

**Wednesday 8 June 2016 - Estimates Committee B (Petrusma)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

**Wednesday 8 June 2016**

**MEMBERS**

Mrs Armitage  
Mr Dean  
Mr Finch  
Ms Rattray (Chair)  
Mr Valentine  
Mr Willie

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**Hon Jacque Petrusma**, Minister for Human Services, Minister for Women

**Ministerial Office**

**Pene Snashall**, Adviser (Children)  
**Suzie Jacobson**, Chief of Staff  
**Simon Duffy**, Housing Adviser  
**Jocelyn King**, Disability Adviser  
**Laura Eaton**, Women's Adviser

**Department of Premier and Cabinet**

**Ann Herbert**, Assistant Director Policy Division  
**David Strong**, Acting Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services  
**Kate Kent**, Executive Director, Communities, Sport and Recreation  
**Wendy Spencer**, Director, Policy and Development, Communities, Sport and Recreation  
**Brook Teale**, Senior Policy Analyst, Communities, Sport and Recreation

**Department of Health and Human Services**

**Michael Pervan**, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services  
**David Nicholson**, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Policy and Regulation Services  
**Michael Reynolds**, Chief Financial Officer

**Erin Wise**, Manager, Budget Development and Advice, Budget and Finance  
**Lisa Howes**, Manager, Office of the Secretary (supporting role)  
**Peter White**, Chief Executive, Housing and Disability Reform  
**Ingrid Ganley**, Director, Disability and Community Services  
**Ross Smith**, Acting Deputy Secretary, Children and Youth Services  
**Mathew Healey**, Director, Strategic Projects  
**Jeremy Harbottle**, Manager, Children and Youth Services  
**Karen Jabbour**, Director, Services to Young People

**The committee met at 2.01 p.m.**

### **DIVISION 3**

(Department of Health and Human Services)

#### **Minister for Human Services**

**CHAIR** - Minister, we welcome you and your team to budget Estimates in your capacity as Minister for Human Services, and we will get to your role as Minister for Women a bit later.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Hodgman Liberal Government has a strong agenda to assist vulnerable people and to give every Tasmanian the chance to participate in and contribute to community life in Tasmania. The 2016-2017 Budget is key to delivering on that agenda. The initiatives in our Budget were borne from a strong desire to assist Tasmania's most vulnerable and to reform existing systems, to ensure long term sustainable benefits. The Budget also continues our strong emphasis on providing direct assistance to community organisations, reforming our child protection system, increasing access to affordable housing and improving the lives of people with disability.

The Government recognises more needs to be done to assist Tasmanians who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. That is why the Tasmanian Government is providing an additional \$60 million over three years in this year's Budget to support Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025 and our commitments under the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2015-2019. The \$60 million is also on top of existing capital funds of \$12.7 million in 2016-2017. The \$60 million investment is in addition to the \$13.5 million we were provided during 2015-16 when the strategy was first announced, on top of the \$9.3 million in existing funding for 2015-2016. A total investment of \$178.6 million in 2016-2017 will improve housing affordability and help those most vulnerable to housing stress and homelessness. In 2016-2017, 624 new houses are expected to be delivered. Under the Affordable Housing Action Plan, over 1600 households will be provided with housing and homelessness assistance during the first four years which includes new supply of over 900 new affordable homes.

A strong focus of the Budget in my portfolio is ensuring the safety and well being of vulnerable children, young people and their families. The reform of Tasmania's child protection system provides the framework to fundamentally improve the lives of these vulnerable children, young people and their families. This Government as a whole believes a different approach to child protection is imperative and in order to better protect children, we

must better support families. Recently the Strong Families, Safe Kids Report into the redesign of Tasmania's child protection system was released with 29 recommendations.

This year's state Budget commits nearly an additional \$20.6 million in cross-agency investment to address the specific recommendations of the final report over the next four years, so as to deliver a child safety and well being system to build strong families and to keep children safe.

This additional investment will also better support our child protection workers. Many of the services helping to make the biggest difference in the lives of families and individuals right across the State are provided by community sector organisations. The Government respects and recognises the enormity of the work that they do, which is why in this year's Budget the State Government is continuing to provide funding of over \$260 million in 2016-2017 to 230 community sector organisations to help them to do their vital work.

To help with rising costs this amount includes indexation applied at the rate of 2.25 per cent as well as \$21.2 million in equal remuneration order funding. The State Government also committed an additional \$9 million on top of indexation during its first term to help community sector organisations.

In 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 we distributed \$2 million a year extra and a further \$2.5 million will be distributed in 2016-2017 and again in 2017-2018. The Tasmanian Government is also committed to improve the lives of people with disability. The transition to full National Disability Insurance Scheme will start on 1 July 2016, now less than a month away, which is expected to benefit around 10 600 people by July 2019.

The Tasmanian Government fully supports the NDIS. In the 2016-2017 state Budget, \$572 million is committed over the next four years. Most importantly, over the next three years as we transition to the full scheme, clients of Tasmania's specialist disability system will continue to get their existing supports until they move to the NDIS. We also, in 2014-2015, committed an additional \$2 million or \$500 000 a year over four years to deliver vital support to people living with disability who are outside the NDIS. The Government also continues to support the final role that our neighbourhood houses play in the Tasmanian community. In this Budget there is an additional \$990 000 over two years to assist neighbourhood houses around the State to continue their important work in our most disadvantaged areas.

This follows on from the additional \$1.7 million in funding provided over the last two years and is on top of base funding, indexation and the equal remuneration order, making a total of around \$5.75 million. Also, \$1.66 million has been allocated for a new facility to replace the existing northern suburbs community centre at Rocherlea.

To conclude, the 2016-2017 Tasmanian state Budget furthers the Hodgman Liberal Government's commitment to creating a fair, safe and strong Tasmanian community to protect and help our most vulnerable, to better support families and to enable more Tasmanians to fully participate and contribute to community life in our State.

#### **Outgroup Group 4**

#### **Human Services System Management**

#### **4.1 Human Services System Management -**

**CHAIR** - From the footnote there is a decrease in this output group for 2016-2017 in regard to the redistribution of joined up human services initiative across output groups. Would you like to give us some explanation of what that means?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Joined up services is an initiative that we took to the state election. In Human Services across DHHS we have around 230 organisations delivering around 500 services. A lot of times in government we say we need to join up different departments in government or the silos. The problem is that they are not joined up, so this is about redistributing the amount of money spent on the Joined Up project, which is to make sure those different services get joined up across the different out groups it affects. So, to join up services in CYS that is then distributed to the children's part. If it is to human services et cetera; that is what that means. It is a small decrease but \$1.8 million for Joined Up was committed last year has been redistributed against the output group.

**CHAIR** - So the progress of the join up?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Under Joined Up, there are five different initiatives that are being done at the moment. It is to significantly improve the outcomes for vulnerable Tasmanians so as to achieve real change. We have a project team. It is four stages approach and first stage was scoping and consultation which was done in the first year. It was then to develop options and now we in the trial, in evaluation phase.

The five different initiatives, the place-based initiative is number 1 in the Huon Valley. In the Huon Valley there are about 120 different services. It might like in your own location where people ring you up and say, there are no services for youth here or there are no services for people with disability. We have done a big mapping exercise and found about 120 different services are going to Huonville but nobody knew about them and they were not speaking to each other.

We brought all those providers together to find out who the other providers were and invited the council along. We are working with Primary Health Tasmania on the initiative so we can map the services and tell people what services are available.

The second initiative is a person based initiative working with a minimum of 25 individuals and families who have complex challenges. They might be involved with family violence, child protection, substance abuse, mental health. They might have housing issues as well. Clients may be using eight or more of our different services. It is about giving them one main lead support coordinator they can use to coordinate all the services. I had some families, when I was in opposition, who had complex problems who had 20 different case workers in their life. It was mum and dad, six kids, different issues with child protection, youth justice, housing, disability and they could have 22 different care plans, 22 different ways of doing it. This is all about providing them with a lead support, coordination service which can help bring it all together.

It is more like a GP model, where a GP does most of your basic care but they need specialist services they can refer you out for more services.

**CHAIR** - Is the Huon model going to be rolled out right around the state?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We are doing a pilot there, person based. That will be 25 individuals and families in different areas. Whilst they are doing a service improvement initiative, a system based initiative and a privacy initiative because we needed to look at the [inaudible] to see how that may interfere with agencies and different organisations interacting with each other. We can provide you -

**CHAIR** - I have a number.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - One of those was Joined Up or otherwise we can provide you with -

**CHAIR** - I expect everything we need is in this information, but it is fantastic to have it on the record as well.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is it.

**CHAIR** - It is on the bottom, sorry. I told you it would be here. There is a fact sheet in relation to that, members.

Minister, can I take you to page 73, table 4.5 and there is some performance information there. It is noted that the department has indicated it is unable to reach the benchmark, achieved in 2013-14 for undertaking quality and safety reviews for organisations and it has reduced its target accordingly. Why has this happened and what are the implications of undertaking fewer reviews?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Over the last year the department has undertaken a major review of the Department of health and Human Services where they have consolidated a lot of units and put them altogether.

Apparently the organisations with the quality and safety review, the organisations themselves actually do have a quality and safety officer.

**CHAIR** - So they have their own reviews in house.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - This is the review of the review.

**CHAIR** - A review of the review.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The reviews are apparently done over a three year period as well.

**CHAIR** - The department is not intending to as many reviews, so hence the target is down. We know people do a lot of work, to put together this information, so if you get a chance to come to the table and tell us all about it. I am sure you will appreciate that.

**Ms GANLEY** - So the quality and safety framework, so we have funding agreements with our community sector organisations. The usual tenure of a funding agreement is three years. This indicator is saying that over that three year period, our quality and safety team which is a department wide team, will undertake a visit and an audit. Subsequent to that,

though, we have funding agreement managers across our program areas, so in disability and community services, because we have the majority of the funding agreements.

We have our community partnership teams and they do annual visits. What the minister was referring to, is organisation have to demonstrate what quality and safety systems they have in place, and that they are meeting our quality and safety framework. Either through accreditation through other standards that exist, or through their own internal mechanisms. The new audit and check that, it is over a three year period in the life of the agreement.

**CHAIR** - So, minister, you are not concerned about undertaking fewer reviews. There is not concern around that? Obviously this is a really specialised area. That is my question.

**Mr NICHOLSON** - The drop off in 2014-15 really just coincided with the departments corporate consolidation and temporary reduction in resourcing. You will see the 2015-16 target returns to a level of 60 per cent, which is what it was in 2013-14 also.

**CHAIR** - Obviously these tables are in our papers for a reason, so I thought that was asking about.

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, can you provide the current number of workers compensation claims in your agencies. How many of those compensation claims have been settled and what was the cost of those settlements since March?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Workforce statistics indicated the organisational health of the department has been broadly maintained during 2015-16. I only have up to the 31 March 2016, 87 workers compensation claims have been received, and projections indicating a decrease in the number of claims compared to prior years.

**Mr WILLIE** - What is the anticipated total cost of outstanding or pending compensation claims?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Those 87 claims; they are across all of health and human services, \$3.193 million.

**Mr WILLIE** - Can you provide the current number of the departmental employees who are on stress-related leave and the total costs related to that leave?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The workers compensation does include stress related to, and again across health and human services and corporate services the total is 21 claims, and it is \$1.929 million.

**Mr DEAN** - Can you break that down to what it was? As I have asked the other departments, the domestic violence situation and leave is embraced by the whole of government.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - You want leave?

**Mr WILLIE** - You cannot break it down into family services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The sick leave is 4.99 per cent rate of sick leave, compared to 5.53 last year.

**Mr DEAN** - It has gone up.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, it has gone down.

**Mr DEAN** - Sorry, did you say the sick leave was five?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The sick leave was 5.53 last year, it is 4.99 per cent this year.

**Mr DEAN** - Are you able to break that down to what the leave was for? Was it domestic violence?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is sick leave. It is just sick leave.

**Mr DEAN** - Sick leave embraces everything, does it?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I think family violence leave comes out of personal leave. It is a recent change, but sick leave has gone down.

**Mr DEAN** - The domestic leave thing is a new one-off family violence leave, or whatever they want to call it. I think the government has a supported 10 days available to that sort of leave in any one year.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is what the Premier is talking about as part of the negotiations going forward on the new wage agreement. At the moment, under their personal leave they can access leave for family violence if they want to. But under what the Premier is proposing it can be an extra 10 days' leave as well.

**Mr DEAN** - Will your department, moving forward, be able to identify members taking leave under the family violence? The reason I ask that is that education are able to do that. We had education on Monday and they were able to provide us with the numbers of people who had accessed leave under that program.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I can give you across government. There have only been 30 applications across government for the family violence leave across all of government in 2015-16. 30 applications right across government.

**Mr DEAN** - We were told yesterday - the member for Elwick is absolutely right - that they could not do that. You have been able to do it. Thank you very much, minister.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - At the moment 30 applications for 2015-16.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I think they were alluding to the fact that some would be in a file as personal leave and would not be able to be indicated as to whether or not it was family violence.

**Mr DEAN** - We have just been told that there are 30 applications.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, that is right, but the question is how many others are there that have not been applications that should be taking personal leave.

**Mr WILLIE** - Before moving along, Chair, I may have missed it but how many of the compensation claims have been settled?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - If we know the dollar value, they are all settled. If we have 87 with the dollar value that means they are all settled claims.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I had a question about the Neighbourhood Houses, the \$25 000 that is going to each of them, is that right?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - \$15 000 extra dollars.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is \$15 000 extra?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I thought you were told in the House that it was \$25 000.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, it is \$15 000 and it is \$30 000 over two years. I do not know what happened in the House but it is \$15 000 extra. There was an election commitment in 2014 and each house received an extra \$25 000 and they used that to put in solar panels and a range of different works. Then to continue that with an extra \$15 000 but this is on top of their base funding, indexation, remuneration order, which equals about \$5.75 billion going to Neighbourhood Houses this financial year alone.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is that tied in anyway to what they can do with that money?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Each Neighbourhood House has an outcomes frame that they have to operate within and they have to say how that \$15 000 is going to help them to achieve the outcomes that have been deemed necessary for their community. For some it may be different programs, buy computers, or they might decide they need to do a literacy program.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you set the outcomes?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They work with the department in what the outcomes are for their particular Neighbourhood House.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The reason for asking is whether preventative health is factored into some of those outcomes because it is a great opportunity to get the message out to the community on some of those preventative health measures.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - You are right and some Neighbourhood Houses do use it for preventative health. They might do Eating with Friends, where they do cooking skills. For example, at Risdon Vale they are supporting students who go to Geilston Bay High School but live in the Risdon Vale area, to come there and do healthy cooking and to run a cafe where they not only learn workplace skills but healthy eating as well. They also use it for different programs for men's mental health but we are also delivering a \$300 000 program through the Neighbourhood Houses specifically for mental health.



**Mr VALENTINE** - That is a component of preventative health?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is a separate component again.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You do not handle Men's Sheds?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you know where that is handled?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Premier - Community, Sport and Recreation.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I missed that opportunity. Thank you.

With respect to the initiative for family violence where they are setting up a new unit to handle family violence - it has an education rep, it has five police officers et cetera. Presumably you have been fully consulted about how that is going to operate? Can you give us an impression from your portfolio as to how that is going to be integrated with what you are doing with the joined up services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We have two departmental employees who run the coordination unit because the initiatives are funded under the Family Violence Action Plan. We have four that are in my services. The first one is the redevelopment of Hobart Women's Shelter at a new location. That will see a big increase in beds from 47 to about 70 beds available at the location where the Hobart Women's Shelter will be located.

There is also \$2.4 million for the Rapid Rehousing initiative, which is a core of 50 houses which are going to be in different locations across the state so that we can use those -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Like as emergency housing?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is an initiative from New South Wales. It gives us flexibility because sometimes the locations of shelters can be well known but we can have a house where, for example, a survivor of family violence is in a different location. We have the ability to provide that different location. Also it may be better for the survivor and his or her children to be staying in the family home. We can use the houses for the perpetrator, to remove the perpetrator as well. It gives us flexibility that way.

We also have an extra \$4 million for counselling services - an extra \$3 million for children's counselling services.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is that coming out of that budget, the allocation for family violence?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That's right. It is coming out of that extra \$26 million and an extra \$1 million for adult family violence services.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What is the impact for you, staffing wise, with respect to that new unit apart from having two dedicated people? Is it likely to impact greatly on the workload or case load of staff?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We were provided with extra staff for that staffing allocation.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is all part of that allocation?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is right.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How many staff?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There are two extra for cleaning services from the Department of Health and Human Services.

With the family violence counselling services, that has gone out to the community sector organisations like SHE and RAIN and other organisations - Centacare and CatholicCare too - to deliver those.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Does that go down to the legal end in being able to access legal advice and things like that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is under the Attorney-General's portfolio. Yes, she did receive extra funding for legal services.

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, can you provide a specific breakdown of the number of consultants and contractors used by your department and if you can, what is the total costs?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Consultancy contracts? For the 2014-15 financial year the department entered into 12 consultancy contracts with a value of \$50 000 or more for a total value of approximately \$797 000. This is across DHHS. For the 2015-16 financial year as at 31 March 2016 the department had entered into 11 consultancy contracts with a value of \$50 000 or more at a total value of approximately \$1.25 million.

**CHAIR** - Can we have some idea of what they go to, what areas? Is there one that is a major consultancy which required that or is that not available?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The redevelopment at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Ambulance Tasmania, Home and Community Care.

**CHAIR** - How many relate to your specific area?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In 2015-16 there was the Devonport land release, Northern Suburbs Community Centre development, Indigo Lodge.

**CHAIR** - These are all projects that are being undertaken through your department?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Five of those were from my portfolio, and the rest were Health. Now the department is all centralised business units.

**Output group 5**  
**Human Services**

## **5.1 Community Services -**

**Mr WILLIE** - I would like to start with something that is very relevant to my electorate. There are a number of community houses that do fantastic work in my electorate. There has been a cut in recurrent spending for houses for the additional \$25 000 they received over the past two years to just \$15 000 for this Budget and the forward Estimates. You created an expectation houses would receive an increase in the current funding from you when you took that policy to the 2014 election. How do you explain the cut you have handed down in government? I know in the submission to the Tasmanian Government Budget from Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania they said a lot of that money was spent on time, employing people and counsellors, and that that extra funding gave them the opportunity to implement programs. I know there is a program at Buchan House at Chigwell, 'Eat Well, Move More, Stress Less'. These sorts of fantastic initiatives are at risk, aren't they?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - With all due respect, it was never a funding cut because this is all additional funding that was on top of their existing base funding indexation and equal remuneration order. When we came into government Neighbourhood Houses had the funding they had received under the previous government. They were rated as a category A house or a category B house. The previous government did not provide them with any extra funding so in our first year of government we provided them with an extra \$25 000 per year. It was a two-year, once-off and now we have given them an extra \$15 000, again as a once-off. There was never any expectation by the houses that that was going to continue being funded in the future. It was for them to do projects they wanted to do that they thought were important at the time. It is a total of \$5.75 million and if the previous government had been in government they would not have had that additional funding in any situation because it was never committed to them by the previous government at all during the 2014 election campaign.

**Mr WILLIE** - I know at the media launch the Premier, Will Hodgman, indicated the houses had to prove they were spending the money well and once the budget was back on track there may be an increase to \$35 000 per annum for each house. That was the sort of expectation outlined by your government.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, I was the only one there when we celebrated Neighbourhood Houses recently and the Premier was not even in the room. I am not sure where that came from.

**Mr WILLIE** - This is in the submission to the Tasmanian Government Budget.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - John Hooper has put out media releases stating they welcome the additional \$15 000. When we did the launch everyone in the room applauded and welcomed it. The number of emails we have received congratulating us and thanking us for funding this initiative has been fantastic. If the previous government was still in government they would not have received the extra \$25 000 a year, let alone the extra \$15 000. The Leader of the Opposition in his budget reply speech did not even mention the Neighbourhood Houses, and neither did the shadow minister. They do not know whether the offer of your extra dollars was even going to be funded because there was no alternative budget released.

**Mr WILLIE** - That is not true; we have done various media on our position. If we could move on, you might be able to confirm for me that the funding allocated to the houses from the additional allocation provided this year will be rolled over if it is not spent in the financial year? If not, will that money be returned to Consolidated Revenue?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Neighbourhood Houses have the \$15 000 per year and I cannot see of any Neighbourhood House that would not use that money wisely. They can roll it over if they want to put it to a bigger project. The \$15 000 I know that all of them know what they are going to be doing with the dollars. I am not quite sure what you are indicating there.

**Mr WILLIE** - If they don't spend it all they can roll it over?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The money will be used in Neighbourhood Houses.

**Mr WILLIE** - Is that a commitment that if they don't spend it all that it will be rolled over?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They will be spending it all. They will be using it.

**Mr WILLIE** - If they don't spend it all it will be rolled over?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, because if it is below a certain amount they get to roll over funding anyway, so that is what happens in all agreements.

**CHAIR** - Where will I ask a question around the Elder Abuse Strategy?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That can be under Community Services.

**CHAIR** - Can you just give us an update? There was \$150 000 as part of a three-year program with an undertaking to provide recurrent funding for 2017-18 for the Hotline. Do you have some figures on the Hotline? I know we are all going to be shocked when we hear what these figures are that we even need a Hotline for Elder Abuse, but unfortunately it is.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I will provide both the 2014-15 figures and the 2015-16 figures. We have those as at 31 May. Advocacy Tasmania maintains the database and the Hotline figures, so these are fresh from Advocacy Tasmania as of 31 May. As at 31 May elder abuse cases there was 200 versus 259 for the full financial year 2014-15. Sixty-three per cent of calls were in relation to older women versus 68 per cent in 2014-15. The percentage of calls in relation to persons above 80 is 46 per cent this financial year versus 50 per cent last financial year. The percentage of calls from concerned family members is 34 per cent this financial year versus 37 per cent last financial year. The percentage of calls from older Tasmanians experiencing abuse is 31 per cent this financial year versus 33 per cent last financial year. The percentage of calls who indicated they found out about the help line via television commercials is 49 per cent versus 60 per cent last financial year.

Would you like me to go through the different types of abuse as well, what they are? Financial, material, psychological, et cetera.

**CHAIR** - That would be helpful, although it may well be a bit confronting for all of us.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Sixty-two per cent of calls this year were in regards to financial or material versus 68 per cent last financial year; 83 per cent of calls this year were in regards to psychological/emotional versus 88 per cent; 22 per cent of calls this year were in regards to physical versus 32 per cent last year; 20 per cent of calls this year were in regard to social versus 16 per cent last year; 7 per cent were in regard to neglect versus 11 per cent last year; 1 per cent was in regard to sexual abuse versus 1 per cent last year.

**CHAIR** - When they make the call to the Hotline what is the next process after that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - If I just look at this year, from the 200 elder abuse cases that Advocacy Tasmania received, they then do an assessment. Some of the calls are then referred to Advocacy Tasmania themselves, so 44 per cent were referred to Advocacy Tasmania because they can then provide information or look after the case. Four per cent were referred to community social workers. For 149, information was passed on to clients; in regard to legal services, 33 per cent; 52 per cent were encouraged to be referred to police; and 34 per cent were referred to the Guardianship and Administration Board.

[2.45 p.m.]

**CHAIR** - Is there any follow-up for those 147 that are referred to in areas where they might get some more information?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The protective information passed onto clients is about where they can go for legal services. Of the 149 protective information, they have been referred to legal services, police, Guardianship and Administration Board from that information.

**CHAIR** - So there is a follow-up on every one of those that fell through the cracks?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They are passed on that information about where it is to best to go.

**CHAIR** - So we don't know if anyone does anything with that information after it is provided, then. Is that fair to say? You know: I report something, I get the information and -

**Ms GANLEY** - The way the advocacy helpline works is they that don't do a formal follow-up but they do often get feedback back from the individual. So they offer more of a, 'This is the referral point'. They do do what they call a warm referral, which is when they refer it to themselves. So they refer the call to Advocacy Tasmania and in their role as Advocacy Tasmania they do what is called a 'warm referral', which is where they make contact on behalf of the person to the other service sector. But, in the main, they provide the information and then the client follows it through.

**CHAIR** - Minister, is there any concern that there may well be people who use the hotline, contact Advocacy Tasmania or one of those, but then don't follow through. Then perhaps that elder person is still in that situation and doesn't realise that that is not appropriate? Is there any concern around that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We believe in the Elder Abuse Hotline's value; that is why we have now made it recurrent funding. Under the previous government, its funding stopped in 2013-14, so that is why we started up the election commitment again to continue it from 2014-15 onwards. Now, because we believe it is important to have that service available, we have made it part of our recurrent programs to continue that program going.

**Mr DEAN** - Of the elder abuse reports that are coming through the hotlines, how many of them are recorded against aged homes and relate to abuse or alleged abuse within aged homes?

**Ms GANLEY** - The residential aged care sector has its own legislative framework and its own reporting mechanisms. The elder abuse hotline is predominantly targeted at the community sector and community-based organisations. The aged care sector has its own regulatory framework.

**Mr DEAN** - So a family member reporting there goes to that system rather than the hotline system.

**Ms GANLEY** - They can ring the hotline but they would be provided with information from the other system.

**Mr DEAN** - I see, it is redirected to the -

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, under the Department of Health and Ageing they have the Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance. Anyone, including Tasmanians, can make a referral to that hotline. A relative, or the resident themselves, or a staff member can ring the Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance to indicate that they believe that there is a risk to the resident for any reason. I should have known the answer to that question because I used to work in the Office of Age Care Quality and Compliance. We used to go into the aged care facilities and examine what did happen to the resident. We could breach the aged care facility if we found they had done the wrong thing.

**Mr DEAN** - On the hotline again, the 1 per cent related to sexual assault, would that be referred to police? Is that the way that would go or is that a requirement?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is right. Of the 149 that were deemed to need more protective information for the client, 52 per cent were taken to the police.

**Mr DEAN** - But there is no record made of where it went to from there?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No.

**CHAIR** - I feel a bit of concern that we do not know whether anyone actually did anything else after that.

**Mr FINCH** - I have a foreboding here about this situation in our community of elder abuse. I get a sense that perhaps we are talking about it more. Media might be covering it more. I am just fearful that it might develop and grow and that we only have the tip of the iceberg. What are your feelings about this? Do you see an increase in the reporting of what is going on?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We are at 31 May so we only have one month to go. We have only had 200 elder abuse cases up to 31 May but last year we had 259. Unless we get another 59 calls this month, we will actually be receiving fewer calls this year than last year. The year before it was 244. It is staying around that sort of 200-plus mark. We believe in the

helpline's value and that is why we want to keep it continuing because some people do not actually want to ring the police. It is a bit like family violence; that is why the Premier started up another initiative, Safe Choices. Some people are questioning whether what they are experiencing is actually elder abuse or not and they feel more comfortable ringing the Advocacy Tasmania helpline to say, for example, 'My children have made me sign this documentation and I am now losing my home. Is that elder abuse?'. They do not want to take it to the police because they have this fear factor that the police will do something to their children, for example. They feel safer calling a helpline to then get advice to give them the support and security they need to make further decisions. That is why we see it as a vital service. It fills that information gap where they are not quite ready to go to police, but they want another service to reassure them that, yes - they are experiencing elder abuse; or no - they are not; or which service they need to take their issue to. That is the gap that it fills.

**Mr FINCH** - How do you promote the hotline through into the community?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There have been television advertisements and there are different brochures, fliers and posters out there. Hopefully your GP's surgery may have one. There are different methods we have used to promote the elder abuse helpline. Also, there are different organisations like the Council of the Ageing and Advocacy Tasmania. So there are lots of different methods we have been using to promote the helpline.

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, how much funding has been provided to integrated family support services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In 2016-17 Budget for integrated family support services, Bapcare, it is \$2 672 796. For Mission Australia it is \$2 691 383. It makes a total of \$5 364 178. Our total funding for the Gateways and family support programs is \$13 561 485. It is the disability, the Gateway services, the integrated family support services, the grandparents raising grandchildren, Keeping Families Together, which comes under Bapcare and Mission Australia, which is an emergency respite program, and the Kentish Family Support Services, which all comes to \$13 561 485.

**CHAIR** - Gambling support services, can we get a figure on that? I believe there are a range of other counselling and support services as well.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - So you just want to know what we spent the money on in 2015-16? For the 50 per cent of the Community Support Levy the total expenditure on that was \$1 946 844. For the 25 per cent of the Community Support Levy it was \$1 153 785, making a total of \$3 100 629.

**CHAIR** - So that includes the other counselling and support services? That is all encompassed?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Sorry, that was the community support brand.

**CHAIR** - That was just the gambling support.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The gambling help services is \$688 752.

**CHAIR** - And that is the other counselling and support services included?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. The direct support services is \$688 752. The community education is \$275 000. The research is \$14 000. The GSP, Gambling Support Program, operations is \$382 480.

**CHAIR** - Who receives the research? I know it is only a paltry amount of money.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Years ago we gave it to the Menzies Centre to develop a GP program.

**Ms GANLEY** - It goes to someone to do some research into a particular aspect.

**CHAIR** - So it is a dedicated amount every year, minister.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Would that have been spent on the third social and economic impact study of gambling in Tasmania as well?

**Ms GANLEY** - I know that we did the campaign with GPs to develop resources for them, which was developed out of the research dollars a couple of years ago.

[3 p.m.]

**CHAIR** - Just for my information, is there any community group organisation that presented in the budget process that didn't receive any funding?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Are you talking about for their community support group funding?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In total support dollars for community sector organisations we provide around \$260 million per community sector organisation. The Human Services Budget is about \$508 billion. It is a lot of dollars we are already allocating.

**CHAIR** - I know but I just wondered if there was any organisation within the community that felt like they were offering services that were valuable but did not get any funding? Obviously a lot of these organisations want more.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That's right. You get organisations that want more. We have to make sure we are providing services that are going deliver outcomes. We make sure the community organisations get three-year contracts so they know exactly what they have for three years and what services we want to provide. We provide around 500 different services so we are trying to join up the services we have at the moment.

**CHAIR** - To try and streamline things. Mr Finch, you had a supplementary to that?

**Mr FINCH** - Is community support all managed through your department?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, 25 per cent is for the benefit of sport and recreation clubs, which is through Community Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Department of Premier and Cabinet.



**CHAIR** - And we went through that yesterday if you remember with a fine tooth comb.

**Mr FINCH** - I am curious about the gambling component of the levy. Did you say \$688 000?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - \$688, 752 goes to Gamblers Help services.

**Mr FINCH** - How is that expended? Are we going to get to a situation where we have helped mostly the people with gambling problems and you would be able to desist with continuing with that program or is it ongoing? How is the money expended?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I can provide you with the numbers who have been using the services. For example, we provide finances to Anglicare Tasmania who provide in person support for clients and up to 31 March they have provided in person support to 185 new clients. They have also provided 492 services for individual support sessions. With the Gamblers Help services the in person individual and group counselling information and venue exclusions, this service is provided by Anglicare Tasmania in partnership with Relationships Australia. It is funded for \$500 000 plus the equal remuneration order. That was in 2015-16. The 24/7 phone counselling information referrals through the Gambling Help Line Tasmania is provided by Eastern Health Turning Point and is funded for \$140 760 in 2015-16. The 24/7 online counselling and information through chat and email services at gamblinghelponline.org.au is provided by Eastern Health Turning Point and is funded for \$12 153 in 2015-16. That was from the community support levy returns.

**Mr DEAN** - How do we know that is working or doing any good? What measurement is in place?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I suppose the social and economic impact study which was done last year in March indicated that the problem in moderate risk gambling remains steady at about 2.3 per cent of Tasmanian adults.

**Mr DEAN** - The point I am trying to make is that these programs are in place, I thought, as a part of reducing the numbers, the education is part of those programs. It is continuing to go along at a similar level. There is no indication that we are getting the results from those programs that we have wanted or expected.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The research told us that the gambling by Tasmanian adults is falling and Tasmanians are more likely than other Australians not to gamble at all. It has shown that participation, for example, in EGM gambling has fallen from 2008 down from 28.5 per cent to 20.7 per cent in 2011, and 18.6 per cent in 2013. That is what the social economic impact study found.

In relation to problem gambling, the study found that the rate of problem gambling in Tasmania has fallen by over 25 per cent. Problem gamblers are about 0.5 per cent of the adult population or around 1900 people in Tasmania. Also it showed that the real per capita spending on gambling in Tasmania is the second-lowest across the states and has been consistently below the national average over the time.

**Mr DEAN** - There is a lot of advertising for gambling on the sporting channels now. Is there any evidence to identify whether that is creating and causing more people to come online or to gamble?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - If the advertising is working, I have a problem with that, it should not be on there at all.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We know there has been an increase in sports betting, particularly amongst younger men who are well-paid. It is an easy thing for them to do on their smart phones and -

**CHAIR** - Cut their wage. That will fix them.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Also because a lot of it is online and is overseas, we do not have the ability to monitor that as well. The federal government is looking at offshore gambling. They have commissioned a review of illegal offshore wagering to lead a three-stage process. We are working with the commonwealth with that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I was just going to ask the question whether this was the place to ask it? I know that sounds odd. There are grandparents raising grandchildren and young children looking after adults. Where would I look at those? Are they in this section?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. I can discuss those under Gateway.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They are not children's services in a way. It is really the grandparents. I looked through the information and could not see where grandparents raising grandchildren was addressed.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Under Gateway, grandparents raising grandchildren.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What page are we on?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They will be under our community services funding, but I can give you the -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is not in the budget papers though is what you are saying?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No. We have 230 organizations with 500 services it would be a pretty big budget paper -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is quite an issue.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There are quite a lot of grandparents out there raising grandchildren. Obviously they need certain services, I expect. There is an organisation that looks after them. Can you tell me whether you give any funding to that organisation?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, to both Baptcare and Mission Australia. Baptcare receives \$147 884 and Mission Australia receives \$147 884, making a total of \$295 769. This is a program especially for grandparents who have recently had a child or a family member come into their care. It provides support, information, referral services and short-term case management. It provides brief intervention support. We have also got those emergency respite lines like I was talking about before, which is our Keeping Families Together program

**Mr VALENTINE** - Would that also be part of the joined up services? The individual, that is the parent might be going through some drug related episode, and you have grandparents looking after the children which might be for an indeterminate period of time until that person has their drug problem addressed, does that funding take that into account? Do you provide services to the person who is causing the issue as much as you do the grandparents in that case?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - At the moment we provide the intensive family support services but also as part of our redesign of child protection services we want to provide a more holistic service for children and their families so we can intervene a lot earlier. Unfortunately for their grandparents, intervention has not been given to their own children early enough for them to have been as good as parents as what they could have been so they intervene early to try and keep families together a lot earlier. We minimise grandparents having to step in so it is about providing more intensive family support services earlier on.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There are different departments involved in that scenario I am painting so the Alcohol and Drug Service would be dealing with, let us say it is a father who has got a problem, or a mother, and your service is looking after the grandparent needs or indeed the child's needs, depending on whether there are any grandparents, are you doing that communication and consultation with the Alcohol and Drug Service at the same time? Is that what happens?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - As part of our joined up oversight committee we have Primary Health and also we have had Jan, in the past, who is from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council as well because we know that Mental Health, especially Community and Mental Health Services, as well as Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs needs to be involved along with Human Services to make it more holistic, the joined up community services project.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The other scenario was the young carer looking after an invalid. I have heard of children as young as 12 or 13 being the main carer for those people so how are you picking those up? Is there a gateway that handles that sort of issue.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Department of Premier and Cabinet does fund Carers Tasmania to assist with that. Usually they are looking after their parents. It may be because they have a mental health issue or they have a disability so we would be funding the parent for the supports that they needed in regards to their mental health or their disability issue to assist that person. Under our child protection redesign if the Education Department thinks that the young person is at risk as well -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So that is where you would catch it most likely.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - to catch the child there as well because behind the redesign of Child Protection Services is to make sure that Education is very much joined in with Human Services when it comes to looking after a child or a young person, especially because they have them for about six hours every day.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In fact they can be the most stable point in that person's life.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Exactly right and we see Education as a very crucial partner and that is why in the Child Protection redesign Education has been allocated \$5 million so that they can work more closely with Child Protection, especially young children or young people that they see at risk.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I know there have been problems in the past.

**CHAIR** - Can we move now to disability.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Minister, I will just start with Gateway and I am advised that families in crisis sometimes have to wait up to three days to receive a call back from Gateway in relation to their case. What can you say in terms of response times for families in crisis seeking access to services via Gateway?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Are you saying that families have to wait?

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I have been advised that some families had to wait three days for a call back.

[3.15 p.m.]

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - From Gateway?

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - From Gateway, in relation to their case. I wonder what the normal response time would be?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - If you can give me a particular case, because that is unsatisfactory.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - The normal call-back time would be?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Our expectation would be to answer the phone and take the call at the time. A particular case, if you want to email it through to my office.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I will ask my PA about that one.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We are very happy to look at that and to follow up that situation.

**CHAIR** - That is unsatisfactory, in your view.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We need to find out what exactly did happen.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I am assuming a call-back in regard to their case and they would have been looking into their case. How long is the wait for respite services once it is approved by Gateway?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - You are talking about adult respite?

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - People with a disability.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There is not actually a wait list for respite. I can indicate the amount of people who have used respite services up to 31 March. All clients receiving respite: there were 121 people who received flexible respite. For own-home or centre-based host family respite there were 170 people. For children receiving respite to receiving flexible respite was 69, and own-home or centre-based or host-family respite there were 110. For children receiving respite who have a primary diagnosis that is not intellectual disability, the flexible respite, there were 30; and for own-home centre-based host-family respite there were 74.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Referring to the top of page 76, the accommodation support clients, I notice the target for this was 1095. How many Tasmanians are you expecting out of that to transition to the NDIS in 2016-17? I notice that the footnote says that we are expecting a transition across.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is 114.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Also, how long are these people waiting for supported accommodation? Can you give us a break-down so we get a clear picture of each part of the state, with north, south and north-west? How long before they get this accommodation? I notice there was a target of 93 in 2014-15. The target seems to be fairly much the same, the target and the action. There is not a lot of difference. Also, what happens to them while they are waiting to be placed into supported accommodation? Where do they live while they are waiting for that? Anywhere they can?

**Ms GANLEY** - In relation to supported accommodation, people quite often come into the Gateway, identify need, and they are living at home with family and they maintain that family arrangement. Otherwise they would be accessing our respite services. Quite often, when a person has identified supported accommodation as a need, while they are looking for that more ongoing placement other services and one-off supports are put in place. They access respite. They might have some in-home family support for that individual while they wait.

At times, people can wait for a while because they have indicated they would like somewhere to live, but they do not want to move for another year, which is quite good because that gives us a chance to plan and work through the system to identify the most appropriate place.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - You do not have a lot of people with nowhere to live in between time?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No and if that was the case, we would put in an emergency response.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Going on to NDIS for a moment and I realise it comes under another portfolio or another ministry. The roll out of the NDIS for four to 11 year olds,

scheduled for 1 July and for children aged three and under on 1 July 2018. I am assuming that means the early childhood intervention services will cease to exist once that roll out occurs. Minister, what information has your Government received from the federal government of how the new NDIS system will meet the standard of community service currently delivered places such as ECIS in Tasmania over many years and such as the ECIS at Munford Street, Kings Meadows which has a wonderful support for thousands of families?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The ECIS will be continuing.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Is it?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They have released an early childhood intervention approach framework paper that was released on 26 February and the NBIA have been trialling an approach for early interventions in the Nepean Blue Mountains and have consulted with key stakeholders on the ECIS approach which is designed to provide all children with developmental delay or disability and their family's access to support and guidance so they can achieve better long-term outcomes through local community services, regardless of the child's diagnosis.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - My understanding was that ECIS will cease to exist as it is.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is a different framework. It is under the Education minister, this part of the framework. There has been a paper released on it.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I may have to ask the other minister or perhaps a question on notice in the House.

On page 76 it states, disability services continues to operate in an environment where demand for services outstrips supply. Given this was also stated in the last budget outlook, what has the Government done in the past year to address the challenge of the heavy demand for disability services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - To meet demand, we have people transferring over to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Over the next four years we are investing \$572 million into the NDIS. People who already have existing supports, they maintain their supports during the trial. We have also funded, on top of the money that is going into the NDIS, plus the money that is going into existing support, an extra \$500 000 per year which provides about 11 700 hours of extra support. It is a substantial amount of funding we are providing for disability services. This year it is \$217.5 million.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - We should not be seeing that comment next year in the budget papers?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Until we get the full rollout of the NDIS on 1 July 2019. What is also happening, people are coming forward and registering with us. It is like pre-registering for the NDIA. They know they are coming on board in January next year but they will come along and say to us they would like extra support or this is what they do. The good thing is, we can do a pre-assessment and then we can let the NDIA know this client is coming. We have been able to estimate our figures quite well as to who are existing clients of ours versus

who will be going into the new clients into the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We have 4500 Tasmanians we currently support and it will be going up to 10 000 Tasmanians.

**CHAIR** - Minister, with the integrated care services provider, my information tells me they no longer have staff in Tasmania, you do all your organising through a call centre in New South Wales. I know they looked after respite placements. Is that a concern that they will need to be calling a call centre in New South Wales to organise their respite services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Our concern is to make sure the employees that services have in this state deliver good services to their clients and participants. In regard to that particular service, we monitor them to make sure that the clients continue to get the service that they need. The National Disability Insurance Agency will be very robust as well in making sure their clients receive the services they require if they come under the National Disability Insurance Agency. If clients are unhappy with that service, under the NDIS they can take their package and go to another service provider. They have choice and control. If they are not happy with the fact that an organisation -

**CHAIR** - There has to be another provider in the area, though.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. We have gone from about 87 providers to about 217 providers now in Tasmania. More and more providers are coming into the state because of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which is a good thing. People actually will for the first time have choice. They are not going to be limited by one provider. For example, in my own electorate in the Huon Valley, the number of providers has exponentially grown and hopefully it will occur in your area, too. When people say, 'Actually they're not doing a good service -

**CHAIR** - There has been a loss of four jobs in one of my areas because Integrated Care Services have walked. They are still there with their services but the administration has all gone. Four jobs just in a week.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The good thing is, if they have experience in that area, we need about 2500 more employees for the National Disability Insurance Scheme in this state. Now that they have that experience, it would be worthwhile - I would encourage them to go to other service providers. We need more staff.

**CHAIR** - It is just disappointing that they have been given a contract and provided a service and now they have decided they will manage it from a call centre in New South Wales, where people will have no idea where North Scottsdale is or where Derby is or anywhere. Minister, can I take you to the NDIS job-ready workforce. It is not budgeted for in the out-years. Can you tell me why that is?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That was a two-year election commitment. When we came into government we realised that we needed a workforce but we needed to know more about the quantum of employees and what we needed to do to build up a workforce ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. That is why we had a two-year commitment with National Disability Services Tasmania to develop a workforce and development strategy. They are also an industry partner with Skills Tasmania now. That action plan was to be developed over two years so it could be put in place in conjunction with being a

strategic industry partner with Skills Tasmania to develop the workforce strategy that we needed for the rollout of the NDIS. They have developed it.

**CHAIR** - The strategy is in place.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is to continue work. They are monitoring it this year to see if we need any changes. It is to get those 2500 extra workers.

**CHAIR** - Can you tell me about the Sheffield family support?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That was an election commitment at the Kentish Family Support Services. The Lyons members felt that there needed to be more family support services in that area. The Kentish Family Support was run by Glenhaven in conjunction with partners, such as Mission Australia and the council to run family support services in Sheffield and to the surrounding areas.

**CHAIR** - They have funding for this financial year, next financial year and then it has been cut in half. Are they looking to be funding themselves partially after that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, it was because they did not start until 1 January. It was a four-year commitment. It was to trial it to see how it would go, so a review will be done to see the whether service needs to continue or needs to be changed or modified. It was always just a trial of the service.

**CHAIR** - It only started on 1 January this year?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, it started 1 January 2015. It is a four-year commitment.

**CHAIR** - Do we know how it is going?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - A review will probably be done over the next year to get the statistics to see what is actually being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved. It is hard to report on outcomes six-monthly; we need to see what changes occurred in the community as a result over time.

**CHAIR** - If it has been in place for two years, wouldn't we have seen something by now?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - A lot of these families require work over a while so that is why we normally have something like a three-funding agreement.

**CHAIR** - I have no objections to Sheffield being lucky enough to gather some funding in that way.

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, can you update the committee on where the Rethink Autism program is at the moment? Also, could you include whom you appointed as members on the advisory panel, please?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I will read out the Autism Advisory Panel membership first if that is all right.



**Mr WILLIE** - Yes, thank you.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - As chair we have Cassie Le Fevre, who has had 19 years of experience in regards to autism; Terry Burke, who is the deputy chair and also the Autism Tasmania chief executive officer; Ingrid Ganley, who is sitting here at the table from the Department of Health and Human Services; Lynne McDougall from the Department of Education; Rowena Wilkinson from the Department of Education the Early Childhood Intervention Service; Chris Oppert from the National Disability Insurance Agency; Tim Chugg from Giant Steps; Ian Wright, the chief executive officer of St Giles; Lyndsay Quarmby, in his capacity as a research representative for the UTAS Rural Clinical School; Kathryn Fordyce, the manager of the Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre at Burnie, which is also run under St Giles; Rosalie Martin, a speech pathologist from Speech Pathology Tasmania; Lisa Risby, a parent representative; Bec Wiaczek, a parent representative; Kristen Desmond, a parent representative and from the Tasmanian Disability Education Reform Lobby.

When we first came to government we were concerned there was a rising incidence of autism. Especially you, with your education background, would have looked after a number of children and young people with rising incidence of autism. We found it is changing a bit under the National Disability Insurance Scheme but there was no awareness of what the proper incidence was in Tasmania, what the referral centres were and early diagnostics et cetera.

We have made a commitment of \$1 million over four years for an autism continue of care program. This year we are providing \$250 000 from this allocation so as to provide a road map from birth to adulthood for autism care, to allow us to work towards earlier diagnosis, assessment and support, as well as research, professional development, support for parents, additional help in schools and transition to employment. We also have been working with the autism satellite school at Lindisfarne North in regards to that.

The Autism Advisory Panel is undertaking extensive work towards developing the strategy. They are also developing a formal research partnership and are currently in discussions with the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder, or the Autism CRC. We have the school health nurses who are working with us in regards to it as well.

Rethink Autism is being undertaken in partnership with the Department of Education from term 2. We worked with the department to begin the rollout of the program through ECIS. In term 3 there was training and leadership development for educators to use Rethink Autism with different school sites involved in the delivery of Rethink Autism throughout the state. It can be delivered to a mix of individuals who may be home-schooled or are attending Catholic or independent schools. We are running information sessions to inform parents of the program as well. Autism Tasmania, for example, recently sent out flyers and notifications to all the members on their membership list to get further information out.

**Mr WILLIE** - While you are talking about the schools, which schools are involved in the program and how do you identify those?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I know Lindisfarne North was.

**Mr WILLIE** - In one of your media releases you mentioned Mountain Heights District School and Waverley. Is that correct?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We might have to take it as a question on notice for an update on that.

**The committee suspended from 3.35 p.m. to 3.48 p.m.**

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - To what was going to be a question on notice I have the response now, if you would like me to read it out now.

In regard to the schools that are involved with Rethink Autism, there is Waverly, the Autism Satellite Learning Centre at Lindisfarne North, ECIS South, Lansdowne Crescent Primary, Austins Ferry Primary School, St Leonards Primary School, Montagu Bay Primary School, ECIS Launceston, the eSchool, and Windermere. It is also in private and Catholic schools. There is Giant Steps, Sacred Heart Launceston, Geneva Christian School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary.

**Mr WILLIE** - How are they determined?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Schools can ask us if they want to now take part in the program and if they can join up. We are welcoming people to join up so they get the training and be a big part of it.

**CHAIR** - We can probably thank Ingrid for getting that information in the break.

### **5.3 Housing Services**

**Mr DEAN** - I am not sure how it works now with community housing, say in my area, having responsibility for a lot of houses. Have we seen any residents being moved on because they have reached a financial position where they are self-sustaining and can afford to go into other accommodation? Have we seen that put into practice? Have any tenants been asked to move on or offered to buy houses they are in?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We run the HomeShare and Streets Ahead schemes so we have had someone buy a house under the HomeShare scheme and we have had tenants under Streets Ahead who have bought their own home. They can under those two schemes. As to the Residential Tenancy Act, those changes only came in on 30 October last year and it takes a year for them to come into play, so we cannot remove anyone due to income limits under after 1 October 2016.

**Mr DEAN** - I thought it was in well and truly before that, but it was obviously just a policy and you had to give legality to it.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - You can always encourage and say to them, 'There are these good schemes here. You can use HomeShare and Streets Ahead schemes'.

**Mr DEAN** - Now it is given legal status, once they reach a certain income into the household? Is that how it operates?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, but there is a lot of other factors. For example, if the person has a disability or if they have children, there might be an elderly person who has lived in the area for 30 years or more. We need to take into consideration a range of different factors. If it is an 89-year-old woman who has been living in the area, we have to be sensitive in offering brand-new accommodation or a unit.

**Mr DEAN** - But hardly likely, I would have thought, to improve their financial position at 89 unless someone passes on and leave them a heap of money.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is a small percentage of our tenants who pay market rent.

**Mr WHITE** - It is approximately 754.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Of those who pay market rent, they might only be paying \$120 a week, say, into our property. If they went to rent somewhere else they would be paying a lot more than they can then afford, so pushing them above their 25 per cent income limit.

**Mr DEAN** - If you have people paying market rent, it would identify the household income has reached a certain level they are able to do that. I thought this program was all about either offering the house to those people to either buy it and/or saying, 'Sorry, we have people homeless and we have to ask you to move on to private rent or purchase your own private home'.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - With the Home Share and Street Ahead, they are offered those schemes, but under the Residential Tenancy Act we have no legislative power.

**Mr DEAN** - I thought we did.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Not until 1 October. It comes in on 1 October 2015 and then it takes a year for tenants to be aware they have a year if they are above a threshold and they cannot get above the threshold by 1 October 2016 before any changes can be made.

**Mr DEAN** - Is that a responsibility of, say in my area - Ravenswood, Waverly, Rocherlea - is that the responsibility now of Community Housing Limited to look at and consider or does that still come back to Housing Tasmania to manage?

**Mr WHITE** - The responsibility sits with each of the community housing providers. As you appreciate, under the Better Housing Futures where we transferred management in areas such as Ravenswood, and in the south it includes Bridgewater, Clarendon Vale, et cetera, there is not that pressure of moving people on. We think it is very appropriate to have people on moderate and higher incomes staying in those areas as good role models. Obviously there is an ability for people within in those communities to buy their home. We have had six tenants purchase their home under Streets Ahead this financial year and I think another 10 have purchased under Homeshare.

The community housing providers aim - and are incentivised to do so - to talk to those tenants who can afford to buy their home, to try to move them into home ownership, and over the longer term that is what we would like to see happen.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you for that. The commitment of an additional \$60 million over three years to support Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-25 is welcome. They are welcomed by Shelter Tasmania, which is good. Is this funding on top of previous funds allocated in your 2015-16 budget for capital and recurrent funding to implement the strategy?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. There is an extra \$60 million over three years. Last year we had \$9.3 million in existing funding in the 2015-16 years when Affordable Housing Strategy was released. We provided an extra \$13.5 million immediate investment at the time and this year we have invested an extra \$60 million on top of what is also in our infrastructure fund.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you. Some of these questions might only need a 'yes' or 'no'.

Which initiatives from your Affordable Housing Strategy will be funded by the \$20 million allocated for this financial year? Will this include the following projects announced in the minister's media release of 26 May 2016? That is, \$11.2 million for housing, new projects; \$6 million for the Devonport Youth Accommodation projects and \$4.4 million under the Family Violence Action Plan?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The \$20 million is on top of the \$11.2 million for housing new projects, and it is on top of the \$6 million for the Devonport Youth Accommodation project. The \$4.4 million you mentioned under the Family Violence Action Plan is over four years. That was not a one-year commitment but \$2 million of that is included in the housing new projects. Not the \$20 million, it is incorporated in the \$11.2 million.

**Mr DEAN** - What proportion of the \$20 million budgeted this financial year can be allocated to capital investment and what to recurrent operational costs?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - All the \$20 million that has been put in for the Affordable Housing Action Plan is for the strategies and initiatives in the Affordable Housing Action Plan. There are 19 different initiatives in that.

**Mr DEAN** - So no investment into recurrent operation costs, is that what you are saying?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - [inaudible] recurrent operational costs, which is what we call our Youth Head Leases and landlord incentives and things like that, but otherwise every single dollar of it is to be spent on actions in the Affordable Housing Action Plan.

**Mr DEAN** - There could be some supplementary questions later on. My last question under this one was that note 2 of page 111 of budget paper 1 indicates that implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy will also be supported through the redirection of a proportion of Housing Tasmania revenue towards implementation of the action plan. What services will be affected by this redirection of funds and to what extent will that occur?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Those services are affected because this is something that Housing Tasmania has always done, as well as under the previous government, where a proportion of

rents and everything else that comes in and they have asset management sales, et cetera. A proportion of that grants and assets management is always used to spend on new housing every year. So the \$11.2 million housing new projects funding incorporates what Shelter Tasmania is talking about, the proportion of Housing Tasmania revenue. The \$60 million is on top of that.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you for that and I wanted to recognise Shelter Tasmania and the great work they do.

**CHAIR** - They do, and I find it interesting that Shelter Tasmania needs to send us a list of 18 questions. I would like to think the department, and your department particularly, would engage with someone so significant that they would not need to send us all those direct questions. Perhaps that is a bit of a heads up for better communication.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The department speaks to them quite regularly and we speak to them quite regularly too. They provide the questions to everyone and we provided them to Housing. It is all itemised on that. It is articulated quite well on that. We appreciate the good work that Shelter do too.

**CHAIR** - I don't want to run out of time, providing one organisation with all their answers and end up losing time for other answers.

**Mr FINCH** - I want to get my head around Housing Connect. I have had a situation where, as you have encouraged us minister, and previous ministers before you, to go direct to Housing Tasmania in the north.

I have done that and I am not happy. I am not a happy camper. I went with a client who needed support for issues that were over a long period of time and ended up being referred to Housing Connect which came out of the blue for me. Went to Housing Connect and started to get my head around how that situation works, although not fully, which is why I want some clarity. I came up with a compromised situation to help the client which was rejected, virtually out of hand. I thought I might have received a bit more help and support for somebody who had a very strong case. I'm thinking Housing Tasmania are going to help me with the issue but I am hand-balled out to Housing Connect. Then I have to build the case all over again. How does the contract work, how does that circumstance evolve.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Housing Connect is our one-stop shop. You know how we now have Gateway if you want family support or disability services? Housing Connect is like that. It is your one-stop shop so people should be ringing Housing Connect if they need homelessness services or if they might need a bit of assistance to get into a private rental. Or if they are seeking emergency crisis accommodation or they want to get on the housing wait list. People should be going to Housing Connect first before they go to Housing Tasmania because -

**Mr FINCH** - My case wasn't any of those.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Right. We are happy for you to contact our office, so we can work with you on that particular issue, if that would make it easiest.

**Mr FINCH** - We have moved on to a certain extent from that and the client is reasonably happy and has had some cooperation. But policy was thrown up again - 'it's not our policy to do that' - and I was a little bit bogged down in this policy being waved at me rather than seeking to compromise or help. Or to help sort out a situation when, with the encouragement of yourself, I go to Housing Tasmania. I am not going to waste my time any more going north. I will come down and handle the situation down south.

I have a shocking situation which I am dealing with of somebody who was in desperate need to be moved because of harassment, because of health. I got absolutely nowhere; I was very disappointed in the treatment. The woman, because we could not get anywhere, had to move out of the situation because of her health and because of the stress that the whole process had caused for her. I just want to alert you to the fact that I will deal with your officer because, as I say, I was not happy that if we are being encouraged to go to the service to take our issues there and to support clients and people from our constituencies and then to - I was embarrassed for the role I was trying to play as an advocate for these two people particularly.

**CHAIR** - Obviously that is disappointing to hear because I know in my situation I have had some really good outcomes, so that is disappointing.

**Mr DEAN** - I get very good service and I am dealing with clients every day.

**Mr WILLIE** - Can you take this on notice, minister? Can you please provide Housing Tasmania's stock profile by suburb which will include the number of bedrooms?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I can give that all to you.

**Mr WHITE** - We can table -

**CHAIR** - It is probably something we need to read out suburb by suburb.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is not actually in a form we can literally .-

**CHAIR** - I do not think we have ever asked suburb and bedrooms before.

**Mr WILLIE** - I have a couple of other questions around maintenance. Minister, what is the maintenance budget for 2016-17 and while we are on that question, what portion on that would be expended on energy efficiency?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - This year total maintenance expenditure is budgeted at \$21.4 million for just Housing Tasmania for 2016-17 which is more than we prepared for 2015-16 which was around \$20.36 million. Better Housing Futures spent around \$15.2 million so if you add the total together, it comes to about \$36.6 million will be spent on maintenance.

**CHAIR** - Can we have the deferred maintenance?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is about \$85 million now. It was \$90 million under the previous government but under Better Housing Futures, that is expected to decrease by \$40 million over time as well.

**Mr WILLIE** - The proportion spent on energy efficiency?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is about \$2 million that will be spent on energy efficiency upgrades which includes heating upgrades and new showers et cetera.

**Mr WILLIE** - That was for last year. What is the planned budget for this year?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The planned maintenance spend?

**Mr WILLIE** - No, for energy efficiency?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - \$2 million.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The Federal Government has announced its commitment of \$2.8 million until 2017 for the national partnership agreement on homelessness. Can you please indicate where the matching state commitment is in the budget papers?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It always comes under output 5.3 - \$134 947 000. We offer such a large number of services -

**Mr VALENTINE** - You cannot itemise them all now. That is fine. What is Tasmania's current public housing debt to the Australian Government? The perennial question. How much is Tasmania's annual repayment against this debt? How much does the Australian Government pay to the Tasmanian Government each year for housing under the national affordable housing agreement?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I can indicate that as of today the total Tasmanian debt outstanding under the Commonwealth state housing agreement is currently \$188.36 million. However, in the next couple of weeks it will reduce to \$180.91 million once we make the June payment. In 2016-17 we will make total repayments of \$15.7 million comprising \$7.6 million in principal repayments and \$8.1 million in interest which will reduce the outstanding debt to \$173.3 million.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Just to clarify, you make one payment a year or two?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, in June every year. Today, it is \$188.36 million. In a couple of weeks it will be \$180.91 million. Then this time next year we will be close approaching the \$173.3 million.

**Mr VALENTINE** - If they could forgive us the interest we would be getting ahead a lot quicker by the sound of it.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In the year 2042; if we are all still here we can all celebrate.

**Mr DEAN** - Had we not better pay it back sooner?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The only state that has managed to pay off their debt is Victoria. No other state has paid it off. It is a very low interest rate. It is about 4 per cent.

**CHAIR** - You could probably get it cheaper at Tascorp. Why do you not try? How are we going with the question? We ask them every year, every minister, for consideration.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is right but the previous government never got rid of it after 16 years either.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is there any traction at all? Are they saying we will attend to this in a certain timeframe?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - As the chair indicated, we have written every year. They have never said no, they will not look at it. They have never said no, it is off the table, that we will not consider different options. It is still open as to what it may be.

**CHAIR** - Can I suggest, minister, that we put forward a proposal to them?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We have put forward different proposals as part of the federation white paper process. It may be considered as part of that as well. It is part of the federation white paper process. Ministers were on a portable housing working group as well. All the ministers involved in housing, when we see our federal counterparts, do raise it as an issue as well.

**Mr DEAN** - How long has it been there for?

**Mr NICHOLSON** - From the 1960s through to the late 1980s.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So just the last part of the question. I am not sure that came out, how much the Australian Government pay to the Tasmanian government each year for housing under the National Affordable Housing Agreement. Could you give us that figure?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In 2016-17 Tasmania received \$28.6 million from the Australian Government for housing services under the affordable housing special purpose payment. The repayment of \$15.7 million we repay of that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Page 4 of the budget paper 1 refers to the delivery of 941 new homes over three years. Under what program will these be delivered and who will own and manage these properties?

[4. 15 p.m.]

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The documentation that we provided has got quite a lot of that detail in there for our 2016-17 work plan. If you go through all of that it will be delivered. Do you want some of it in here?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Just need it on *Hansard*.

**CHAIR** - I would suggest that next year we send these on to the providers and we might get fewer questions.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, you are right.



**CHAIR** - I think what will happen is that every other provider will also start sending in their questions.

**Mr VALENTINE** - We will have to send them in the same direction. Then we will only ask the ones that don't get answered.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There are different initiatives. There is the shovel-ready private developer supplies, which is initiatives 1 and 4 with the affordable housing action plan. Initially it will see 27 new homes developed. There is the public housing site preparation, which is initiative 2 - around 500 vacant land lots. There is the community housing stock leverage program, which we will build; around 120 more houses will be delivered under that. There is the Flinders and Cape Barren Island action 5, which is also being undertaken. There is the HomeShare initiative 5, which is under that program. Streets Ahead is under it. There is the Devonport Youth Supported Accommodation facility, for which building will commence by December 2016. There is the expanded housing register, which starts soon. There is the Youth Castles pilot, which is initiative 7. The youth at risk response centre will be a drop-in centre, which is short-term supported accommodation for young people. Building works for that will begin by December 2016. There is the dads and kids crisis shelter, which is where we are working with Hobart City Mission to deliver crisis accommodation. There is the women and kids crisis shelter, for which we are working with the Hobart Women's Shelter - a new site. There is Rapid Rehousing.

I will just extend those numbers. The shovel-ready private development grants - there are about 27 on that one. Community housing stock leverage program - that will be 120 plus. The homeshare is about 250 assisted. There is the youth at risk also 203. The youth at risk response centre is seven. The Youth Castles is five. The dads and kids crisis accommodation is nine. Huntingfield land release is 230. The Somerset land release is 15. The Devonport land release is 22. The social housing supply is 45. The regional supply is 50. The Somerset elderly units is six. The Newstead elderly units is seven and the inner city elderly units is 30. The housing reinvestment is 17. The private landlord incentives is 350. The youth head leases is 200. The Streets Ahead program is 100. The backyard units for young people is 40. The supported youth accommodation is 46. The new Devonport youth supported accommodation facility is 25. The expanded Launceston youth supported accommodation facility is eight. The Burnie disability supported accommodation facility is 25. The Devonport group home is four and the supported elderly accommodation is another 50 places. That brings it up to a total of around 1691 assisted initiatives for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, or 943 new houses.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you very much for that, minister. It is a very full response.

Table 4.5 on page 66 of the budget paper 1 shows only the amounts included in the policy and priority statement and doesn't fully reflect the \$20 million allocated for each financial year as the total funding allocated includes equity investments. Can the minister clarify what this means?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The equity investments is HomeShare. HomeShare is reflected in a different section of the budget papers.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Will doubling of the first home owner grant be funded separately in addition to the \$60 million allocated for affordable housing?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, and that is on page 61 of budget paper 1.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Can you please advise how much funding has been allocated for support and elderly accommodation for residential care of older people who are homeless? Does it include capital and recurring operational costs?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That initiative is for supported elderly accommodation. It will be subject to a tender process and we are still working on the location. We are going to continue working with the Australian Government to make application under the Australian ACAR - Aged Care Approvals Round - process.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Will it include capital and recurring operation?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We have a capital funding allocation ourselves but it will depend on us getting approval for licensed beds from the Australian Government, so we need to work with them on that.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I note the Government allocated \$6 million for the Devonport Supported Youth accommodation facility. Can you indicate where in the Budget recurrent funds have been allocated for staffing of this facility?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Devonport Supported Youth Accommodation facility has \$7.5 million altogether; so it is \$6 million over the forward Estimates, but that is in output 5.3 out of the \$134.9 million.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Could you advise what amount of funding will be allocated for the private landlord incentives in 2016-17 and how many households will be assisted?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Out of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, the funding allocation for private landlord incentives is a total of \$2.35 million over three years in the forward Estimates. It includes \$0.7 million for 2016-17, and an estimated 350 households by 2019 will obtain affordable private rentals under this initiative. This initiative will be decided in consultation with Housing Connect in the private rental sector to ensure that the initiatives are effectively targeted.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Can you advise the basis for determining the amount of the incentive paid and who will receive it?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is still to be decided in consultation with Housing Connect to make sure it is targeted. The Affordable Housing Action Plan has only been out since September and we are still working through with different providers as to how we will be rolling these initiatives out.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - And how it will be funded within the Budget?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We have the dollars set aside.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - The budget fact sheet on housing services has \$24.3 million for specialist homelessness services plus indexation. Where is this listed in the budget papers and what is the breakdown of expenditure on the Specialist Homelessness Services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The funding is allocated under output 5.3 - Housing Services. What was the other part of the question?

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - What is the breakdown of the expenditure?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - An allocation of \$12.54 million is made to Housing Connect and the remainder of the \$24.3 million goes to Specialist Homelessness.

**CHAIR** - Minister, can we table that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - We know that the number of people seeking public housing is growing and so is the number applicants on that housing register. Can you give me the up-to-date figures, please? I believe we do better than the national average, but it is still a big number.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Chair, as you indicated we have the lowest proportion of social housing applicants compared with other states. The current applicants on the Housing Register wait list as at 31 March are 3368, but that includes 216 suspended and 12 incomplete applications.

**CHAIR** - Do we still have them in categories as we had before?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The categories are now priority and general. The priority, which is exiting specialist homeless shelters is 88 and then the priority applicants is 1515 and the general applicants is 1537.

**CHAIR** - What is the average wait time now?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The wait time is totally different now, because in the past we used to have categories that indicated 1, 2, 3 and 4. In the past you could have been a category 4 but you might have been escaping family violence, so you weren't recognised as being a priority, or you might have been an amputee or different scenarios. We have changed all the categories and the wait time is totally different.

**CHAIR** - Does that explain why the average waiting time has increased from 35.7 weeks to 42.2 weeks.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is right, because it is a different parameter now that we are measuring against. In the past we only used to measure just category 1s. Category 1s in the past were only about 400.

**Mr WHITE** - Usually around 250 to 400.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Now we are talking about 1500 people.

**CHAIR** - It is still extending out the time. All of that probably means nothing for people who are waiting for housing.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In the past if they were category 4 they might have been waiting three or four years even though they might have been homeless, escaping family violence or in some other situation. We have recognised that they should not be waiting that long and now that we have made them priority it has blown out our wait times.

**CHAIR** - Under the capital program under Family Violence Action to establish the women's crisis accommodation, can you tell me where that is going to be and how many crisis centres or crisis accommodations are there?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Did you want to know the location?

**CHAIR** - Yes, I am interested.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is going to be southern Tasmania. We do not disclose the location of our shelters for obvious reasons.

**CHAIR** - I did not want the address, minister. Is there a plan for that to be rolled out around the state or is it only ever going to be perhaps southern-based?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, we have a number of shelters throughout the state. Magnolia House in Launceston, Warrawee at Ulverstone, and a number of different shelters that we run throughout the state. On top of that we also have our rapid rehousing, which is another 50 houses that will be in different locations throughout the state that will be used as well.

**CHAIR** - How much of the funding that has been provided has been committed for the increase in your new supply of affordable housing?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Under the Affordable Housing Action Plan there is new housing of 943 houses of the \$60 million over the four years.

**CHAIR** - Do we know where they are going to be located?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In the action plan it is quite well detailed.

**CHAIR** - Is there a break-up between community and public housing in that?

**Mr WHITE** - In regard to new supply of the 943 approximately 260 would be supply that would be owned by the Director of Housing. In addition to that you are talking - and this would be an approximate number - around 170 dwellings would be owned/managed by community housing providers. Of the 260 owned by the director, a number may be managed by providers in the case of crisis shelters, youth accommodation et cetera. The other new supplier that comes on line will be around home ownership products like home share as we release land and that is developed into new housing.

**CHAIR** - Do we have a number of people living with a disability who are looking for housing? Are they in the 943?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The 943, we have supported accommodation facility for 25 units in Burnie. We also have a Devonport group home with four beds, also as part of our Devonport youth supported accommodation facility, five of those beds will be for participants in the NDIS as well. All the ones that are built for Housing Tasmania also have to use our minimum standards, which means they have to be fully accessible for people who are aging or people living with disability. The number of houses just mentioned have to have our minimum liveability standards as well.

**CHAIR** - We want to thank Shelter Tas for their input into today. All my questions were not theirs, some were mine. What additional housing stock is expected to be leveraged from the transfer of the 500 public housing titles to community housing providers?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is going to be 120 plus or more.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We appreciate the opportunity. Other questions around housing?

**Mr DEAN** - I notice private rental assisted clients has dropped off by near 500, according to the papers in the budget. The reason given is there is a lack of affordability for people with private rents getting out of their area I suppose. Is that evidenced also in the increases in the categories 1 and 2 lists as well? I suppose it is if they cannot get private rental. To take that one step further, on the bottom of page 77, to cover off on it, it says:

Housing Tasmania will examine the way private rental assistance is divided and how can it best assist vulnerable people to access safe and affordable housing.

How is that review going? What has happened there? How can we assist these people?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - As you have indicated, with the private rental assistance we have had the funding there, but we are not able to assist as many people with the dollars that we have had allocated. In the Affordable Housing Strategy it indicated that the research showed a lot of people are renting. I might be earning a decent salary of \$100 000 and a landlord has a choice between Jackie earning \$100 000 and Bill who is earning \$30 000, but Bill also has four kids and he is a single parent. Even though Jackie could afford to buy a property they will give it to the person who has the better income and least risk to them. People who have higher incomes are renting properties so that they have more disposable income for other needs, when they could afford to rent a higher rental. Yes, 39 per cent of rental stock is in that situation, where they are being rented by people who could afford to rent a property that is worth more.

**Mr DEAN** - What percentage of rent is paid as subsidised in those situations?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In the Private Rental Assistance scheme? That is more to pay their bond.

**Mr WHITE** - PRA is more about bond assistance. In some cases it can provide up to two weeks' rent for people to help them effectively get into the property. The Commonwealth Rent Assistance might be what you are thinking about. It is not a rental subsidy scheme like that. It is to help out with the bond and in some cases it can help people

if they are in arrears, maybe up to a couple of weeks' rent, obviously to stave that off so they can settle down again but it does not provide -

**Mr DEAN** - That is not a loan?

**Mr WHITE** - We do seek to get the money back over time but obviously a fair bit of the money does not come back.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Do you write that money off?

**Mr WHITE** - This is part of the recurrent funding on the program.

**Mr DEAN** - The other thing with outstanding debtors. Do Community Housing Limited and all the other housing organisations have to deal with that themselves? Do you collect the outstanding debtors? Is there a cumulation of that kept by Housing Tasmania?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - When we transferred stock some rental arrears went with them to try and collect back.

**Mr DEAN** - So we cannot get any information on that unless we go to the community housing groups? What about the amount of arsons in Housing Tasmania properties and does that increase through the year?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In regard to arson this year there has been 34 incidents to a value of \$1.331 million but in 2013-2014 there has been 49 incidences at \$2.225 million, so it has dropped.

**CHAIR** - Outstanding debt?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The current debtors as at 31 March is 218 at a value of \$48 000.

**Mr DEAN** - Of those arsons in relation to Housing Tasmania properties, how many have been successfully investigated and prosecuted and has there been any recovery of any of the moneys through the court process?

**Mr WHITE** - Within the last financial year, we have had two payments made through Crime Stoppers, which obviously results in successful convictions. When you have a conviction in this situation, the Court would find the guilty person would be responsible to repay the Director for those funds. Chances in most cases of getting those funds and repayment would be extremely low, so they would typically be treated as a normal debt over time and the majority of those debts which would obviously be over \$100 000, would be written off over time.

**Mr DEAN** - When you advertise for information leading to successful prosecutions, there is a reward, is that paid through Housing Tasmania?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We offer a reward of up to \$10 000 through Crime Stoppers to anyone who provides information that leads to the conviction of those responsible for burning down public housing properties. As Mr White indicated, this year we have allocated a reward of \$15 737. One was a \$10 000 payment, the other was a \$5737 payment.

**CHAIR** - Somebody who does the wrong thing is convicted, does that debt stay with them for life even though there is probably no opportunity to recover the entire funds, does it stay with that person for life until it is paid?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes. In an accounting sense you can technically write off debt. Any tenant who might have a debt of say \$5000, that would stay on their account. If they wanted to come back into housing, it could be five years later, they would still have to talk to us and come to an arrangement on the debt before they would be eligible to be housed by us, even if the debt has been written off in an accounting sense.

**Mr DEAN** - So a Housing Tasmania client who was to burn down a house - and that has happened - are they moved out of Housing Tasmania properties because of that and would not be allowed in until they repaid that debt; is that the way that works?

**Mr WHITE** - If it is arson and all those things are in place, that would be correct, yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Or is it the fact that they don't lose the debt that they might be let back in?

**Mr WHITE** - It would be recorded against them so, in that case, I don't know, a \$100 000 debt or whatever -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It depends on the circumstances.

**Mr WHITE** - It does and there may be circumstances where people in that circumstance may be rehoused depending on their own personal things around mental health if there are appropriate supports in place.

**CHAIR** - So special circumstances [inaudible] considered, and rightly so.

**Mr WILLIE** - Can we get the details of the debt write-off? How many evictions were there in 2015-16 and can I have the breakdown of the reasons? Specifically, how many under the three-strikes policy?

**Mr DEAN** - Will that include the properties under the control of Community Housing Limited and the others as well? You need to get the whole thing.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - For evictions for 2015-16 there were three for antisocial behaviour, six for arrears and eight for condition of property making a total of 17, versus 28 in 2014-15 and a total of 42 in 2013-14, and 50 back in 2011-12.

**Mr WILLIE** - How many under the three strikes?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - One.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Apart from a couple of others, when people are evicted, do you refer them to other services? Is there any other referral?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Before somebody is ever evicted, in Housing Connect we have tenancy support officers who do a whole body of work about trying to keep people supported in the home, especially if they have mental health issues or other issues. A whole lot of work would have gone into this. If it is evictions for arrears, Housing Tasmania does a lot of work in trying to get people to pay their debts and keep on top of the rent they owe us and condition of property. They get sent a lot of notices to say the condition of the property is deteriorating so we need you to address that. So a lot of work has gone on for probably months, or years in some cases, before it has even got to that stage.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you for that. Another part of the question is about arson and the value of the house. What percentage per year do you write off that debt?

**Mr WHITE** - That is a similar question to what we have just been asked, to be honest. It is approximately \$900 000 per annum.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Sorry, I meant each of those debts. Is it 30 per cent that you write-off per annum on that individual dip?

**Mr WHITE** - We would have to provide those figures.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The other question I had was, the transfer of housing stock that we had just recently; \$74 million to the private sector, remember that little transaction.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It was not \$74 million, I think it was about \$485 million in total has happened over the last.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I was told it was \$74 million or maybe that is the whole project.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Under the Better Housing Futures that has happened over the last few years the management of those properties went to the community housing sector so the value of those properties was written off our books. It was a total of \$485.5 million was taken off our balance sheet over the years of those transfers. That is why, last year for example, in the budget paper it looked like we had great big housing services of an extra \$132 million that was actually spent -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Where is that handled in the budget paper? Where is that enumerated in here?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That has been done in previous budget papers as the stock has been transferred it has happened in previous budget papers.

**Mr VALENTINE** - With that bill that we just handled.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The community has not stopped leverage quota and it has not started, it has not concluded yet.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Where will it be listed in the following years.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It has already been taken off our books in regards to the value of those houses in previous years.



**Mr VALENTINE** - They have been written down basically. When you do those transfers is there a stamp duty involved? If you are going to a different owner with each house, so do we pay stamp duty as government?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - With transfer of management there is no stamp duties paid on that but when the transfer of title stamp duties paid will be reimbursed there.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You reimburse the third party. Thank you.

## **Output group 6**

### **Children Services System Management**

#### **6.1 Children Services System Management -**

**Mr VALENTINE** - The number of FTE's in that unit if I could please? It was 4 FTE's last year.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I think the wrong figures were given to Rob last year.

**Mr VALENTINE** - This year it is 5.4.

**CHAIR** - It is not children's services. It is the system management, so it is 5.4.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Last year it must have been a wrong figure. FTE's in the Program Support Unit for operational projects.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - 69.2

**Mr VALENTINE** - How is that unit going; is it working effectively? It has not been there that long and I was wondering how it is performing.

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - The Program Support Unit has been there for a reasonable time but has recently changed its make up because of our new leadership structure. It is now inclusive of what I would term an administrative component within each of the regional areas as part of the broader Program Support Unit.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I was going through last year's *Hansard* and it read that it was new.

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - All the components were existing but this make up is new. There is an essential component that deals with a large degree of project management and then there is a regionally-based administrative component.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The performance information dashboard, how is that functioning at the moment?

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - It is functioning very well.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No hiccups or problems with it?

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - No, it is fair to say its imbedding into our decision making and management is growing.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Delivering on its design brief?

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - Yes, basically.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is it being utilised across the spectrum of staff it was intended for and by all staff and managers or is there a way to go before everyone is engaged in using that?

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - It is probably fair to say it is used by some more than others and that comes down to their comfort level with the technology. The encouragement and ability to access it is there.

**CHAIR** - More training?

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - More training, but I think part of it is about just imbedding it in their management approach.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is Child Protection involved in this in some way?

**Mr HARBOTTLE** - Child Protection managers and team leaders use it as part of their supervision arrangements.

**CHAIR** - Can I just ask about the out-of-home care reform. It says the system is being 'redesigned to provide intervention options', can I have an update on how the progression is going on the redesign?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Out-of-home care reform is a separate project to the Child Protection redesign, but I can talk about both.

**CHAIR** - In our notes it talks about being 'progressively redesigned', so I am interested in how the redesign is progressing, particularly when it is to do with the needs of children who have experienced trauma.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I will touch on redesign as well. The redesign of Child Protection is what we announced recently with the \$20.6 million across Children and the Department of Education will be going towards the redesign of Child Protection Services. Underneath that we also have the out-of-home-care reform. It has been long overdue because Tasmania's out-of-home-care system needed strengthen in prevention as well as reunification services. We have done phase 1 of out-of-home-care reform, which was about having providers for sibling group care, residential care and therapeutic services.

**CHAIR** - Have I strayed into 7.1, minister?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is okay, we can cover it off now.

**CHAIR** - It is listed under this output group but it probably relates to that.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Phase 2 is an examination of family-based care options with initial focus on foster carers, including the recruitment, support, training, approval, registration and deregistration of carers. It is a very exciting process because our foster carers are some of the most hardworking and valuable Tasmanians we have. We want to do everything we can to support them more. We want to bring into place consistent and uniform policies and practices to make sure that carers feel they are part of the broader team. We want them to have statewide consistency in recruitment and accreditation, but most importantly, training. A lot of the children coming into out-of-home care of course have experienced trauma, so we want our foster carers to seek more training and support when it comes to trauma. We are doing a lot of work with the Australian Childhood Foundation in regards to that. The out-of-home care stage 2 reform has Redesign of Child Protection Services, which is the covering umbrella over the whole process.

## **Output Group 7 Children Services**

### **7.1 Children Services -**

**CHAIR** - I am going to ask you, minister, about Youth Justice and the Supporting Young People on Bail program and post-detention transition program. Why is there a reduction in the percentage of community service orders completed in 2014-15 compared with the previous years and the future targets?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Supporting Young People on Bail program is working exceptionally well. I was talking to Save the Children recently and it is working so well that they have been invited to Queensland to present on what they are doing. There was an article on TV, and the Queensland Government saw it and asked them to come up there and present.

**CHAIR** - Sort them out.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, and sort them out. Because they thought Tasmania was doing such a good program, they were invited up there by that government to look at it. The program is working really well. It is supporting young people on bail. It is a voluntary, strength-based, solutions-focused, diversionary youth justice program for 12- to 17-year-olds.

**CHAIR** - Why the reduction in the number of community service orders completed if it is working really well?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - For the year to date, the community service orders completed, we are tracking at 89.5 per cent now.

**CHAIR** - So we are on target?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Is there any problem with finding people to supervise those community service orders? That has often been an issue, finding the right people -

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - To work?

**CHAIR** - To supervise anyone who has got a community service order. I am just interested, is there any issue with finding the right people in communities to undertake that role of supervision? If you do not know about it, there is probably no problem, minister. That is perhaps the rationale behind that. I do not mind if you take that on notice.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I can call to the table someone who would know some more on it, Karen Jabbour, who is the director of Services to Young People.

**Ms JABBOUR** - In relation to community service orders, I do not think we have a huge issue at the moment with finding people. Quite often it is about matching the right people up with the right service and making sure that it is in an area where people can complete that appropriately. There may be other issues such as transport et cetera but as for finding people [inaudible].

[5.00 p.m.]

**CHAIR** - So there is no issue. That is fine. I wondered if the reason they were not being completed was finding the appropriate people for supervision. That is a statement, not a question.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I can also give an answer to another question. In regard to the Housing Tasmania debt write-off, in 2014-15 it was \$899 537 and in 2015-16 it was \$864 562.

**CHAIR** - That is why the owing is only \$48 000. Wait until the end of next year.

**Mr DEAN** - Is that right across all Housing Tasmania properties, and does it include those under CHL and all those other organisations?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Just our properties.

**Mr DEAN** - Just those controlled and supervised by HT. So CHL would have all of theirs on top of that; if there are any debts they are written off?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - When the community housing providers took over, the community housing providers bought the debt, part of the debt went with them.

**Mr DEAN** - When we are looking at the write-off of debts in affordable housing across the state, that includes CHL and the other organisations that are managing your properties. I am trying to get an encompassing figure of the outstanding debts that have been written off.

**Mr NICHOLSON** - Mr Dean, that represents our long-term housing debt as a state agency. The ongoing debt ledgers of the community housing providers would be for them to manage. We would not keep figures on that.

**Mr WILLIE** - I am wondering if you can give us specific details of the waiting lists for the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service Children and Young Persons Program. Can you give us some details on the number of children waiting on this in the south, the north, and the north-west?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There are 52 children on the waiting list now, statewide, that are being actively managed. I do not have a breakdown for the regions.

**Mr WILLIE** - While we are on that, can you provide details of how many adults and how many children - the split for the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The referrals received by the adult program is 4459. There is no wait list for the adult program. The new clients of the adult program are at 825. Current active clients are 1885.

**Mr WILLIE** - If we could move to the CatholicCare contract from December 2015 to June 2016, how many young people did they counsel? How many adults did they counsel? How many staff were employed by CatholicCare to undertake this work?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They have not provided counselling to any adults. They were purely for children. As at 4 May 2016, Catholic Care have provided a service for 42 children and young people.

**Mr WILLIE** - And adults?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They don't do adults.

**Mr WILLIE** - What provision has been made after 1 June when that contract finishes. Is that going to be absorbed by the public service.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The initiatives under the Family Violence Action Plan, the \$4 million for counselling services, is part of a request for a proposal process. That is separate to the funding that is for the family violence counselling support services.

**Mr WILLIE** - It might be separate but are they expected to continue the service without that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - CatholicCare?

**Mr WILLIE** - No, the contract is finishing. Will the extra load be -

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The \$4 million that was allocated under the Family Violence Action Plan is part of a request for proposal process at the moment.

**Mr WILLIE** - The CatholicCare contract is finishing. There will still be -

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That was a temporary contract while we were doing the request for proposal process for the whole quantum of dollars that was allocated under the Family Violence Action Plan. The service is for the extra dollars that we have received under the Family Violence Action Plan, those dollars are part of a request for proposal process.

**CHAIR** - Before I head back up the table, do we do the Ashley Detention Centre here?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, you can do that here.

**CHAIR** - Can we have the current numbers please?

**Ms JABBOUR** - There has just been another person admitted to Ashley. Now we are at 11.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Are they still receiving the education component of their rehabilitation. That is all still working?

**Ms JABBOUR** - Yes.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - While you are on that subject, could we have the staff numbers?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Ashley is funded for 66 positions.

**CHAIR** - Sixty six positions for 11 people.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There are three shifts a day, a seven day roster. We have to remember that we have girls and boys and varying ages.

**CHAIR** - You have to have people awake all the time.

**Ms JABBOUR** - At the moment we have individuals from the age of 13 right through to 20. When you take that into account and consider the number on remand, some have been sentenced, you have different complexities.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Why do we have 20 year-olds there?

**Ms JABBOUR** - Because he was sentenced under the Youth Justice Act. He has been there for some time.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, there has been a lot of discussion about Ashley and whether we should keep it. Should there be other facilities? Are you looking further into Ashley as a custodial area for young people? Has it been further considered or have you now accepted the fact that it will be there and that is the way it will happen for the next 20 years?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In regard to Ashley, I think all members were invited to consultations by Noetic.

**CHAIR** - I think the invitation is coming, minister.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I know Greg Hall turned up to the consultations that Noetic is running in regard -

**CHAIR** - That is in his patch so that is not surprising. The local member wasn't but I would be surprised if he wasn't invited.

**Ms JABBOUR** - We did run consultation sessions around Tasmania. Noetic Solutions did run consultations. It was advertised broadly in the papers and invitations were sent out.

**CHAIR** - To all members?

**Ms JABBOUR** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Everyone is going to sack their PAs this week.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - If you still want to have some input we are quite happy to take input.

**Mr DEAN** - Where do you look like going? What is the future?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Noetic is doing a lot of work at the moment on what a therapeutic model within the centre could be in the future or what the future delivery of detention services could be. They are providing an options paper of the future. We are also working with the Commissioner for Children in regard to what future model for detention service could be for young people in Tasmania, keeping in mind Ashley is a very old facility.

**CHAIR** - With a very new, big fence.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Apparently you can get over it in nine seconds. It would take me a life time.

**Mr DEAN** - Have there been any issues with assaults on workers within Ashley and vice versa in the previous 12 months? I guess there is work in that and you might need to take it on notice - sick leave of staff within Ashley.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - From 1 October to 8 April 2016, there were 12 reported code black incidents recorded at Ashley. That does not necessarily involve staff, that might be resident with resident.

**Ms JABBOUR** - Code blacks are calls for assistance. It comes under the emergency policy and there is a number of different components in the emergency policy but code blacks are one of those. There has been a number of those but it could relate to a number of things. It could be a resident who is fighting with another resident. It could be a resident who is fighting with a worker. It covers all things where assistance might need to be called.

**CHAIR** - Minister, is that normally what a code black is, a fist fight?

**Ms JABBOUR** - It could be a number of things. Yes, quite often it does relate to something like that. It could be where something is escalating and the individual feels they would like some additional support to come to the unit. It can be a range of different things.

**Mr DEAN** - The other one about work injury situations and sick leave taken by staff within that unit within Ashley. Do you have those figures?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We only had those because DHHS figures we gave before incorporated workers at Ashley.

**Mr DEAN** - You do not keep the Ashley figures separate?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We will have to take that question on notice.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The number of FTEs in children and youth services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The child protection workers, it was 186.8 but we took it up to 188.6. As part of the redesign, we have announced we are going to employ another 31 people to work in children and youth services as part of the child protection re-design process.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I had something in the order of 484.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That was just child protection workers.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Last year there were 484.6 plus 20 being recruited, I believe.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is around 480 positions but we are recruiting for child protection workers at the moment.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How many recruits?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We are recruiting 31 more staff for children and youth services as part of the re-design of child protection.

**CHAIR** - Will that be spread statewide?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In the budget papers you advised a \$1.4 million and 30 per cent reduction in funds and the words 'reflects an internal reallocation of funds.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - What page are you on?

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is on page 92. Note 8 says:

The decrease in children's services assistant manager primarily reflects an internal reallocation of funds within the Children's Services outputs following the DHHS review.

That is \$1.4 million. It does not fully explain things. On page 78, table 4.7, it is proposed this output group is to achieve an improvement from 59 per cent of planned strategic projects with milestones achieved for 2014-2015 to a target of 100 per cent for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

**CHAIR** - We have gone backwards, honourable member.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How does this objective align with a 30 per cent reduction in funding? It is a pretty big ask is it not? Gone backwards?

**CHAIR** - We are back to 6.1.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is all right I have allocated this question in the wrong section, but I would still like the response. I do apologise.



**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The target for 2015-2016 is - are you talking about the planned strategic -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is 100 per cent.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is 100 per cent.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The output group is to achieve an improvement from 59 per cent to 100 per cent and yet there is a 30 per cent reduction in funding.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is an internal reallocation of funds within the Children's Services outputs following the DHHS review. The DHHS review was all about setting up central business units and consolidating things like purchasing, financing, policy, legislation, etcetera. It has just been reallocated internally across DHHS, so the quantum of dollars -

**Mr VALENTINE** - The funds are still going to be available?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is it. The DHHS dollars are still there, but is just different.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is fine. That is a simple enough explanation. Can the minister advise us what is the nature of the projects that are not delivered in full because it talks about that? Does the 59 per cent strike rate then compromise the operations and/or objectives of Children's Services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The 2015-2016 target is 100 per cent though.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What is the nature of the projects that are not delivered in full?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In 2014-2015 what projects weren't taken -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Previous.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Previously weren't done in full.

**Mr NICHOLSON** - There could be a range of reasons for that, Mr Valentine. Obviously some projects go across multiple years so they might not be completed within a year.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I understand that is possible.

**Mr NICHOLSON** - Obviously, we have been through a major restructure of the department in the Children and Youth Area and we have created now a major projects area that provides additional support in the implementation and design of projects, which allows us to be clearer about milestones and time frames when we are setting project scopes. That is why you are seeing an improvement in the projected target to 100 per cent.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Okay. That is a fair call. What are we measuring to ascertain the benefits of these projects? Do you have any measures? We are spending money on major projects like this, what are we measuring to know whether we are hitting the mark or not?

**Mr NICHOLSON** - With most of our major projects now we have project activation agreements we use at the start. We use standard project management methodology and identify what the outcomes we are seeking to achieve through the project might be. We then match to resourcing and then work out time frames relative to those two factors. Then at the end of the process when the project is complete we will go through an outcome realisation process where we assess -

**Mr VALENTINE** - You are doing the outcome realisation?

**Mr NICHOLSON** - Increasingly we are doing that under the model I described just before.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is right it is good project management and is terrific.

**Mr DEAN** - Are we keeping any statistical data in this state in relation to complaints against children for assaults or abuse on parents and guardians?. Victoria is the lead state in this. Victoria say they have a real problem and assaults reported by parents and guardians has increased 50 per cent over the last three years. It is reaching epidemic levels. I suspect we could have a problem here, so do we keep those figures?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I noticed that question in your budget reply speech and we have asked and actually could not find data at all.

**Mr DEAN** - I can give you the Victoria data.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Victoria data, we could not find any corresponding data for Tasmania.

**Ms JABBOUR** - We do not capture that data. Because if we were under the Family Violence Act it does not allow for that, in relation for assaults of children on adults or vice versa. Anecdotally I know that happens, it would be probably police who may be able to provide some data but we do not collect it currently in that form.

**Mr DEAN** - Will your department be looking at then? If it is happening, that comes down to a management thing with these children as well.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - If police charge them under the Youth Justice Act, then we become involved. But we also have our Youth At Risk strategy being developed at the moment. So if young people that we identify at risk, or who will become at risk in the future or may become future clients of Community Youth Justice or of Ashley. There is a whole strategy and body of work being done which involves a whole range of consultations.

We are trying to do the prevention side, but as to details police has. We aim to strengthen our relationships with Department of Police Fire and Emergency Management, is part of not only our redesign of Child Protection but also of our risk strategy.

**Mr DEAN** - That's good. The youth justice court is under the Attorney-General is it?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No; Youth Justice is myself. The Youth Justice court is under the Attorney-General.

I have another answer to a question on notice. In regards to Mr Willie's questions, family violence counselling service, this is for the waiting list - 52 statewide. There are four waiting in the north west, four in the north and 44 in the south.

**Mr WILLIE** - Thank you.

## **Output Group 8 Independent Children's Review Service**

### **8.1 Office of the Commissioner for Children -**

**Mr FINCH** - A steady increase over the Forward Estimates. Nothing stands out for me there in respect to that.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - He is doing exceptionally well, I think you have had a briefing from the Commissioner for Children. He is doing outstanding work and I really appreciated what he has been doing, especially with regards to the redesign of child protections. He was heavily involved in the whole process, taking part in consultations with Professor Maria Harries. He is also very much involved looking at the future of Ashley Youth Detention Centre and the Youth At Risk strategy. By the amount of opinion pieces he is putting in the newspaper, and with the consultations every year. Last year he went out and made so many consultations with kids.

**CHAIR** - Holding them is the problem.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We have the Commissioner for Children for five years and Mr Pervan has been for nine years. We have managed to hold on to him. Recently the Commissioner for Children [inaudible] the Young Creative Writers Awards with the theme 'fairness and respect'. Last year not many of us managed to go where he received the awards where Matt Deighton from the *Mercury*, Heather Rose and a few others were involved. It was quite special to see what amazing writers our young people can be. Also he has taken the lead in child safe organisations and as part of that he consulted with over 400 children in 20 communities around the state to hear from them directly what they believe a child safe organisation should look like. This year he will be producing a report, released in four parts, on the health and wellbeing of Tasmania's children, young people and their families, which will be a combination of national and state data on all aspects of children's health and well being.

He is also going to do a report on a major point of family domestic violence and the impact on Tasmanian children this year. He also has a range of advisory groups so he is doing a lot of work.

**Mr FINCH** - It is much better that he has a five-year term, as you mentioned earlier, rather than a three-year term.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - He is outside of the election cycle which is the most important thing and he is doing a fantastic body of work.

**Mr FINCH** - The situation still occurs where any complaint to the Commissioner for Children and people have issues, the Ombudsman is the one to whom those complaints go.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Apart from young people in Ashley. He is a representative for young people in Ashley so they can go straight to him if they want to raise an issue with Ashley.

**Mr FINCH** - How close or strongly linked is that relationship between the Commissioner for Children and the Ombudsman?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They are both independent statutory officers but they will just refer the case to the Commissioner for Children if he receives a case. He could refer to us because some people are not aware of what the child protection hotline number is, for example, so they might contact him with their child protection concern and they will be referred to Child Protection Services. It depends on what the issue is as to who the most appropriate person to be referred to because sometimes it might be the Anti-discrimination Commissioner. It depends on the issue.

**Mr FINCH** - Just having a look at the output, the activities provide in this output include promoting the rights of the children examining the policies, practice services provided to children, any law affecting health, welfare, care protection and development of children. Does the work of the Early Childhood Foundation fit in here somewhere? Does the foundation still exist?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is under the minister for Education.

**Mr FINCH** - For the early years?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - If there are no other questions in regard to the Office of the Commissioner for Children, then I invite you to look at the Minister for Women.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Can I table an answer to just one more question before we close off? The latest statistics we have was nine assaults on staff for 2014-15 but we cannot confirm if they took sick leave.

## **DIVISION 7**

(Department of Premier and Cabinet)

### **Minister for Women**

#### **Output Group 6**

#### **Community, Sport and Recreation**

#### **6.5 Women's Policy -**

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In July 2015 the Government released the Women on Boards Strategy 2015- 2020 which is addressing the gender imbalance of government board membership. As at 5 May 2016 women represented 38.8 per cent of government boards and committee appointees, which is an increase from previous starting point of 33.8 per cent or five percentage points or 14.8 per cent in the last 12 months. This is a good start as the Government works towards our target of achieving 50 per cent of women on boards by the year 2020. To assist with achieving our target, \$150 000 over three years for the Tasmanian Government Board Diversity Program is being provided to enable scholarships for women to undertake training with the Australian Institute of Company Directors, including the Company Directors Course and the Foundations of Directorship Course.

Women, as we know, make an exceptional contribution to our community and it is important as a community that we recognise their efforts and celebrate their many untold stories. Therefore I look forward to acknowledging the outstanding leadership and achievement of women and women's organisation who will be inducted on to the 2017 Honour Roll of Women in March 2017. As well, in 2015-16 the Government provided funding of \$7500 to support International Women's Day events in each region of the state and produced an on-line calendar of events through the community sport and recreation website.

Economic security empowers women and girls to make choices and live independent, enriching all aspects of their lives. The Tasmanian Women's Plan provides a strong foundation to improve outcomes in this area. For example, we have the Valuing Gender Inclusion in policy and program design web pages to assist policy and program planners to examine gender related implications in the development of their programs, services and policy. I also have the Tasmanian Women's Council which advised me on all areas of the Tasmanian Women's Plan and women's issues and is also actively engaged with and supporting the Economic Security for Women Organisation.

We are also currently assisting with the development of the third action plan of the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children, which also focuses on women's economic participation and financial security pre and post family violence crisis intervention. We are also working with the University of Tasmania to highlight, especially with university students, the issues of occupational segregation and the associated pay gap, so as to empower female graduates to negotiate for better pay and job conditions into the workforce.

As part of my role as Minister for Women and Minister for Human Services, in August 2015 I was proud, alongside my Cabinet colleagues and the Premier, to be part of the release of Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015 to 2020, which is providing a much-needed nearly \$26 million extra for 19 new and direct actions that address family violence in Tasmania. As part of this, the family violence consultative group, which I convened, played a critical role in providing advice and feedback on the government's response to family violence. This group is made up of external government stakeholders who have a wide range of expertise and experience in this issue.

Also during 2015-16 the Tasmanian Women's Council hosted numerous white ribbon events and held conversations with experts such as the then Assistant Commissioner of Tasmania Police, John Adams, to support the government's response to family violence and women's safety.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I notice that, as you say, it has gone to 38 per cent of women on boards. How many women have been promoted to boards and committees currently? I appreciate it is to 2020 that you are looking for 50 per cent.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It has gone from 38.8 per cent.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - How many people is that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Out of 1236 current board positions, 784 are occupied by men and 452 by women.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Can we get a list on notice of GBEs and a breakdown of the current management of government boards and committees in terms of gender?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - GBEs?

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - GBEs would be a good start. The other thing I noticed, Minister, on 1 July 2015 it was reported with the ABC that you said your Cabinet colleagues will be held accountable for hitting the target and that Cabinet members will be responsible to report to Cabinet on a quarterly basis as to how they, in their own agencies, are going at reaching the target of 50 per cent. Have your Cabinet colleagues been reporting quarterly? If so, how are they going? If not, why not?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I want to finish reading out what I should have read out in regard to the 784, then I will answer that question. Individuals sitting on multiple boards I counted multiple times here, so the percentage breakdown that we get is not the same as you get from simply comparing the number of individual men and women sitting on government boards, which gets the 38.8 per cent. Just to put a rider on that figure.

In regard to my Cabinet colleagues, to be quite honest just about - I am not allowed to talk about what they say but every time -

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I understand you are not allowed to talk about what they are saying, but have they been reporting quarterly as you said they would?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. They report just about every single week and every single nomination they put forward has to come up with a certification form. The reason that we are doing so well is because we are holding each member accountable, each fresh nomination they put up as to the reasons why not.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - I can see the increase is 3 per cent but how many people is that actually that has increased then?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I was the top of the class in maths.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - We have 452, so what was it previously? It would be interesting to see. We have a percentage but how many actual people if your Cabinet colleagues are doing well and increasing the membership. I note you were saying you were working with UTAS regarding the pay gap and negotiations. What money has been spent by the government in

public primary schools, high schools, colleges and university, apart from just the pay gap to help nurture leadership in young girls and young women?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We had the \$50 000 for the scholarships. Through the Department of Education we have the My Education program. With the fact sheets, what we have been working on is to target the university students primarily up front.

**Mrs ARMITAGE** - Was that just the pay gap and negotiation you mentioned? Are we talking about helping to nurture leadership? I am sure, minister, that you too want women appointed to the boards on merit and ability and not because of gender.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In regard to education and training, the state introduction of My Education commenced in 2015 and will continue to be rolled out across government schools over the next two years. This is in regard to improving education and training and leadership opportunities for women and girls. This is what is happening in the schools. It starts in kindergarten to year 12 and is about career and life planning. It aims to assist students, both male and female, to identify their personal interest, values, strengths and aspirations, to get them to start thinking about what they want to go to once they finish their schooling. The implementation is well under way, and action across a number of the priority areas has taken place. From the beginning of their education girls are being involved in decision making about their future pathways together with their parents, carers and other influential adults in their lives. Imbedding career development into the curriculum, along with the opportunities offered through the state's trading centres and vocational education and training programs are helping to ensure female students have opportunities to build skills in non-traditional disciplines.

**CHAIR** - Can I ask about the Our Watch. It is not a long of money over three years and it talks about supporting 'Tasmania's annual membership of Our Watch'. How does that relate to this output group?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Our Watch is done on a state-by-state basis. It is done on per capita contributions so other states put in a lot more money. For us it is only \$22 000, we get the cheapest rate in Australia.

**CHAIR** - Even if it is not a lot money, what do we get from that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - With Our Watch the benefit is it is an organisation that works with ENRO - Australia's National Research Organisation - for women's safety, but they also do a lot of research. They are helping to drive nationwide change. They have had program such as They are doing a framework at the moment called Change the Story, which is an initiative under the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children. This outlines the latest evidence on what causes violence against women and their children. They have been talking to more than 400 diverse stakeholder groups around the country. Change the Story outlines what actions work to prevent violence against women and their children.

[5.45 p.m.]

**CHAIR** - Has that information been something your government has used as a frame work for the family violence action plan?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. Also, it helps the initiatives they release and that we take part in. We get the benefit of receiving their documentation, research and reports in the different initiatives they do.

**CHAIR** - I do not recall seeing it previously.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Natasha Stott-Despoja is the ambassador for it. She is the chairperson. It is a body that is helping to drive nationwide change.

**CHAIR** - Do you meet?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. When the board meets in Tasmania, I get the opportunity not to attend the board meetings but to meet with the board after their meetings.

**Ms KENT** - It is an interesting board structure. I am the nominated representative from Tasmania. The states and territories that belong to it are almost every state and territory except for Western Australia and New South Wales. It is chaired by Natasha Stott-Despoja. Also the Australian of the Year, David Morrison, is on that board, and others, so it is fairly high powered and dynamic. There is a focus on working with ANROWS, the research organisation, to ensure there is good underpinning evidence for the national program.

**CHAIR** - It sounds like we get pretty good value for \$22 000.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - As it is on a per capita basis, we get definitely a lot more than our \$22 000.

**CHAIR** - I do not recall seeing it. It went under my radar.

**Ms SPENCER** - We did not join until August last year, so it is after the last Estimates. It is reasonable and I quite understand.

**Mr FINCH** - With the Ministry for Women, have you had any involvement or provided support for the development of the AFL's policy or progression of women playing Aussie Rules Football? How do you view it?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It would be fantastic, I think, one day.

**CHAIR** - I wish it had started earlier.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes. It is under the Premier's portfolio because he is the Minister for Sport. My Dad played for South Launceston and City South so I grew up on a football oval and the best thing on a Saturday was sometimes watching my mother play in the women's team. I was able to kick a football all right. I think, one day, it would be wonderful to have an AFL team. There is a lot of development that has to go in the meantime. We are working with AFL to develop that further because it is something the Premier is lobbying for. He supports the idea of a women's AFL team for Tasmania. -

**CHAIR** - It will be a coup if the women get a team before the men.



**Mr FINCH** - Have you been called on to give the mantra for this development, minister?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I encourage and lobby from the sidelines but it is the Premier who is the person who meets with the AFL and it is under his portfolio.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The name of the program is the Tasmanian Government Board Diversity Scholarship Program. Is that allocation a legitimate part of women's policy or more of a generic aspect of inclusion and diversity? It says 'Government board diversity'. It is interesting it has that name without getting women on the boards. I guess one could say 'board diversity' could also be cultural, so it is getting people from different cultures.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is to encourage more diversity so it is to encourage more women to be on boards. The primary focus is on women but we would like to see boards become more diverse with people with a disability or from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island backgrounds as well. The diversity is more to encourage people to start thinking that their board does need to be more diverse. Fifty per cent is our first target, then we can start working on the other aspects as well; that would be a good step forward.

**Mr VALENTINE** - My last question is what is the current ratio of women in the SES?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Thirty-five per cent of the senior executive positions are occupied by women. However, that is now six per cent more women in senior executive positions than at the equivalent time last year. The head of the State Service, Greg Johannes, has been leading discussions with heads of agencies to develop a gender equality strategy for the State Service, particularly looking at the under-representation of women in the senior executive service. He spoke of his intention to promote gender equality across the board on the boards and committees on which he serves and is endeavouring to accept future positions only on boards and committees that actually do have an equal gender balance, so it has been driven from the top.

**Mr DEAN** - Have we ever done any study or review of why we have this imbalance of females on boards. Is there ever a review done? Is it that we do not have as many women putting their hands up for these positions? Or is it that they are being overlooked in favour of men? Have you ever looked at that?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We have found from the researchers that there is unconscious gender bias. Even if women have the equivalent knowledge and skills and background, unconsciously people do see males as having more leadership ability and that men make better leaders; so it has been a big issue for a long time. It is like on the ASX 200 boards, there are a lot more men than women.

The Governor of Tasmania likes to say it is because men are seen as being able to lead and have more management experience, even if the women have exactly the same qualifications and background.

**Mr DEAN** - We have got a number of men who are professional board members and on umpteen dozen boards. In one instance, there was about \$400 000 or \$500 000 coming in to that one individual from all the board commitment that he is on. Do we have any women currently on multiple boards?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, there are women on multiple boards. That is why I indicated before that the figure I read out needs to be in the context that people might be on multiple boards.

Chair, I need to correct an answer to one question today. While another person entered Ashley today, another one left today. At the end of the day the number is back to 10.

**CHAIR** - Thank you and your team very much for your contribution to the Estimates process. We very much appreciate it. We know how much work goes into preparing everything that you do. Again, we thank you and your chief of staff, who provides us with very good information in a very timely manner.

**The committee adjourned at 5.56 p.m.**  
Endpoint Security by BitdefenderThis page is safe