to improve services within that community.

Mr WOOD: I am not against a lease over aged-care facilities and schools, etcetera, which recognises that the land is Aboriginal. These facilities are 99% built for Aboriginal people. They are funded by the government, in wages, maintenance and the cost of building those facilities. Why is it not a peppercorn rental? You are using government money, and it goes around in circles. If you want a new football oval, you put in an application for a football oval. However, you will have a long-term rental payment based on unimproved capital value, which will increase quite considerably, which means less money for some of the services people want in those communities.

They are not built for anyone else. The government does not say to the community, 'You build your own school, you run it and pay for it, because it is on private land'. It builds facilities such as an aged-care centre or women's refuge because it wants to help people. They are all built for the community, and I have difficulty, not with the lease or peppercorn rental, but it is a bit like saying, 'Thank you for your schools, thank you for the police station and thank you for this. Here is the bill.' It seems to me that we send out the wrong message.

Mrs PRICE: I might pass your question on to the CEO of my department, member for Nelson.

Mr CHIODO: Member for Nelson, it is a policy question. It is a policy that has existed for a considerable period of time now ...

Mr WOOD: Under a federal government direction which had no relationship with what was on the ground.

Mr HIGGINS: Policy or direction.

Mr WOOD: Okay, thanks. Thanks, Madam Chair.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 1.3 and Output Group 1.0.

OUTPUT 2.0 – REMOTE ENGAGEMENT, COORDINATION AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Output 2.1 – Language Services

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 2.0, Remote Engagement, Coordination and Language Services, Output 2.1, Language Services. Are there any questions?

Mr VOWLES: Yes Madam Chair. Minister, has there been around a \$1m decline in funds available for language services, and what is the reason for that reduction?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, I will get Ken Tinkham, the Chief Financial Officer, to answer your question.

Mr TINKHAM: Ken Tinkham, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Community Services. The \$1m decrease in funding relates mainly to a one-off project for provision of cross-border Indigenous interpreting services which will cease this financial year. That was \$1.15m. Basically, the language services earn revenue from some of the services it provides. Again there was a one-off funding source of \$300 000 for that in the current financial year as well.

Mr VOWLES: Thanks very much, Ken. Minister, what are the risks of this reduced Commonwealth funding? Are you fighting to have the one-off funding ongoing? What impact will \$1m being taken out of the budget have? Also, we just heard \$300 000 is out of another project. Are the language services able to deliver?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, in relation to your question in Output 2.1, Language Services, the language services output covers activities of the AIS and the Interpreter and Translation Service of the Northern Territory. Both these services exist to overcome language barriers and provide fair and equitable

access to government and non-government services. For this output, the budget papers show an increase between the 2013-14 budget and the 2013-14 estimate figures, from \$7.968m to \$9.864m, an increase of \$1.896m. This increases ...

Mr VOWLES: Sorry, minister, if I could interrupt you there, I am talking about the \$1m taken out, not about holistic increases. What impact will that have on services, considering you had \$1.5m and now you have \$500 000 in one program, if that is right, Mr Tinkham?

Mrs PRICE: I am going to read this for you so you can understand the nature of the funding for the language services. If I may, can I continue reading what I have in front of me?

This increase includes \$1.15m in Commonwealth funding for the provision of cross-border Indigenous interpreter services, a \$0.45m increase in services free-of-charge expenses, and a \$0.3m increase in own-source revenue for services provided to external clients.

The 2013-14 budget for the language services output is \$406 000 higher than the 2013-14 budget due to changes including service free-of-charge adjustments.

Mr VOWLES: I have no further questions.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 2.1.

Output 2.2 – Remote Engagement and Coordination

Madam CHAIR: I now call for questions on Output 2.2 – Remote Engagement and Coordination.

Mr VOWLES: Yes, Madam Chair. Around First Circles, the Chief Minister told the media of his intention to scrap the IAAC and replace it with Indigenous Circles with groups of Indigenous leaders representing the Top End and Central Australia regions of the NT. There is \$800 000 available. Will you seek expressions of interest or direct appointment to First Circles?

Mrs PRICE: The expressions of interest calls are to encourage people to put their hands up be part of it.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister. Who will be involved in decision-making about appointment to First Circles?

Mrs PRICE: As minister I will be involved in appointing people to First Circles.

Mr VOWLES: Will any fees be paid?

Mrs PRICE: The framework has been put in place. We will make sure we will have people who want to be part of First Circles and we will make sure we look after them.

Mr VOWLES: Minister, in looking after them do you mean they will be paid a fee? Will you appoint people directly who will receive a fee?

Mrs PRICE: It has to be decided once the framework has been set.

Mr VOWLES: Still in the framework, okay. That is all the questions I have.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of output 2.2 and output group 2.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 3.0 – WOMEN'S AND MEN'S ENGAGEMENT

Output 3.1 – Women's and Men's Engagement

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to output group 3.0 – Women's and Men's Engagement, Output 3.1 – Women's and Men's Engagement.

Ms FYLES: Minister, do you have an advisor for women's policy within your office?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nightcliff, yes we do have an advisor.

Ms FYLES: You have a specific advisor for women's policy within your office?

Mrs PRICE: Sorry, could you repeat that question for me please.

Ms FYLES: Do you have a specific women's policy advisor within your ministerial office?

Mrs PRICE: That is right.

Ms FYLES: Do they meet regularly with clients? Do you meet regularly with clients and stakeholders?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, we do.

Ms FYLES: What are some of the initiatives your agency has put in place since scrapping the 2030 plan which was implemented to improve women's representation and to measure outcomes for women?

Mrs PRICE: In answer to your question, member for Nightcliff, the Office of Women's Advancement provides grant funding for a range of activities that support women and women's organisations throughout the Northern Territory. The Office of Women's Advancement administers three scholarships and two grant programs to assist women and women's organisations to undertake study to recognise and celebrate women's achievements, and to promote women's safety, gender equality, leadership and participation.

The scholarships and grants program has a total annual funding of \$106 000. There are the Chief Minister's Scholarships for Women as well. Three Chief Minister's Scholarships for women are granted each year, one higher education scholarship and two vocational education and training ...

Ms FYLES: Are they part of that \$106 000?

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Ms FYLES: The \$51 000 for International Women's Day grants, is that also part of that \$106 000?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, that is right.

Ms FYLES: Of that \$106 000, apart from scholarships and grants, what portion goes to initiatives for the agency since scrapping the 2030 plan?

Mrs PRICE: The scrapping of the 2030 plan - I was not involved in that as a minister.

Ms FYLES: The government you are part of scrapped that initiative; I am trying to work out what has been replaced for Territory women. Some programs for the bush area or communities?

Mrs PRICE: The national plan to reduce violence against women and children.

Ms FYLES: Is that part of the \$106 000?

Mrs PRICE: No, it is separate. This is an Australian government commitment.

Ms FYLES: So that is federal government funds. I am talking specifically about what the NT government is funding, what initiatives the agency has put in place to support Territory women. Is it just those scholarships under the \$106 000?

Mrs PRICE: Through the Office of Women's Advancement, the Northern Territory government has also committed to the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children ...

Ms FYLES: Was there a monetary commitment to that or was it simply the signing of an MOU?

Mrs PRICE: There is no money involved.

Ms FYLES: I am specifically focusing on the funding in the Territory budget to help Territory women – looking for programs in remote areas and communities. What has been done to support non-Indigenous and Indigenous women in the Territory?

Mrs PRICE: The total of \$18 930 in grant funding was distributed for the 2014 International Women's Day.

Ms FYLES: That is all, \$18 000?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, \$18 930 available funding – the Arafura Ensemble received \$1500, National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame received ...

Ms FYLES: Minister, in the interests of time, I am sure you could table those figures.

Mrs PRICE: It will not take me long; I will go through them for your interest, member for Nightcliff

Ms FYLES: I am conscious of time and have a lot of questions. Can you give me an update on the FTE for the Office of Women's Policy?

Mrs PRICE: I might just read through these so you can see where the money has been spent.

Ms FYLES: I am well aware of the International Women's Day grants and who they went to, it is on the website. Could you give me an update on the FTE ...

Mr HIGGINS: I would like to hear, minister, if I could. Thank you.

Mrs PRICE: Godinymayin Yijard River Arts and Culture, Women of the World Festival in Katherine, was granted \$700; Austin Martial Arts, which is a self-defence course in Darwin, was given \$300; Tennant Creek Women's Refuge was given \$1000 – empowering and mentoring young women; Dawn House was given \$500; Business Professional Women in Darwin was given \$1000 for the Inspiring Change talk held in Darwin; the Chamber of Commerce Central Australia was given \$1000.

The Northern Territory Working Women's Centre was given \$1000; the Roper Gulf Regional Council Women's Day Celebration was given \$1200; Champion Fitness open day in Darwin was given \$300; Girl Guides Northern Territory in Darwin and Tennant Creek was given \$1000; Central Australian Women's Legal Services was given \$1000 for a fundraiser in Alice Springs; Women's Network NT in Darwin was given \$1000; the Department of Health Wurrumiyanga island girls were given \$1000 for a barbeque lunch; the Northern Territory Women Lawyers' Association was given \$1000; the YWCA of Darwin was given \$1000; SIDS and Kids was given \$580; the United Nations Association of Australia NT was given \$1000; the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Women's Council was given \$2000.

The Office of Women's Advancement has an annual general grant funding pool of \$65 800. The general grants program is under review and more information will be available on the website soon, but Barkly Tableland Women's Day last year was given \$4000.

Ms FYLES: Minister, we spoke about those previously in this portfolio, in the interests of time can you give me an update on the FTEs for the Office of Women's Advancement?

Mrs PRICE: The member for Daly asked me to go through what has been funded out of the Women's Policy and I ...

Ms FYLES: I think the figures you have moved onto are historical.

Mrs PRICE: I would like to talk about them and table them.

The Women's Network NT was given \$1000; Danielle Loy, for her launch, was given \$3540; Mbantua festival was given \$20 000; Waltja was given \$1000. Monica Stewart was given \$500; The Australian national research organisation for women's safety was given \$15 450. That is what has been happening.

Mr HIGGINS: Thank you, minister.

Ms FYLES: Minister, can you please give me an update on the FTE for the Office of Women's Advancement?

Mrs PRICE: I have been told there are three.

Ms FYLES: And what was that figure previously? In the previous financial year, I understand, it was higher than that, when it came out of the Department of Health and then moved across to the Department of the Chief Minister. Do you not have those figures at hand?

Mrs PRICE: I have been told there were four.

Ms FYLES: Four down to three. How many of those three positions are currently filled?

Mrs PRICE: Three.

Ms FYLES: What is the budget for the Office of Women's Advancement?

Mrs PRICE: I might get Ken to give you those figures.

Ms FYLES: A whole figure will be fine; I do not need a breakdown.

Mr TINKHAM: The budget for Women's and Men's Policy is \$1.082m for 2014-15.

Ms FYLES: Minister, can we get an update on the review of the policy framework for Territory women, which is currently under review I understand?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nightcliff, I will take that on notice.

Ms FYLES: In broad sense, as the Minister for Women's Policy, can you not give me any details?

Mrs PRICE: I will take it on notice.

Question on Notice No 10.3

Madam CHAIR: Can you restate the question for the record.

Ms FYLES: Can we get an update on the review of the policy framework for Territory women, which is currently under review? Who is doing the review and what is the cost of the review?

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, I do.

Madam CHAIR: That question is No 10.3.

Ms FYLES: Minister, what are the key outcomes you are trying to achieve through your grants program and through the Office of Women's Policy? Stakeholders are telling me that it feels like – in 2012 when Ms Anderson was the minister there was a lot of fanfare, we had a huge announcement – they say they feel like it has completely stopped and there is nothing happening. Are you able to give me some of the key outcomes you are aiming to achieve?

I am sure you do not need any notes for this. You are the Minister for Women's Policy. It is about what you are trying to get for Territory women.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nightcliff. Yes, in 2012 there was a big fanfare with the previous minister. I am ...

Ms FYLES: I think Territory women were enlightened to see that and are now concerned ...

Mrs PRICE: I am down to business now where I can help make sure the women in the Northern Territory have a say and a voice.

Ms FYLES: How does that happen? How do they have a voice and a say? What are some of the policy programs you have in place through your Office of Women's Advancement?

Mrs PRICE: We now have men's and women's policies to engage our women and men to take part and work with our government to make sure we engage with the wider community and with people in remote and regional centres to have their say and be part of the change our government wants to see happening.

We hold a variety of community engagement projects across the Northern Territory to provide an opportunity for women to discuss issues that are important to them. There are the Smashing the Glass Ceiling forums, which are free lunchtime forums focusing on women in the Northern Territory that provide a

platform to discuss gender equality, equity, and what actions and changes can be initiated by the individual to assist in career development. We had the A Conversation Worth Having forum – inspirational dynamic guest speakers who shared their experience to facilitate debate around a broad range of topics relevant to all women. In collaboration with the Parks and Wildlife Commission, the men's policy and the Office of Women's Advancement present A Conversation in the Park forums. I have been to a few of those forums as well to hear what people are thinking and what they ...

Ms FYLES: Where are those forums taking place, minister?

Mrs PRICE: If you had known about it you would have come to the one at the Botanical Gardens. That was a great place to have this forum ...

Ms FYLES: Minister, I am just asking ...

Mrs PRICE: From now on, as you are the opposition member for Women's Policy, we will make sure you get the flyers, and you will get notice so you can come and be part of this change ...

Ms FYLES: Minister, I already receive invitations ...

Mrs PRICE: Let me finish ...

Mr BARRETT: A point of order, Madam Chair!

Mrs PRICE: Let me finish, let me finish. I am not finished yet.

Madam CHAIR: Member for Blain.

Mr BARRETT: If the member for Nightcliff could stop interrupting, that would be great. I want to hear the answer to this.

Madam CHAIR: Minister, you have the call.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Where was I? In collaboration with the Parks and Wildlife Commission the Men's Policy Unit and the Office of Women's Advancement held A Conversation in the Park forum where women from Darwin and the surrounds sat and talked. We used the Botanical Gardens, which is a beautiful setting. The women really appreciated the environment.

Ms FYLES: Minister ...

Mrs PRICE: Hang on. In the financial year to date, 600 Northern Territory women have attended the various forums which have provided valuable information on what matters to women of the Territory. We have been busy.

Ms FYLES: Minister, are you able to give me a list of the locations where those forums and workshops have taken place across the Territory? Maybe that will highlight what support has been provided.

Mrs PRICE: I will take it on notice.

Ms FYLES: So, you are unable to give me a list? You spoke of one in Darwin. I know the Smash the ...

Mrs PRICE: I will take it on notice.

Question on Notice No 10.4

Madam CHAIR: Member for Nightcliff, please restate the question for the record.

Ms FYLES: Minister, if you could provide me with a list of the locations of the Office of Women's Policy forums.

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question?

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Madam CHAIR: That question is No 10.4.

Mrs PRICE: Some of these forums go up and down the track. They are not just in Darwin – Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Palmerston, Darwin and Casuarina.

Ms FYLES: Obviously, those locations we have just spoken about. What support has been given to Indigenous women in remote communities compared to those in urban centres?

Mrs PRICE: I have just answered that question.

Ms FYLES: Minister, you did not give me any locations in a remote community. There have been no forums or workshops in remote communities - places like Galiwinku, Gapuwiyak, Yuendumu?

Mrs PRICE: At the ...

Ms FYLES: Even Nhulunbuy. Does Nhulunbuy ...

Madam Chair: Member for Nightcliff, the minister is answering the question.

Mrs PRICE: Hang on a minute, member for Nightcliff. I want to let you know what I want to do, what I would like to do that Labor did not do ...

Ms FYLES: Minister, you are the minister ...

Madam CHAIR: Member for Nightcliff, you cannot interrupt the minister.

Mrs PRICE: ... like set up a Women's Council in the Northern Territory and create an advisory body which will then inform us as to how we should look after women in the whole of the Territory.

Ms FYLES: So, minister, to date you have not been to Nhulunbuy with any of these forums?

Mrs PRICE: I have been to Nhulunbuy. I have spoken to women out there.

Ms FYLES: Minister, I am talking about your Office of Women's Advancement and the programs it is running. What is the engagement with women from remote areas compared to non-Indigenous women or women from urban areas?

Mrs PRICE: I talk to Indigenous women in the remote areas all the time.

Ms FYLES: Apart from talking, have you run any formal workshops? We are talking about the Territory ...

Mrs PRICE: I talk to them and encourage them to be part of this change. Madam Chair, that is all I have to say on that.

Madam CHAIR: It is now 12.30 pm.

Ms FYLES: It is not quite 12.30 pm and I have a couple of more questions.

Madam CHAIR: That is fine; you can ask the questions after the lunch break. The minister is not going anywhere. It is 12.30 pm so we will adjourn for lunch and be back at 1 pm. We will resume after the lunch break with further consideration of Output 3.0.

The committee suspended

Madam CHAIR: We are continuing on, thank you, everyone, for coming back after the break. We are on Output Group 3.0. Are there any questions under that output?

Mrs PRICE: I would like to finish answering the question the member for Nightcliff raised about women's policy, its advancement and whether I had attended forums ...

Madam CHAIR: Absolutely.

Mrs PRICE: ... and if any of the staff from women's policy had been to communities. They have attended meetings; one was in Wadeye, the other one was in Yuendumu, and I have been informed they will be attending the Garma Festival.

I went to the Women of the World conference in Katherine, there was another forum with the Desert Poppies in Alice Springs, and I have had numerous meetings with the Arrernte women in Alice Springs, the traditional owners of that area.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr HIGGINS: Can I ask one question?

Madam CHAIR: Yes, member for Daly.

Mr HIGGINS: It is very general. I was going to ask it when the member for Nightcliff asked her questions about women's policy. Can you give us some indication of what initiatives we have in the area of men's policy? I was going to ask at the time if she could answer about both men's and women's policy, but it is specific.

Mrs PRICE: The Department of Community Services is working hard to address many of the issues impacting on men in the Territory. We have developed a policy framework for improving the social and emotional wellbeing of men, which is consistent with local Territory circumstances and contexts. It is important that we raise awareness of the traumatic impact of domestic and family violence on families and friends.

So my department, in conjunction with our Chief Minister, has created an Indigenous Men's Advisory Council which provides strategic advice to the Northern Territory government on managing trends and significant issues affecting Indigenous males in the Northern Territory. There is a great opportunity for us to make it work with women's and men's policy.

Mr HIGGINS: Are they closely related, men's and women's – not the policy, I mean when they are working?

Mrs PRICE: They are separate, but what has been suggested, and what I would like to see happening, is a women's advisory council. We are having talks about that as well.

Mr HIGGINS: The member for Nelson raised this in parliament. I have forgotten how he phrased it as opposed to men's policy and women's policy. Can you also tell us about your trip to New York and how that fitted in with all of this?

Mrs PRICE: The trip to New York was in March, where I attended the 58th Session of the United Nations Commission on Status of Women. While I was at the conference I spoke with attendees from all over the world about issues affecting women, especially Territory women. I met other ministers from Australia there as well, with whom I shared experiences, and I helped set up contacts with my department and their departments.

I met with Dr Christine Chin, Chief of Staff to the First Lady, Michelle Obama, and Executive Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls. We discussed multinational strategies to prevent and address violence against women and girls, how to increase economic participation by women through multilateral events like the G20 and UN committees, and how to start the process of how to recognise unpaid care provided by women in the local and international economy. As a result of this meeting, Dr Chin has agreed to share information and open dialogue with the Northern Territory government.

At the invitation of the Swedish and Sri Lankan governments I was part of a panel on preventing violence against girls and boys. Other members of the panel included the Sri Lankan Ambassador, the UN's women's member, a young Mexican girl, and a girl from Malawi, who both shared their experiences about violence. I also met with the minister, Michaelia Cash; Natasha Stott-Despoja, the new Australian Ambassador for Women and Children; and Liz Broderick, Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner, to talk about what we can do to prevent violence and support women and children who have been victims of violence and sexual assault, and to look at mental illness issues in the bush.

During that week I attended over 15 sessions. I brought this information back with me to assist with better policy for the betterment of lives of Territory women. It was a great experience.

Mr HIGGINS: Is that an annual event or was it a one-off? Is it something we want to be involved with into the future?

Mrs PRICE: I think every two years it takes place.

Mr HIGGINS: Is that the first time we have been, or we have been to them in the past?

Mrs PRICE: I went to one in Beijing when I was working with the Central Land Council. I took women from Central Australia, who were encouraged to speak. That was in 1992.

Mr HIGGINS: Do we know if that was done a couple of years ago? Maybe the member for Nhulunbuy might know whether we have had any involvement with it before?

Ms WALKER: Sorry, I did not hear the line of conversation, member for Daly.

Mr HIGGINS: Thanks for that, minister.

Mrs PRICE: It was a great opportunity.

Madam CHAIR: That completes consideration of Output Group 3.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 4.0 – CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE

Output 4.1 – Corporate and Governance

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 4.0, Corporate and Governance, Output 4.1, Corporate and Governance. Are there any questions?

Mr HIGGINS: No.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 4.1.

Output 4.2 – Shared Services Provided

Madam CHAIR: I now call for questions on Output 4.2 – Shared Services Provided. Are there any questions?

Mr VOWLES: No.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output 4.2.

Output 4.3 – Shared Services Received

Madam CHAIR: I now call for questions on Output 4.3 – Shared Services Received. Are there any questions?

Mr VOWLES: No.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of Output Group 4.0.

Output-Specific Budget-Related Questions

Madam CHAIR: Are there any out of output-specific budget-related questions?

That concludes consideration of outputs relating to the Department of Community Services. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the departmental officers who have attended today. We will have a short break.

The committee suspended

OUTPUT GROUP 5.0 - PROTECTION OF SACRED SITES

Output 5.1 – Protection of Sacred Sites

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now move on to consider the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

I welcome you, minister and invite you to introduce the officials accompanying you and, if you wish, to make an opening statement regarding the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right I have Ben Scambary, the Chief Executive of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, and to my left Clive Naylor, Director of Corporate Services.

Madam CHAIR: Will you be making a statement, minister?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, Madam Chair. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, or AAPA, plays a key role in the development of the Territory. As a preamble to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Site access, the AAPA is responsible for seeking a balance between the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites and the aspirations of all Territorians for their economic, social and cultural advancement. This government will continue to have a commitment to the protection of sacred sites by listening to the advice of Aboriginal custodians.

With the need for economic growth and jobs, this government will also balance that commitment to sacred site protection with development of the Northern Territory that is inclusive and respectful of the needs and wishes of Aboriginal people, especially about sacred sites.

In the financial year to 31 March 2014, the AAPA has issued 156 authority certificates providing certainly for works to occur, while ensuring sacred sites will be protected in accordance with the wishes of traditional Aboriginal custodians. An authority certificate issued by AAPA under the *Sacred Sites Act* provides the developer or the user of land with the legal indemnity from prosecution under the *Sacred Sites Act*, as long as the conditions of the certificate are complied with.

Authority certificates are based on advice received from consultations with Aboriginal custodians of sacred sites. Respect for the key aspects of Aboriginal Territorians' culture is vital to all Territorians moving forward.

In the past year AAPA has provided authority certificates for important projects throughout the Northern Territory, including proposed works to improve facilities within and around Aboriginal communities, maintain and improve the Territory's expansive road network, improve the visitor experiences within national parks and to inform many small- and large-scale projects within Resources and Primary Industry. The coordinated community authority certificate project also ensures that government's investment in infrastructure, housing and future development in Aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory is done in a respectful manner, with regard to the protection of sacred sites from damage and interference.

In a project which was close to my heart and which deserves a special mention, AAPA also completed an important authority certificate which facilitated a project to ensure a bore can finally be drilled and water can be supplied to the outstation of Alyuen at Aileron Station.

As I have mentioned to my colleagues before, this outstation has not had a water supply to its residents for many years. AAPA also developed and implemented solutions for the authority certificates for large-scale projects, such as the NBN roll-out in the major centres of the Territory, and significant road and infrastructure projects across the Territory.

NBN certificates have been issued for Katherine, Gove, Tennant Creek and most of Alice Springs, with the remainder of Alice Springs certificates to be issued before the end of June this year. In the financial year to 31 March, AAPA received 190 applications for authority certificates. In addition to the issuing of authority certificates, AAPA has responded to requests for information on its existing records of sacred sites and previously issued certificates.

In 2013-14, a total of 454 requests were completed by the end of March. These requests for information are on average completed in four days, but AAPA is currently working on implementing significantly improved access to its records, which will allow clients to access information online when needed. This project is progressing and is likely to bring the regulatory function of AAPA into an environment consistent with other Northern Territory government agencies.

The new system will not only enable clients to access registers, but will also track progress of certificate applications online.

AAPA has also worked on streamlining responses to mining notices to enable mining companies to risk assess sacred site issues earlier in their planning process.

There is another project to develop a protocol with the Alice Springs Town Council for tree trimming of the many sacred site trees in Alice Springs. This protocol is near completion and will help inform tree works for other organisations.

AAPA engages positively with custodians, proponents and developers alike. AAPA works hard to ensure that persons and companies wanting to develop, work on or use land have every opportunity to seek clear advice at an early stage of their project planning, and, thus, be able to take into account any possible constraints that might occur so sacred sites are protected from damage and interference.

AAPA also provides custodians with opportunities to provide their input on the conditions required to protect sacred sites in the light of different types of proposed works or use of the land.

The work of AAPA is not easy, as it involves a balancing act in listening to the sacred site concerns and advice of Aboriginal custodians, working to provide certainty to those custodians, and to other users and developers of land in an independent, yet accountable, way, without being involved in decisions regarding land use and land management. That certainty of advice from AAPA is about providing the best possible protection to sacred sites while supporting the ongoing development of the Territory.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Are there any questions on the minister's statement?

Mr VOWLES: Yes Madam Chair, thank you for that statement, minister. On 28 November you put out a couple of press releases about the review of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority; I will call it AAPA from now on. You said there was a review happening; what has happened to that report? Has it been provided to you?

Mrs PRICE: Would you repeat that question, please, member for Johnston?

Mr VOWLES: No problem, minister. On 28 November last year you issued a couple of press releases; the subject was the review of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. You then put another one out shortly after making a few changes to it; in short, it was around having a review. Do you have that review? Has that been finalised?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, there was a review and a paper is before Cabinet at this time, so I am unable to comment on any aspect of it.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you. Does the review at all suggest canvassing different options for changing the act so members are directly appointed by the minister, and not senior and acknowledged custodians on the advice of relevant land councils, as required now?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, as I have stated, there is a paper before Cabinet at this time, so I am unable to make any comment.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you. Does the review of the act canvass options for change in the act so the function of the board is changed to that of an advisory body, rather than a statutory decision-making body as it is now?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Johnston. As I have said, there is a paper before Cabinet at this time, so I am unable to make any comment.

Mr VOWLES: As the minister responsible for AAPA, did you sign off on the circulation to agencies of the draft Cabinet submission, including options for changes to the *Sacred Sites Act* which I mentioned in earlier questions? You would have had to sign that to go out to agencies to receive advice from them.

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, there is a paper before Cabinet at this time, so I am unable to comment.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Are there any other questions on this?

Mr VOWLES: Would you have signed off on that before it went to agencies for advice?

Mrs PRICE: As I have stated, there is a paper before the Cabinet ...

Mr VOWLES: You sign off on it; you can talk about it because it is now in Cabinet. Did you sign off on the draft Cabinet submission? You would have had to before sending it to agencies for advice.

Madam CHAIR: Minister, you do not have to make any comments on Cabinet-related lines of inquiry. Member for Johnston, do you have any other questions?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, I have many, Madam Chair.

Madam CHAIR: Perhaps now would be a good time to ask the next one.

Mr VOWLES: I am going to, thank you very much; I appreciate your consistency today, thank you. To what extent have agencies warned that the changes to the *Sacred Sites Act* could hinder the timely consideration of Sacred Site Clearance Certificates, and that changes such as those we have been discussing could affect the confidence of investors interested in developing land in the Northern Territory?

Mrs PRICE: I might ask Ben to answer your questions.

Mr SCAMBARY: The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has been asked to provide a submission to Cabinet, and that is subject to the usual confidentiality of these matters.

Mr VOWLES: Good save, minister, thank you, Mr Scambary. Minister, what actions have you taken to ensure that the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory is taking appropriate measures to ensure the protection of sacred sites and properties it has management responsibilities for?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Johnston. I will ask the AAPA CEO to answer that.

Mr SCAMBARY: The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and the Parks and Wildlife Commission have been in discussions about improving mechanisms for the protection of sacred sites within the Northern Territory's parks estate. Some initiatives that have arisen out of those discussions include the provision of live access AAPA database for authority certificates which have been issued to the Parks and Wildlife Commission, so they can tell at any given time what their coverage is in relation to sacred site protection. In addition, we have worked with them on protocols for when and how they should apply for authority certificates from the authority. That includes developing a single point of contact between our organisations.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mr Scambary. Minister, AAPA provided advice to the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment in relation to over 200 human burials in several burial areas believed to be present in Lot 5182 Town of Darwin, and Lot 8630 Town of Nightcliff. There has been recent clearing work conducted at that site as a precursor to building work, which affected families fear will be affected by development of that site. Would you agree that development of commercial buildings on top of a burial site does not constitute damage or interference with that site?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Johnston. Mr Chandler would be the best person to answer your question, as it is his portfolio.

Mr VOWLES: Okay. I might rephrase that question to go into it a bit more, minister. Did AAPA provide any advice? It must have provided a report around that burial site, or that lot of land.

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Mr VOWLES: Are you able to table those reports or advice, or provide it?

Mrs PRICE: I might pass the question to Ben who might be able to fill you in on what has happened.

Mr SCAMBARY: Member for Johnston, the issue is the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority had a delegation under the previous *Heritage Conservation Act* for dealing with traditional Aboriginal and Macassan burials. When the current *Heritage Act* came into being in October 2012, that delegation ceased.

The authority issued a sacred site clearance to the developer of that lot, identified that there may be an historic burial ground at that location, and urged the developer to raise the matter with the Heritage Branch of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment.

Mr VOWLES: So that was the advice given? So that was the advice given by AAPA to Heritage, which falls under the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment?

Mrs PRICE: I will get Ben to answer that question for you, member for Johnston.

Mr SCAMBARY: Yes. That advice was provided to the Heritage Branch of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment. On two occasions: directly before the authority certificate was issued; then, a number of archival sources were provided to the Heritage Branch shortly after.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, Mr Scambary. Did that advice say to go ahead with it, or mention the possibility that the site is a burial area? Is that what the advice ...

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, that question should be directed to the appropriate minister, who is minister Chandler. He looks after the heritage side of things.

Mr VOWLES: No problem. Thank you, Mr Scambary. Minister, can you outline AAPA's work and input into the review of seabed mining?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Johnston, I will ask my CEO, Ben Scambary, to answer that question for you.

Mr SCAMBARY: Member for Johnston, the authority was tasked with looking into issues concerning the protection of sacred sites in relation to seabed mining. From memory, the report on that matter is due in 2015. To date the authority has undertaken a range of preliminary research around a number of issues, and we are anticipating finalising our report by the due date.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, minister, and Mr Scambary. Minister, what action have you taken in reporting back to the site custodians in relation to damage to sacred sites at Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve and Judbarra/Gregory National Park?

Mrs PRICE: Thanks for that question, member for Johnston. In 2013-14, AAPA brought legal action against the Northern Territory of Australia for breaches in 2011 of the Sacred Sites Act by the former Parks and Wildlife Service at Chambers Pillar and Judbarra national parks. AAPA lost the case of Chambers Pillar but won the case of Judbarra National Park. Both court cases have clarified the law around the protection of sacred sites under the act and the exercise of proprietary rights and interests of landholders.

Subsequent to these court cases, AAPA has been in discussion with the Parks and Wildlife Commission about sacred sites protection within Territory national parks. Outcomes of these discussions have led to a number of initiatives that should better protect sacred sites within the parks estate. This includes provision of sacred site data in digital format by AAPA to Parks. This occurs via live data access to AAPA's database. The same service is provided to other government agencies throughout DoI, Housing, DLP and Water Resources.

I might pass this question to Ben to fill in a bit more about other areas that are not covered.

Mr SCAMBARY: Member for Johnston, I think your question related to what steps have been taken to talk to the custodians of those sites?

Mr VOWLES: Yes, have you had consultation and are you keeping them involved in the discussions and outcomes and ...

Mr SCAMBARY: Yes. Essentially the authority consulted with custodians at both locations subsequent to the two court cases concerned. The site damage at Chambers Pillar was very minimal in the sense that there was no need for any form of reparation for the site itself. The expectation was that a good fall of rain would probably correct the damage done to the clay pan at that location.

At Judbarra the custodians of the sacred sites that were damaged in that incident remain very concerned about those sites. I understand they undertook a ceremony to mark the destruction of the trees at Judbarra. I also understand further discussions are occurring within the joint management framework.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you. I have a couple more questions. The administration and efficiency with AAPA of \$104 000 identified in Budget Paper No 2 will be delivered in 2014-15. What are the impacts of those savings on specific programs or activities and staff establishment – the \$104 000?

Mrs PRICE: Thanks, member for Johnston. I will ask Ben Scambary to answer that question for you.

Mr SCAMBARY: Member for Johnston, at this point we have not finalised quite how we will deal with the savings identified, but it is unlikely that amount of savings will impact on our current employees. Rather, it will be covered under the purchase of goods and services of the authority. There is a number of measures we are looking at to achieve that savings.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you very much, Mr Scambary. Minister, can you provide details of any activities undertaken by AAPA in 2013-14, or planned for 2014-15, in relation to supporting the intergenerational sharing of knowledge about sacred sites and sacred site protection issues among site custodians?

Mrs PRICE: The authority undertakes primary fieldwork with custodians of sacred sites and records information about sacred sites and custodianship. Over 30 years of data is retained in the authority concerning traditional land interests across the Northern Territory. This raises a number of legacy issues that relate to the intergenerational transfer of knowledge about sacred sites and custodianship.

The authority actively responds to requests from the descendants of people who have been consulted about sacred sites in the past. At present, each request is responded to on its merits. In addition, the authority tries, where possible, to encourage young people to participate in on-country visits to learn about sacred sites. This work is opportunistic and often done within the context of authority certificate work. The board of the authority has also considered the issues of youth engagement, and places a high priority on this in the context of AAPA's approach to the protection of sacred sites.

Initiatives being considered by the board include the development of a school curriculum package focusing on sacred sites, school engagement by the board, facilitated on-country visits to increase opportunities for intergenerational transfer of knowledge, and a film and media campaign. The authority continues to consider such initiatives within the resource base available.

Mr VOWLES: Thank you, minister, I am finished with my questions.

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to consider the estimates and proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2014-15 as they relate to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. Are there any agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies?

That concludes consideration of agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies.

OUTPUT GROUP 5.0 – PROTECTION OF SACRED SITES

Output 5.1 – Protection of Sacred Sites

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 5.0 Protection of Sacred Sites, Output 5.1 Protection of Sacred Sites. Are there any questions?

That concludes consideration of Output Group 5.0.

OUTPUT GROUP 6.0 – CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE

Output 6.1 – Corporate and Governance

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 6.0 Corporate and Governance, Output 6.1 Corporate and Governance. Are there any questions?

That concludes consideration of Output Group 6.0.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any non-output specific budget-related questions?

A member: No.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of outputs relating to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the departmental officers who attended today.

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now move on to consider outputs relating to the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.

The committee suspended.

PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
Output Group 7.0 – Parks and Wildlife

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, everyone, thank you minister. I welcome you again, this time as the Minister for Parks and Wildlife. I invite you to introduce the officials accompanying you and to make an opening statement regarding the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am joined today by Mr Andrew Bridges to my left, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, and Joanna Frankenfeld, the Chief Financial Officer, to my right.

The primary responsibility of the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory is to look after the Territory's parks and reserves for the benefit of the community. It does this by providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation experiences in a way which also protects the unique natural and cultural values of the park.

The commission manages over 87 parks and reserves, covering more than 45 000 km², both terrestrial and marine. Thirty-two of these parks are jointly managed in partnership with Aboriginal people. The commission also carries out wildlife management programs, the most well-known being the active management of saltwater crocodiles.

Between 1 July 2013 and 31 March 2014, 158 crocodiles were captured by the commission. The croc team regularly checks over 60 traps in the harbour and waterways, and a further 22 traps are in place on our parks and reserves. Capture numbers and locations can be accessed through the internet on the Be CROCWISE website. I have had the opportunity to go out with Tommy Nichols and his team to check a trap, and I have a good appreciation of what they do to keep our harbour and waterways as safe as possible.

In August last year, commission staff went to Timor-Leste to present at a crocodile management forum in Dili, and assist in developing an integrated crocodile management program.

A little later in the year, Tommy also went to the Solomon Islands to provide help and advice on crocodile management. The Territory's crocodile program is certainly well regarded.

Be CROCWISE is another important program; this public education program lets people know that any body of water in the Top End may contain large and potentially dangerous crocodiles.

Earlier this year I launched the Be CROCWISE CD, following the Be CROCWISE song competition. In the Top End, many people live and participate in recreation activities in and near waterways. People need to be croc wise and know how to enjoy the waters in safety.

Since becoming the Minister for Parks and Wildlife in September last year, I have worked hard to get out and about to the parks and reserves managed by the commission, including the wildlife parks, The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens and the Window on the Wetlands facility, to meet the staff and rangers, stakeholders, neighbours, traditional owners and members of the community across the Territory. The diversity of the roles, responsibilities and activities of the commission in urban, rural and remote settings, from the Red Centre to the tropical north, has both impressed and fascinated me.

From opening a new garden at the Territory Wildlife Park to declaring hunting seasons, providing opportunities for commercial development on parks through concessions, releasing draft plans of

management for public comment, bringing wildlife to sick children in hospitals, holding donated barramundi releases and completing infrastructure upgrades, there are too many areas of this department's work to mention.

However, I would like to mention a couple of highlights which establish the commitment I and my agency have to ensuring Territory parks and reserves are for the benefit of the community. Down my way we are shining a spotlight on Alice Springs to become a Mecca for mountain bikes around the globe, with the opening of a new world-class trail network at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve. This government provided \$150 000 to build the new trails, which have been constructed to international standards. The new mountain bike trails are the perfect way to explore the beauty of Central Australia.

This government has also committed a further \$150 000 of minor new works funding for stage two of the mountain bike trail at Alice Springs, to continue to upgrade and keep a bright spotlight on Alice Springs and mountain bikers.

In Darwin the Wesleyan Church at the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens was refurbished as Eva's Café, adding another great attraction to enhance the visitor experience. Territorians love the great outdoors, and the opening of Eva's Café allows friends and family to relax and explore the gardens without having to travel too far for a bite to eat in one of the Top End's favourite parks.

At Litchfield we are working to make our parks safe for everyone with a blitz by rangers and police undertaken throughout Litchfield over the Easter and Anzac long weekends. The commission will continue to implement programs and strategies that give the community confidence that all of our parks are safe places for families to visit. This is a good example of the relationships and partnerships the commission is building to achieve sound community and public outcomes.

Further to relationships and partnerships with other government agencies, the commission has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Northern Territory Field and Game Association and the Northern Territory four-wheel drive club. Both MOUs acknowledge and recognise the contribution these respected organisations provide to the management of our parks and reserves, and provide opportunities and benefits for both parties.

Community involvement is also very important. One example of this in this portfolio is calling for members of the community to provide input on the development of the wildlife carer guidelines that support the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife for release into the wild. There needs to be a consistent approach to wildlife care to give the animals the best chance of surviving when released. The wildlife carer guidelines will provide uniform standards across the Territory. They will be owned by the community because they contributed to its development.

One area we will not be speaking on is the tourism and recreation master plan. This plan needs to go before Cabinet before we will comment on it.

Looking to the future, the upcoming expressions of interest process seeking new development of tourism product proposals on all parks and reserves is an exciting program that will bring novel and fresh tourism opportunities across the Territory, and will contribute to economic growth and northern Australian development. As this process has not commenced, I will not be speaking on it today.

Proposals and options for new hunting areas and activities are being considered by a high-level working group which includes representation from government, and key hunting and shooting organisations.

Madam Chair, in conclusion, I welcome questions that relate to the output groups associated with my Parks and Wildlife portfolio.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Are there any questions on the minister's statement?

Ms WALKER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have questions on the minister's statement. But before I ask them, could I inquire, minister, if you are able to table the answers to Written Question No 195? There are actually three questions in there, two of which apply to Parks and Wildlife.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. That is a different output, but I believe that question was raised earlier by the member for Johnston. It has to do with AAPA.

Ms WALKER: I have just double checked that. Written question No 195 has three parts to it. Yes, the first one was to do with AAPA, but the following two are relating to Parks and Wildlife.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nhulunbuy, in answer to your question, as of 31 March 2014 the Parks and Wildlife Commission had 118 rangers.

Ms WALKER: That was 118?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, against an approved structure of 133 ranger positions. In addition to those identified in that pay period, the commission has 11 staff identified as rangers who are either on unpaid leave or are casual employees who did not received payment in the specified pay period, bringing the total number of rangers employed by the commission to 129.

Ms WALKER: Minister, as at 31 March 118 rangers, but 133 ...

Mrs PRICE: I believe 118 rangers.

Ms WALKER: Yes, and 133 positions but not all filled because people might be on unpaid leave or for other reasons?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nhulunbuy, I will get Andrew to answer that question for you.

Ms WALKER: Thank you. I am trying to get to that last figure of 129.

Mr BRIDGES: At that particular pay 20 – I think it was just before 31 March – there were 118 rangers paid. Our organisation chart has 133 positions. I am not sure whether this 118 includes casual positions, but we have casual positions and we have people on leave without pay, study leave and a number of things. If someone did not get paid on that particular pay then they were not necessarily picked up.

Ms WALKER: There is a difference of 15 positions between ...

Mr BRIDGES: At that pay, yes. It would not normally be that level of discrepancy.

Ms WALKER: So the final figure was 129?

Mr BRIDGES: That includes staff on our books who were not paid on that particular pay.

Ms WALKER: Three positions are unfilled?

Mr BRIDGES: For example, if people take advance payment for leave, they will get that when they start their leave and for the pay that was being counted there is not necessarily any pay for them, but they are still on our books, it is just that they on recreation leave.

Ms WALKER: How does that figure of 118 compare with the same time the previous year: 31 March 2013, if you have that figure handy? If not, can you take a question on notice?

Mr BRIDGES: I do not have that figure.

Mrs PRICE: We can take that notice.

Question on Notice No 10.5

Madam CHAIR: Member for Nhulunbuy, would you please restate the question for the record.

Ms WALKER: Can you please advise, as at 31 March 2013, the number of rangers employed and on payroll being paid by the Parks and Wildlife Commission?

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, we will take it on notice.

Madam CHAIR: The question will be No 10.5.

Ms WALKER: Thanks, minister. Do you have the answer to part three of question 195? It is to do with the total number of visitors.

Mrs PRICE: There were 2 207 837 visitors between 1 July 2013 and 31 March 2014.

Ms WALKER: I have questions in relation to the opening statement. Thank you for your opening statement, minister. I know the Parks and Wildlife Commission does a lot of good work, a lot of hard and very challenging work around the Northern Territory. I know it is a very important part of your portfolio and one you are very passionate about.

You said a number of things in your opening statement I would like to follow up on. You talked about the role of the Parks and Wildlife Commission looking after the Territory's parks and reserves for the benefit of not only visitors and tourists, but cultural and heritage values for traditional owners across these parks in the Territory. I want to specifically ask you about water issues associated with the Territory's parks and reserves and ask you, given the environmental, ecological, recreational and heritage value of our Territory parks, have you or your department made any submissions on applications for water extraction licences under the *Water Act*?

Mrs PRICE: I think that the question is best answered by the minister for Land Resources if it is questions about water. He is the best minister to give you ...

Ms WALKER: Is that a no, that there have been no submissions made by Parks and Wildlife in relation to applications for water extraction?

Mrs PRICE: Yes, that sits with the minister for Land Resources.

Ms WALKER: I understand that. I was in committee yesterday when the minister appeared about water issues, but I was trying to understand whether you, as the minister representing your agency of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, had made any submissions on water extraction licences. For instance, Power and Water Corporation had put in submissions around licences granted in Katherine. Given that your portfolio manages parks and the water that runs through them, I was curious to know if your agency had made any submissions about water extraction licences?

Mrs PRICE: As I stated, that question is best directed to the minister for Land Resources.

Ms WALKER: Okay, that is neither a yes nor a no, but I understand your position. Modelling undertaken on the impact of Ms MacFarlane's water extraction licence indicates adverse impact on water flows in Elsey National Park - which is in your portfolio - and adjacent areas. Were you aware of that?

Mrs PRICE: I will get Andrew Bridges, the chief executive to answer that question.

Ms WALKER: I was asking the minister if she was aware of that, if she is not, are you aware of it, Mr Bridges, as the CEO?

Mr BRIDGES: I was aware of applications, but we are an operational agency; we do not have the expertise in the science side of things for water modelling. That is generally done by the other department. We rely on the advice we get. I think with our submissions generally, if we get those sorts of things, we do not have the expertise to be able to comment.

Ms WALKER: Have you put in submissions on this sort of thing?

Mr BRIDGES: Not a submission, no.

Ms WALKER: Have you raised a query, asked for information or a briefing?

Mr BRIDGES: No. We have a lot within our agency that we deal with and that we think we are good at, and that is what we do. If things are outside our area of expertise we rely on someone else.

Ms WALKER: Minister, the modelling on the impact of granting a licence of 5800ML to Tina MacFarlane indicated that the number of days whereby the impact to stream flow is greater than 20% at Elsey National

Park increases considerably with the increase in licence entitlements. It also indicated that adverse impacts will affect Bitter Springs, Rainbow Springs, Judy Crossing and Red Rock.

Are you concerned these impacts might affect the ecology and biodiversity of the park and reduce its attraction for recreation and tourism?

Mrs PRICE: As I have made it clear, that question should be directed to the appropriate minister. With biodiversity, I will ask Andrew Bridges to give us an idea of what has been happening in those areas.

Ms WALKER: Thanks, minister. It is specifically about biodiversity impacts on the park, with relation to reduced flows.

Mr BRIDGES: I do not think I have read the report you are referring to, but I would expect that the water section within the Department of Land Resource Management would do its monitoring, and it also has biodiversity scientists who do the monitoring. Our people are really operational, looking after them on the ground. I have not heard anything of concern from them but, as I say, the science is done within a different department.

Ms WALKER: Sure, thanks, Mr Bridges. Madam Chair, I seek leave to table a memo from the Water Advisory and Regulatory Officer in Katherine. It is about the groundwater extraction licence increase, and the negative impacts that will have on downstream flows.

Madam CHAIR: It is fine to table that, member for Nhulunbuy.

Ms WALKER: In the annual report, the member for Nelson has just pointed out to me that one of the goals for Parks and Wildlife is about one of the strategies. Goal one is to minimise threats to biodiversity health, so whilst the report may sit within the domain and the purview of the Minister for Land Resource Management, I would have thought that Parks and Wildlife would need to be across it, understand what those impacts are and have a role to play in minimising them.

Madam Chair, I have another question for the minister. Have you ever written a letter of support for Tina MacFarlane's water licence application?

Mrs PRICE: I believe I did, because she is a constituent.

Ms WALKER: Okay, and that was in support of her application?

Mrs PRICE: It was a letter supporting her.

Ms WALKER: When was that? She is a constituent of yours, and this was obviously prior to the application. Who was that letter to?

Mrs PRICE: I cannot recall, but I know it was supporting her.

Ms WALKER: I am, in part, testing your memory, minister; the letter was to the Chief Minister. What is your position – perhaps it is a difficult one when you are a member of Cabinet and a local member representing a considerable Indigenous constituency in the seat of Stuart – in relation to the Mataranka area and water licence applications? Also, what is your position on strategic Indigenous reserves?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy, but I do not think that relates to budget questions.

Ms WALKER: You have, in the past, held a position on strategic Indigenous reserves, whereby you challenged the government to scrap them. You then decided that you support them. Given that water licences in this region around Mataranka are negatively impacting on flows through Elsey National Park, which is within your purview, I am sure I am not the only one who wants to know what your current position is on strategic Indigenous reserves.

Mrs PRICE: I am not going to enter into that debate, because whilst this water issue is happening – I did support Tina MacFarlane at the time because she is a constituent, as you would if your constituents had an issue they raised with you. I did my best to support her; that was then and it was when Terry Mills was Chief Minister.

Ms WALKER: So do you support the decision to grant her a fairly sizeable 5800 ML licence to access water from the aquifer?

Mrs PRICE: What I recall was a letter supporting her because she was my constituent.

Ms WALKER: Minister, in the lead-up to the last Territory election, did you receive any financial or in-kind support from the MacFarlanes?

Mrs PRICE: No.

Ms WALKER: Okay. Thanks, minister. Following on from your opening statement, you talked at length about crocodile management which, of course, is an important issue in the Northern Territory, knowing they are protected and, over the years, there has been an increase in crocodile population numbers. You said that in the past year 158 crocodiles have been captured. The issue of crocodile culling has been a very hot topic of late in the Northern Territory. We had, sadly, a Darwin man taken a week ago. What is your agency's stance on this issue, minister?

Mrs PRICE: Crocodile culling is important because of what has happened recently. I thank you for that question, member for Nhulunbuy. It is an issue that involves Territorians in the north where there are crocodiles in the waterways. Culling has been discussed, but it has not been brought to the table in Cabinet to discuss. That is where it sits.

Ms WALKER: Given, minister, you move around the Northern Territory and the Top End, what are the sorts of things you are hearing from traditional owners about what it is they would like to see done?

Mrs PRICE: As you are aware, I read the newspapers, so I read the comments people have put into the newspapers as to what they think should happen. We, as government, understand there is an issue and we want to make sure we do it properly if we do decide what we should do in regard to culling crocodiles.

Ms WALKER: To date, since you have been the minister, what analyses have been conducted on this issue, and what sort of advice is your agency providing to you that you might take to Cabinet?

Mrs PRICE: Crocodile culling is an issue that will not go away. I believe the question about culling and crocodiles would best be answered by the Minister for Land Resource Management. That is where it stands now.

Ms WALKER: Have you had meetings with the Minister for Land Resource Management about an approach to managing crocodiles?

Mrs PRICE: Parks and Wildlife people work closely with the people of Land Resource Management. They have conversations about crocodiles, but that is ongoing.

Ms WALKER: Thank you, minister. On another angle around crocodile management, there were plans to establish, on a trial basis, crocodile safari hunting, harvesting up to 50 crocodiles a year. You talked about it in your ministerial statement in March and said:

I want to send the message to hunters across Australia that we are open for business in a safe, sustainable and sensitive way.

Shortly after that the federal Minister for the Environment put the kybosh on the Territory's plans for a trial period of safari hunting of 50 crocodiles a year. You were part of a joint media release on 27 March 2014 with the Minister for Land Resource Management describing it as a total load of croc and standing by the Territory's decision to do this.

It is three months since then. What progress have you made in trying to turn around the federal minister's thinking on this?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. That rests with the Minister for Land Resource Management because in the conversations we had with the federal minister he indicated he did not want that to go ahead.

Ms WALKER: Why does it sit with Land Resource Management? It was a joint media release that you and the minister put out. I am trying to understand what your involvement has been in this process given you are promoting hunting in the Northern Territory?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. Parks and Wildlife deals with crocodiles but we focus on the operational side of things. Safari hunting rests with the Minister for Land Resource Management, and we work in partnership with them. The comment in the media release did not come from me and, as I have reiterated, I had talks with the federal minister for Parks. It was a good meeting, but at the end of the day he is the federal minister.

Ms WALKER: There are comments attributed to you in this media release. You said:

Greg Hunt has made a decision which will do nothing to improve the lives of Indigenous Territorians living in remote communities.

The decision goes against the Commonwealth government's priorities of developing the north and ending welfare dependency in the bush.

You clearly have views on this. Is the matter shut and closed?

Mrs PRICE: I thought it was a great opportunity at the time for Indigenous people to be employed or have their own businesses, whether it was safari hunting or egg collecting. It was an opportunity that would have encouraged Aboriginal people to be part of the employment strategy, to have jobs in their own country and be familiar with how to relate to crocodiles. That is what my comment was pointing at, and it was a sad occasion where the federal minister did not give us an opportunity to work with him to create employment opportunities in the north for Aboriginal people who are familiar with crocodiles; they do not have crocodiles in the southern states. I would like to – some of the key points of the commission to keep people safe from crocodiles. As I have mentioned, the commission does a lot to help keep people safe from saltwater crocodiles, but it should be remembered that over much of the Top End there is always a risk that a crocodile might be in our waterways and coastal areas. The commission maintains a 50 km Darwin crocodile management zone. This includes Darwin Harbour, the Darwin rural area and east of the western side of the Adelaide River.

In this zone there is no tolerance for saltwater crocodiles. This means the croc team actively pursues all sightings, undertakes regular spotlight surveillance, and baits checks weekly 26 permanent traps and a further 34 traps, depending on the season and sighting. This makes a total of 60 traps in the Darwin crocodile management zone. This is not an exclusive zone, and it cannot be assumed that the zone is always safe from crocodiles. There is no technology currently available to detect crocodiles coming into the zone, nor is there a barrier to keep crocodiles out of the zone. However, the croc team removes every crocodile sighted within the zone.

There are areas in some parks that are managed to exclude saltwater crocodiles. These exclusion zones mean there is a high degree of confidence that crocodiles are prevented from entering the zone, so the level of risk is low to allow swimming, but these areas tend to be seasonal. An example of this is Wangi Falls in Litchfield National Park.

The commission also maintains a 50 km non-tolerant zone in the Katherine River, from 20 km downstream of the Katherine Low Level Bridge up into Nitmiluk National Park. Ten traps have been reinstalled in the Katherine River now that the river levels are stable. Following a fatality in 1986, a crocodile management program was implemented in Borroloola to remove all crocodiles from a management zone from 2 km above to 8 km downstream of the town of Borroloola.

Since that time, the Ranger Station at Borroloola has maintained the crocodile management zone through trapping and spotlighting. On average, seven saltwater crocodiles are removed from the Borroloola area on an annual basis. When regular trapping programs are not in place, mobile traps may be used to capture problem crocodiles in remote locations. Currently, the number of crocodiles captured is trending downwards. The likely reason is two poor Wet Seasons in a row and not as many crocodiles moving around. In 2011-12, 301 saltwater crocodiles were captured, 272 in 2012-13 and 254 up to 2 June 2013-14. Management plans for specific parts of the reserves include a risk assessment based on public use of the area, the number of crocodiles present in this area and the proximity of the location to non-population of crocodiles. There are individual saltwater crocodile management plans in some of the Top End parks and reserves.

Management actions are site specific, and they include the provision of warning signs, surveillance, trapping and removal of crocodiles. Unfortunately, despite all this effort, there have been three confirmed attacks so far in 2014, two of these being fatal, and my deepest sympathies go to the families and friends. These three attacks all occurred in Kakadu National Park, two associated with swimming and one

associated with fishing from a boat. Kakadu National Park is not managed by the Northern Territory, therefore is not subject to the commission's crocodile management plans. I understand that Kakadu National Park is revealing its crocodile management plan, and the commission will provide any advice or assistance it can.

Protection of saltwater crocodiles started in 1971. Prior to this, no records of crocodile attacks were kept. Since protection of saltwater crocodiles in 1971, the Parks and Wildlife Commission has kept records of all reported saltwater crocodile attacks. From these records I can tell you there have been 66 confirmed attacks, with 20 being fatal and a further 46 resulting in injury. The number of crocodile attacks each year is increasing due to the growing human and crocodile populations in the Northern Territory. The most common size of saltwater crocodiles attacking people is between 3 m and 3.5 m. The attack is nearly always fatal when the crocodile is over 4 m.

The group most at risk is young local males swimming in crocodile habitat. Records also show that 38 attacks, of which 13 were fatal, were on Indigenous land, with Indigenous people affected by 46% of attacks. Eleven attacks, of which four were fatal, were in Kakadu National Park. Eight attacks, where two were fatal, were in Northern Territory managed parks and reserves, excluding Kakadu National Park, and nine attacks, where one was fatal, occurred on other land tenures, such as other Crown land or private land.

Ms WALKER: A point of order Madam Chair! I appreciate the minister reading the work associated with crocodile management on to the record, but in the interest of time, I wonder if she would consider tabling it. It is not to do with the question I asked, unless she is nearly finished.

Mrs PRICE: I can table it.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Are there any further questions on the statement?

Ms WALKER: I want to go back to the line of questioning I was on. Obviously managing crocodile numbers and reducing those numbers, whether it be through culling or safari hunting, will reduce risks to Territorians, particularly Indigenous Territorians. Crocodiles certainly are not discriminatory, and this was part of what safari hunting was going to do, as well as provide economic opportunities.

Minister, in the very last line of the media release I talked about, issued jointly by you and the Minister for Land Resource Management on 27 March, it states that:

The Northern Territory government is now exploring alternative pathways to make crocodile safari hunting a reality.

What are the alternative pathways you are exploring to make this a reality?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. That would be totally led by the Minister for Land Resource Management, and discussions have been going on for a while. He is the person who will be able to give you a clear indication of what the plans are.

Ms WALKER: Okay, thanks, minister.

In your opening statement you also talked about keeping parks safe for visitors. Obviously, crocodile management is one issue, but the very recent death of a tourist at Kings Canyon was a tragic accident, and I certainly join with you in passing on condolences to that young woman's family.

Is there money in this budget for public safety infrastructure or awareness to better look after the safety of our tourists and visitors?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you for that question. I might pass that on to my CEO, Andrew Bridges.

Ms WALKER: Thanks, minister.

Mr BRIDGES: Public safety, through an organisation like ours, is of primary importance, so pretty well everything we do considers the safety of the public and our staff. We work in some remote areas where conditions are challenging. While we do not have a specific allocation for public safety, it is embedded through everything we do and any development in the department. Where there are incidents and we have

problem areas, we look at ways to improve safety there. Beyond that, it is built into the way we do business.

Ms WALKER: I understand from the media I have seen that there will be a fence going into this particular spot at Kings Canyon where this tourist fell.

Mr BRIDGES: I think it is way too early for any decisions like that. There is still a police investigation going on, and there will be a report to the coroner. As an agency, I am not aware of the full facts yet. Our people helped carry out the initial response, but we have not seen the results of the investigation. Any decisions would very much depend on what the circumstances were.

Ms WALKER: Sure. Thanks for that answer. Minister, how many injuries, accidents, or deaths have occurred in the Territory's parks in the 2013-14 year, let us say up to 31 March. That may include staff as well as visitors.

Mrs PRICE: I will pass that question on to my CE, Andrew Bridges.

Mr BRIDGES: That is a difficult one to answer. There were no deaths. There are eight new workers compensation claims for staff. There might be minor injuries that do not require compensation that I do not have a record of. As to injuries to members of the public, I cannot tell you how many. It is the odd thing like a sprained ankle or a trip on a track, but it is few ...

Ms WALKER: Do you keep that sort of data, Mr Bridges?

Mr BRIDGES: There is an incident report filled out for all of those. They go to our Work Health and Safety Committee and, ultimately, to our leadership team if there is any action to be taken. Many of them are very minor. Anything significant we take action on as soon as we can.

Ms WALKER: Okay, thanks for that. I am nearly finished with my questions in relation to the statement. Minister, you talked about the master plan that is still going through a Cabinet process. I thank your office for providing me with a briefing that included some discussion around this plan. I will ask you the same question I asked at the briefing because I still get a bit miffed by it.

There were consultations held in relation to the master plan in October and November last year, in Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine. Why are consultations not held in places like Tennant Creek, which is on the Stuart Highway, and Nhulunbuy? I know we do not have a park in Nhulunbuy; however, there are a lot of park visitors in my electorate, I can assure you. I want to understand why it is these consultations are only held in these three main centres.

Mrs PRICE: It is a pity it was not held in Tennant Creek because we look after the Devils Marbles and Davenport Ranges. I will give that question to my CE who will be able to answer that for you.

Mr BRIDGES: I thought we did go to Tennant Creek. I might be wrong; I would have to check that. It would be normal. I know ...

Ms WALKER: It was not advertised, unless it changed.

Mr BRIDGES: ... we did not go to Nhulunbuy. We do not have any parks there. However, we realise we can go a bit broader. I think that came from the meeting in the minister's office. It is not just people who live in the main centres who are interested in our parks, so we will look at how we move around the Territory a bit more broadly.

Ms WALKER: Thanks, Mr Bridges and minister. What is the time frame anticipated around your master plan? When will we see an outcome of this and something in place?

Mrs PRICE: We are not too sure. It is probably a couple of months away.

Ms WALKER: Okay. Has there been, as a part of the development of this master plan, research and analysis with regard to an increase in private investment into the Territory's parks since this idea was originally mooted?

Mrs PRICE: As I mentioned in my opening speech, I will not be able to speak about the master plan until the report comes back.

Ms WALKER: Okay, and that will be in a couple of months. During the time since the master plan has been launched and speaking about private investment in our parks, and in your ministerial statement in March, have you as the minister, or the Parks and Wildlife Commission, been approached by any outside entities to invest in commercial enterprise within the parks?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. I have not been approached, to my knowledge, about opportunities ...

Ms WALKER: Opportunities to invest in parks.

Mrs PRICE: That is right.

Ms WALKER: You have not been approached as minister. What about your agency? Has the commission been approached by outside entities?

Mrs PRICE: I might pass that question to the CE.

Mr BRIDGES: We have had two or three of the normal minor concessionary type applications. One that comes to mind is for Larapinta Trail, but that is all that is – I think there is a renewal of an existing contract ...

Ms WALKER: An existing contract.

Mr BRIDGES: ... for – I cannot remember the activity, but it was Casuarina Coastal Reserve. There has been the normal run-of-the mill business stuff but nothing outside that.

Ms WALKER: No new entities looking for opportunities to operate within parks as a private operator?

Mr BRIDGES: There are a couple in the pipeline which do not currently have concession agreements with us but are operating in the parks. The Larapinta Trail is an example where there are some operators that use the standard public walk, but if they want to set up their own private camp areas to be a bit removed from the free independent walker then – it is that sort of thing.

Ms WALKER: In relation to the master plan and this strategy of opening up for private investment in parks, what aspect of that strategy is about promoting Indigenous employment?

Mrs PRICE: This plans needs to go before Cabinet so we cannot really comment on it.

Ms WALKER: You cannot confirm whether promoting Indigenous employment is part of the strategy?

Mrs PRICE: No.

Ms WALKER: Thanks, minister. I do not have any further questions on the opening statement. The member for Nelson might.

Mr WOOD: I have one on the opening statement regarding the master plan. I have not seen the master plan, but I had a briefing on it. Minister, I know you say you cannot comment on it, but you might be able to give an idea of what concepts are being put in. Places like the Litchfield municipality have large areas of conservation-valued land, like Girraween Lagoon, McMinns Lagoon and a number of areas like Howard River, which border on a number of your parks, especially the Howard Springs Hunting Reserve. Is the government giving any consideration to working in partnership with Litchfield or other municipalities that have to maintain some of these important conservation area – they are not officially conservation parks – so they can help maintain these areas?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nelson. As I stated in my opening speech, I will not be able to comment on the master plan.

Mr WOOD: Without commenting on the master plan, do you think it is possible your department could look at joint management or could assist a local government in maintaining some of these areas?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will pass that question on to my CE, Andrew Bridges.

Mr BRIDGES: At the moment our primary focus is to manage our existing estate and very much focus on service delivery. New areas, looking at other opportunities – sure we look at them, but those would all then be put to Cabinet. Currently our focus is primarily our existing parks and reserves, the service delivery and making sure they are providing opportunities for Territorians and tourism businesses, while at the same time protecting the intrinsic cultural and natural values.

Mr WOOD: I am looking at it from the angle that it is not a council's role to be a protector of wildlife. They do not have a conservation role, but they do work in conserving areas and protecting them from development and maintaining habitat, especially with wildlife corridors which are a requirement of the *Planning Act*, including natural features in areas such as the Litchfield municipality. I was coming from the aspect of working together with Parks and Wildlife so we maintain these areas in a joint management program. I saw the answers before, many years ago. No money, that was the bottom line, but it did not help the council.

I have other questions, but I will wait until we get to the next area.

Mr McCARTHY: Minister, has there ever been a Johnstone River croc picked up in a trap in the Katherine River, and what would happen if that was the case?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you member for Barkly, I will get my CE to answer that.

Mr WOOD: We had trivia night at the Howard Springs pub tonight; that would be a good question if I get the answer.

Mr McCARTHY: You will get the answer in a minute.

Mr BRIDGES: To be honest, I cannot tell you, but I expect it is likely and, if so, it is probably released again.

Mr McCARTHY: In crocodile traps in remote areas, like Bynoe Harbour, is there an electronic alarm on the trap to let the rangers know there is something in there?

Mr BRIDGES: No, they ring 000.

Mr McCARTHY: The croc or the ranger?

Mr WOOD: The croc.

Mr BRIDGES: No, generally where there are traps our people are servicing they are checked at least weekly. In remote areas, if our staff are not there they tee up with someone to check it often. If it is a remote area they will stay out there until such time as, if it is a problem croc, it is caught.

Mr HIGGINS: We have had a lot of discussion about culling crocodiles and safari hunting, and a lot of it revolves around safety. One of the problems we have at the Daly - when I went back there a few weeks ago, I had an idiot from Queensland fishing on our boat ramp with three kids swimming in the river, and we have signs everywhere. What do Parks and Wildlife do to stop idiots and protect people? What sort of strategy do you have?

Mrs PRICE: Thanks member for Daly, I will get my CE to give you an answer on that if he has one.

Mr BRIDGES: CROCWIS is our program to try to ensure all Territorians understand the risks and how to live safely with crocodiles.

Mr WOOD: These were Queenslanders. You might need a different language.

Mr BRIDGES: The program is being reviewed. We have looked at all the data of the demographic of those at risk is, what sort of activities are most at risk, and we target our messages to those groups. It has been a successful program. I think it was last year that the CD was released, but the song competition was in the previous financial year. Off the top of my head, about 12 schools submitted songs and the winners were announced at the Darwin Show. It was subsequently made into a CD and some of the radio stations picked up some of them. Apart from the end product, the kids are getting involved in that gives them that strong message, and they have to think about how to tell that message. We put a lot of effort into the CROCWISE

program, and we are always looking for new ways to do that, such as a couple of new television ads for next year.

Mr HIGGINS: A lot of that addresses our locals, but what about tourists? There is a bit of contention around the tourism commission, with talk of the dangers of crocodiles which might scare tourists away. However, I can assure you that if someone is taken by a crocodile – and the evidence is on the front page of the *NT News*, crocodiles boost its sales – tourism numbers increase. Does CROCWISE address the tourism side of it or is it just meant for locals?

Mrs PRICE: That is a good question, member for Daly, and I am sure we can come up with a CD which specifically targets tourists, wherever they might be, and we will look into that.

Mr HIGGINS: Thank you.

Mr BARRETT: There have been some asbestos issues in dealing with infrastructure which comes under Parks and Wildlife; could you outline if there is anything within the budget this year to deal with asbestos?

Mrs PRICE: The Parks and Wildlife Commission has prioritised ongoing programs for the removal of asbestos from parks and reserves. The management of asbestos in a workplace is regulated under the *Work Health and Safety National Uniform Legislation Act 2011*.

Under that act, workplaces are required to identify, as far as is reasonably practicable, all material containing asbestos, which is to be reported in an asbestos register.

A risk assessment of identified asbestos is conducted by competent persons, as defined by legislation. The risk rating guides decisions made on controlled measures to minimise risk to the health of staff, contractors and the public.

The commission engaged licenced asbestos assessors to survey and identify asbestos within parks, reserves and office workplaces, and asbestos registers are being developed for each.

ACM has been found in the buildings and/or grounds of 31 of the commission's workplaces, including the George Brown Botanic Gardens, Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Charles Darwin National Park, Howard Springs Nature Park, Channel Island, Elsey National Park, Gregory National Park, Hatches Creek and Serpentine Chalet.

Asbestos management involves either removal and disposal, or onsite management, and funding for removal and disposal is prioritised based on the risk to health and safety.

A budget of \$450 000 was allocated for asbestos-related works under the 2013-14 repairs and maintenance program.

Expenditure has included asbestos-related works for George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, the Territory Wildlife Park, Barrow Creek Telegraph Station, Tennant Creek Telegraph Station, Elsey National Park, Nitmiluk National Park, Bullita Ranger Station, Trephina Gorge Nature Park, Finke Gorge National Park and the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. Similar funding is allocated for 2014-15, and the commission will continue to make the removal of asbestos a priority to improve safety for staff and the visiting public.

Agency-Related Whole-of-Government Questions on Budget and Fiscal Strategies?

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to consider the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2014-15 as they relate to the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.

Are there any agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies?

Ms WALKER: Thank you, Madam Chair, yes, I have a couple. Minister, there has been a sizable cut in funding for the Parks and Wildlife Commission since the 2012-13 budget. Total funding is reduced from \$58.6m to \$49.6m. Budget Paper No 2 this year refers to agency savings of \$712 000 within your agency. Where have those savings been made?

Mrs PRICE: I will let Joanna Frankenfeld talk about the budget.

Ms FRANKENFELD: Yes, the budget decrease between the two years is \$790 000. This year has parameters for employment expenses of \$337 000, which is an increase. Then we have the goods and services decrease, which is a whole-of-government saving in NTG air travel, which is \$7000, and whole-of-government saving in multiuse devices which is \$5000. We have a cut, like all the other agencies, that equates to \$700 000 and, at this time, we have not identified how that saving will be managed.

We have a \$6000 drop in Commonwealth external grant funding. We have parameters again on goods and services of \$158 000. We have a decrease in the repairs and maintenance budget of \$587 000, and parameters again in grants of \$20 000, which adds up to the decrease of \$790 000.

Ms WALKER: You mentioned air travel in the reduction to goods and services?

Ms FRANKENFELD: Yes.

Ms WALKER: This might be a question more for the minister or Mr Bridges. Given the fairly diverse geographical spread of parks, what will the impact be if people cannot travel?

Ms FRANKENFELD: This is not about people not being able to travel. This is about the government having arranged a contract that is more efficient and will guarantee savings on travel. We are expecting actual costs to decrease in line with the budget decrease.

Ms WALKER: All right, so no one's travel is reduced ...

Ms FRANKENFELD: No one's travel is reduced.

Ms WALKER: ... it is about working under a tender arrangement?

Ms FRANKENFELD: It is a whole-of-government contract. It will still be in an Internet arrangement but they have arranged guarantees for a certain percentage off the flights.

Ms WALKER: Okay, thanks for that. Minister, my next question was around total staff numbers. I had asked you as a written question on notice about park rangers, and thank you for supplying that answer. Are you able to advise the total number – you may need to take this on notice – of staff employed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission, and could you provide those numbers by breakdown of designation? I will also be adding to that the number of apprentices and trainees, and the current number of Indigenous employees.

Mrs PRICE: I might get Joanna to go through the list of how many FTEs there are and how many Indigenous rangers are employed.

Ms FRANKENFELD: At pay 20, which is March 2014, the full-time equivalent number of staff was 184.3. Do you want the classifications of those staff?

Ms WALKER: Yes, if that is possible.

Ms FRANKENFELD: That is broken down into executive, three FTEs; administrative – 46.9 FTEs; physical – 6.6 FTEs, professional – 35.7 FTEs; technical – 167.2 FTEs; and trainees – 4.5 FTEs. Of that number, 17.9% are Indigenous employees.

Ms WALKER: Excellent, thank you. Are you able to table that document? I cannot scribble as fast as you can talk.

Ms FRANKENFELD: Sorry, I am just looking through for the answer because it was a whole-of-government question and we have already prepared this answer.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nhulunbuy, we can table this for you.

Ms WALKER: Thank you so much for that. I am sorry to have sent you into a flurry there. I am grateful for your preparedness to table it.

Minister, are you able to provide a breakdown of which organisations received wildlife grants to 31 March 2014? Are you able to break it down by region and provide details of what projects these grants are going to?

Mrs PRICE: The details of grants paid from 1 July 2013 to 31 March 2014 are: Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, \$160 000; Greening Australia NT, \$100 000; Wildcare Alice Springs, \$15 000; Wildcare Inc, \$25 000; Central Land Council \$185 000; Northern Land Council, \$120 000; and Darwin Wildlife Sanctuary \$2000. That is a total of \$607 000.

Mr WOOD: Can you tell us what last year's was. I have not had time to do the maths?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CE to answer that for you.

Mr BRIDGES: The grant to Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, as the minister said, is \$160 000 to 31 March, but that is a \$200 000 full-year grant and is the same as it was for the last financial year.

The grant to Greening Australia is to assist with the provision of the Land for Wildlife Program in the Top End. That is the full-year cost, and it is the same as last year.

The grants to Wildcare Alice Springs and Wildcare Incorporated, which is Darwin, are the same as they were last year. The two grants to the Central Land Council and the Northern Land Council are not wildlife specific; they are for the provision of joint-management officers.

The Darwin Wildlife Sanctuary grant of \$2000 was a one-off grant to help it develop a business plan for a concept it was developing for a voluntary hospital/rehabilitation centre for wildlife in the Top End.

Mr WOOD: FrogWatch has gone, James Cook University has gone, the Environment Centre NT has gone and Ark Aid volunteers have gone; is that correct?

Mr BRIDGES: I think only one of those was a Parks and Wildlife grant. There was nothing for FrogWatch last financial year.

Mr WOOD: There was \$181 818.

Ms WALKER: Page 29 of the annual report.

Mr BRIDGES: For 2012-13, sorry.

Mr WOOD: That is last year, is it not?

Mr BRIDGES: Yes, that program finished at the end of March last year. What was the next one?

Mr WOOD: James Cook University – the Environment Centre NT is the one I am interested in.

Mr BRIDGES: I cannot remember that one. The Ark Aid volunteers do a lot of marine turtle rehabilitation and that grant was for a lift. The other ones we might have to take on notice. I do not recall.

Katherine Wildlife Rescue Service is going and still funded. I believe that is the same. The payment for Land for Wildlife in Alice Springs is in process now for this year, which was the same as last year, \$50 000, but the payment has fallen after 31 March. We can go back look at the full year figures for last year and the full year figures for this year.

Mr WOOD: That is all right, I can work those out.

Ms WALKER: Thank you for those details. Minister, since you cut the funding to FrogWatch, what funds - if any - have been appropriated to stop the increased numbers of cane toads in the Top End? Are there any programs operating which are funded by the Northern Territory government and working to combat the spread of cane toads, which pose a massive threat to native species?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CE, Andrew Bridges, to answer that question for you.

Mr BRIDGES: We do not have any programs specifically funding the removal or control of cane toads. We have a program at Territory Wildlife Park. It is more about how it has been working with the university to look at reducing the impact of cane toads on wildlife. This program is looking at teaching quolls to stay away from cane toads; it is proving successful. It looks like it is a learned behaviour to their progeny. The idea is the quolls are released back into the wild with the knowledge not to eat cane toads.

Some recent research - I forget who it was carried out by - at Fogg Dam has been done to assess the spread of cane toads as they came through the Territory. Initially there were big, long- legged toads which are the explorers - it is an interesting article to read - and that was the first wave to come through. Then you get the smaller, shorter-limbed ones. Following that, given that cane toads have now moved through to Western Australia, there seems to be an ecosystem resilience, and some of the native species are starting to show increases in their numbers again. They are not yet back to where they were prior to cane toads, but there is a resilience amongst many species that are starting to pick up again.

Mr HIGGINS: You probably do not have the answer to this either, but is there any species in Australia that has been made extinct by the cane toad? Have you any feedback where quolls are reappearing? There are two places that I know of in the Northern Territory where they have been sighted since cane toads arrived.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Daly. I will ask my CEO to answer that question.

Mr BRIDGES: I am probably not the best person to ask what species are extinct due to cane toads. Generally the scientific work is done within the biodiversity unit of the Department of Land Resource Management. I have not heard of anything. Being from Central Australia, I am well aware that species you may not find for quite a number of years can turn up again. The central rock rat was an example of that. It was found number of years ago in the West MacDonnell National Park on the Larapinta Trail. Prior to that, I think it was 1962 when it was last sighted in a stock camp at Haasts Bluff, on Aboriginal land. As an agency, in those days we spent a lot of time and effort with trap nights, trying to catch a central rock rat with no success. Ten for some reason the suite of climatic variables gelled, and they almost – I do not like say they reached plague proportions, but there was a rapid increase in the population. We were getting them right down to the workshop area at Ormiston Gorge within the West MacDonnell National Park.

The second part of the question was about quolls. I am not aware specifically of quolls; I hear reports of some of the goannas and monitors returning where they thought they might not. It does not surprise me, as a bit is now written about species resilience. Apart from what we do on parks, most of the research outside of our department is done through Land Resource Management or the universities.

Mr HIGGINS: Thanks.

Ms WALKER: Minister, I wanted to ask you about your marketing budget for the Parks and Wildlife Commission for 2013-14, through to 31 March. Are you able to break this down as to where that spend has gone, and by advertising medium?

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nhulunbuy. The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory spent \$83 925 on advertising and communications from 1 July 2013 to 31 March 2014. Spending on newspaper advertising in 2013-14 was \$24 318, online expenditure was \$2565, and radio was \$636. Others – \$457 magazines \$179, and television advertising expenditure was \$4447. In total, that is \$32 602 for advertising.

For marketing displays in 2013-14, nothing was spent. Events and exhibitions spending was \$14 801, marketing materials expenditure was \$9680; printed material was \$415; sponsorship was \$25 911; and media monitoring was \$514. The total expenditure for marketing was \$51 322; advertising and marketing expenditure together adds up to \$83 925.

Ms WALKER: Thank you, minister. It would be really helpful if you were able to table that document if that is possible, thank you. The figure of \$25 000 you mentioned for sponsorship – where has that sponsorship gone?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nhulunbuy, I will take that on notice.

Ms WALKER: Okay, thank you.

Question on Notice No 10.6

Madam CHAIR: Member for Nhulunbuy, please restate the question for the record.

Ms WALKER: Minister, can you please advise of the sponsorship budget of \$25 000 was allocated and for what purpose?

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question.

Mrs PRICE: Yes.

Madam CHAIR: That question is No 10.6.

Ms WALKER: Further to that, minister, in relation to the advertising spend, can you advise what has been the effect of this spend in marketing? What has it delivered? Has it increased visitor numbers?

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nhulunbuy, I will get my CE to answer that question for you.

Ms WALKER: Thank you.

Mr BRIDGES: It is a bit hard to give a specific number of where it might have increased visitor numbers. But ...

Ms WALKER: It is a hypothetical.

Mr BRIDGES: ... that marketing goes to things like CROCWISE. It is hard to measure how many people's behaviour we might have influenced. CROCWISE is one of the programs we market and advertise. Events and exhibitions are things like our show presence in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin shows. Again, what that might translate into is a bit hard to measure.

Much of the general newspaper advertising is for general openings and closures as things come along through the course of the year, particularly with the Wet Season in the Top End. That is the bulk of where our advertising and marketing goes.

Ms WALKER: Thank you very much for that, Mr Bridges. Minister, I understand the importance of marketing and advertising costs, but can you advise whether that money originally used for conservation and wildlife has been reappropriated to marketing and public relations activities?

Mrs PRICE: Can you repeat that question?

Ms WALKER: Has money originally dedicated for conservation and wildlife been reappropriated to marketing and public relations?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CE to answer that question for you.

Mr BRIDGES: I am not sure whether I quite understand the question. There was not any reappropriation in the financial year.

Ms WALKER: I was just checking whether funds dedicated for the work of conservation and wildlife on the ground shifted to meet your advertising budgets because you faced budget cuts?

Mr BRIDGES: No, \$84 000 out of our budget is a very small spend. The majority of our funds go to our frontline service delivery. Some of these programs, particularly getting the message out for CROCWISE – we could not do it without using some of the other mediums. Our staff cannot get out and about to do it face-to-face, so marketing and our presence at shows and events is a pretty small spend. It has not been taken from anywhere; it is just part of general business.

Ms WALKER: Madam Chair, I do not have any other questions, but I will check with the minister where I might ask a question about key stakeholders associated with parks, specifically AFANT, in the context of hunting and recreational fishers having access to parks. In which output would I ask that, minister?

Mr BRIDGES: Output 7.1.

Ms WALKER: Thank you. Madam Chair, I have no further questions in that area.

Mr WOOD: I have a few, thank you. Minister, do you have the visitor numbers for parks over the last three or five years, depending on how far you go back? That is for all parks, not just the total.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I believe they are available on ...

Mr WOOD: I am sure you have more detailed information than I have seen on the website because you take in some of the small parks. Are you saying they are all, for the last three or five years, on the webpage?

Mrs PRICE: As far as my CE knows.

Mr WOOD: I will have a quick flick before 3.30 pm. I have asked it every year and usually someone tables it.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will get my CE to see if we can give you the answer.

Mr WOOD: I am interested because some years ago the numbers in a lot of parks were going down. I am interested to see if there has been a move to increase the numbers in parks.

Mr McCARTHY: Your figures go back 12 years.

Mr WOOD: Yes, and not all parks were doing that well. Some were doing well.

Minister, you have been contacted by the boss of Leaders Creek, Brian, about the sea eagle with the arrow in it which is still nesting at Leaders Creek. He is asking what Parks is doing to capture that eagle. It has lost the head of the arrow but it still flying and nesting with the remains of the arrow in it. He has tried to get it used to him being around there – he knows where it is – but he cannot capture it.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nelson. I will get my CE to answer that question for you.

Mr BRIDGES: I have not had an update on that recently. It was certainly brought to my attention. Our people have been out; they have seen it but it is difficult to catch. They felt it was not impeding its flight too greatly and it is nesting ...

Mr WOOD: Will it cause an infection or something like that?

Mr BRIDGES: ... how it survives. The answer really is that people should not do that.

Mr WOOD: It is dreadful that someone – it is one of the most beautiful birds you will ever see.

Mr BRIDGES: Absolutely, but as for its survival it is difficult to tell.

Mr WOOD: Are they out there to monitor it or ...

Mr BRIDGES: If it gets an infection that will most likely to slow it down and it will be catchable and can receive veterinary treatment. I would have to check with staff, but that was the last I heard. That was a couple of weeks ago.

Mr WOOD: Minister, I love the parks in the Northern Territory. I get out of this place and I love to go to a park somewhere. I went to Limmen Park last year. They are beautiful parks, especially around Tomato Island and the new conservation area. Two parks were taken out of joint management plans by your predecessor: Mary River and Litchfield? There were two parks where the plans were withdrawn for re-advertising in the community as to whether people wanted to have more input into those management plans. Can you give us an update on where we are those with those parks?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CE to answer that for you.

Mr BRIDGES: I do not remember the exact timing. I know both are advanced and I expect within the next few months they will go to the minister, seeking approval to go back out for public comment. The Litchfield plan was more about how to describe how we will treat antisocial behaviour. We have already started trying to do that, but it was making sure that plan was clear on antisocial behaviour and tourism in general. The Mary River one is the same.

Mr WOOD: I thought Mary River had something to do with the four-wheel drive people.

Mr BRIDGES: The plan was to focus on ensuring it included the whole community. It includes things like four-wheel drive and other access. Both have advanced and will be ...

Mr WOOD: Out for public comment soon?

Mr BRIDGES: I cannot remember the dates. August or September sits in my mind. I cannot say for certain, but they are not far away.

Mr WOOD: Last year's annual report spoke of \$7.9m for a community service obligation payment to Territory Wildlife Park. Is that money the government gives you? What is that money about?

Mr BRIDGES: Yes, it comes through the commission to pay the community service obligations to the two wildlife parks.

Mr WOOD: That is all right. When I saw it in the grants I was wondering what it was for. Cost of lease payments, \$1.53m for parks – do you have a figure for this year?

Ms FRANKENFELD: Yes, this year it will be \$1.7m. I have the exact number if you want it.

Mr WOOD: Does it go up by CPI?

Ms FRANKENFELD: It increases each year, yes.

Mr WOOD: In relation to the size of parks, I saw an increase in the, 'area of land in control and management of the commission in square kilometres. In 2013-14 it was 46 300 km², you are estimating in this budget 47 200 km², which is an increase of 900 000 km². Where has the extra land come from?

Mrs PRICE: I will get my CE to answer that question for you.

Mr BRIDGES: It was an estimate based on some land areas we have not yet put to government.

Mr WOOD: A new park or an extension of a park?

Mr BRIDGES: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Are we allowed to know which park?

Mr BRIDGES: I would prefer to put it to Cabinet first.

Mr WOOD: You have brought out a beautiful new plan for visitors and tourists who come to the Territory, but there are a few parks that are not on it. They are mentioned but not described. Tree Point is on it, but there is no description. They are little parks. Mount Nancarrow does not even get a mention. It is a conservation reserve.

Have you only picked the best ones, or should you have covered all of the parks? I looked at that document and there are some parks that are written on the map, but there is no description of them. Mount Nancarrow, which is a conservation reserve, does not get a mention at all. I am wondering why some get in with plenty of explanation, some get in with no explanation and some do not get in at all.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nelson, I will get my CE to answer that for you. I know of small places in the Alice Springs region and I do not think I have seen them mentioned.

Mr WOOD: They are sometimes the best places.

Mrs PRICE: It is a big country.

Mr WOOD: I realise that, but if you want to promote what is great about our parks, some of those little parks are really nice. You have this guide but it is not – I can get the explanation from the website, but I will not find them in the guide.

Mrs PRICE: I will ask the CEO to give you that answer, member for Nelson.

Mr BRIDGES: We are going through the process of reprinting information on now and there are some updates. I do not know if it includes Mount Nancar. Our goal would be for all our areas, providing they are ready and safe for people, to be listed. There might be a few in there at the moment, and we do have some areas of land which people do not visit.

Mr WOOD: Are they secret?

Mr BRIDGES: There are some where there is no legal access, and things like that.

Mr WOOD: That one is only by the river really.

Mr BRIDGES: There is a small sliver of the Powell Creek Telegraph Line but there is no legal access to it from surrounding lands, so some of those we leave out.

Mr WOOD: I know how to get there.

Mr BRIDGES: I have not been to Mount Nancar, so I will have to do that now.

Mr WOOD: Yes.

Mrs PRICE: We will all have to go

Answer to No 10.5

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, to go back to the question asked by the member for Nhulunbuy – question 10.5 about ranger numbers and how many we have. The answer is 117 rangers, and in addition there is one on unpaid leave.

Ms WALKER: Thanks, minister.

Madam CHAIR: Are there any further questions on agency?

Mr WOOD: I will ask one about Howard Springs Nature Park though, as it is important. Minister, in this report there is no mention of the Howard Springs community committee, which did exist. I am wondering if it has been scrapped, because the communities in here but there no Howard Springs.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, we will have to take that question on notice.

Question on Notice No 10.7

Madam CHAIR: Can you restate the question?

Mr WOOD: Minister, could you please say whether the Howard Springs Community Advisory Committee is still in existence, and if it is not, why not?

Madam CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question?

Mrs PRICE: I do.

Madam CHAIR: That question is No 10.7.

Mr WOOD: I will give you one question for the sake of it. The Knuckey Lagoon conservation reserve is a park which is not looked after that much. I am not saying it does not get looked after, but it is not given as much priority as others. I am wondering if the minister might, in her future plans, think of putting a boardwalk around and through that lagoon, because it is one of our jewels, although many people do not even know it exists; perhaps that might help visitor numbers to that area.

Mrs PRICE: Member for Nelson, I will ask my CEO to answer that question for you.

Mr BRIDGES: We always have a dilemma in selecting projects for our minor works programs. I suppose we are oversubscribed with ideas. I have not heard of a boardwalk for Knuckey Lagoon before.

Mr WOOD: There is a group of residents who care about the area. They are asking whether something like that could improve it. It does not have much money spent on it, just a bit of weed and fire control. It must be one of the few places in the world where you have pelicans, magpie geese and all sorts of birds five minutes from the Karama Shopping Centre. When you go there, you would think you were in the middle of Kakadu, except for the traffic going past and the aeroplanes going over the top. It is a beautiful area. I just put that as a suggestion that came from the people in that area.

I have one other question about the rock pool and the shade at the Howard Springs Nature Park. I thank the department. I know some of this came from the previous minister as well, because it took a long time to get some of these improvements. Were they built to budget? The shade is terrific, it make a lot of difference to people.

Mrs PRICE: Thank you, member for Nelson. I was there the other day and opened the shaded area.

Mr WOOD: Did you ask the local member if he could pop along so you could have a photo opportunity?

Mrs PRICE: I apologise, but it was ...

Mr WOOD: It is in my newsletter too.

Mrs PRICE: It was a great day to be out there because this young girl – I think she was 11 years old – had written and insisted that covers be put over the pool area. It worked out and it is a great place for families to spend an afternoon or weekend, having barbecues. Kids will not be sunburnt and you have shade during winter where you can get out of the pool, warm yourself and jump back in.

I should not tell you this, because I should have invited you to come and release these barramundi into the Howard Springs – but it is a great little place and I will make sure in future when there is anything that happens – even if they have a barbecue – they will invite you to come along and join me.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, minister. I am sad, I did not realise it was going to have an official opening. I do publicise it as much as I can.

Mrs PRICE: I can make sure we send you photos.

Mr WOOD: Okay, thank you. It has one of the best playgrounds, I reckon, that has ever been built. It is one you can get hurt on, but still enjoy. In other words, there is a bit of adventure in it. It is a terrific playground. If anyone is looking at something similar that is the place to go.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of agency-related whole-of-government questions on budget and fiscal strategies.

OUTPUT GROUP 7.0 – PARKS AND WILDLIFE **Output 7.1 – Parks Wildlife and Visitor Services**

Madam CHAIR: The committee will now proceed to Output Group 7.0, Parks and Wildlife, Output 7.1, Parks Wildlife and Visitor Services. Are there any questions?

Ms WALKER: Thanks, Madam Chair. I have probably been through most of my questions, but I will ask one to do with visitors to park, particularly our recreational fishermen and women. I note in your statement in the House in March you said:

I am working with AFANT to develop a sustainable and sensitive way to open more areas for recreational fishing in our parks and reserves.

Are you working personally with AFANT in meetings you have held, and in those meetings, have they raised with you the issue of strategic Indigenous reserves?

Mrs PRICE: To my knowledge I have had one meeting with AFANT, and we discussed the possibility of opening up other land to make sure people have access to fishing. Water allocations were not raised in the

conversation. I am building up a working relationship with AFANT to make sure we understand clearly what AFANT's role is and what Parks and Wildlife's role is. That is where the conversation is right now.

Ms WALKER: Thank you, minister.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you everyone.

Mrs PRICE: Madam Chair, I want to get back to the eagle. I have just been advised of what has happened recently with the eagle in regard to member for Nelson's question. As the arrow is not impeding the eagle currently and does not look infected we are waiting for the arrow to work its way out like a big splinter. That is what I have been told. Wildlife staff are still monitoring it but the eagle is not responding to lures to capture it. It is continuing to evade being caught. It has a mate which is assisting to feed it. The Leaders Creek boat ramp keeper is keeping us informed, but he is also now causing an issue by asking the general public for donations and to help catch the eagle. That is a situation we might need to keep an eye on.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

Mr WOOD: He is a concerned citizen ...

Mrs PRICE: I understand.

Mr WOOD: ... and I thank him for his hard work.

Madam CHAIR: That concludes consideration of the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. On behalf of the committee I thank the staff who attended with the minister today. That also concludes, due to no time being left, Territory Wildlife Parks, and Statehood. This concludes the Estimates Committee public hearings.

All answers to questions taken on notice must be given to the Clerk Assistant of committees by 10 July. Late answers cannot be accepted.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Estimates Committee for the overall manner in which these public hearings have been conducted. I would also like to place on the record a vote of appreciation from the committee to all other members who participated in the public hearings process.

Thank you also to the Legislative Assembly staff who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the whole process ran smoothly over the five days. With the finalisation of the scrutiny of ministerial portfolios, I thank both the ministers appearing before the committee and the officials who attended the hearings.

I also take this opportunity to place on the public record my appreciation for the assistance provided to ministers by agency officers.

I now formally close the public hearings of the Estimates Committee 2014. Thank you.

The Estimates Committee concluded.