

# UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Wednesday 7 June 2017 - Estimates Committee A (Hidding)**

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

**Wednesday 7 June 2017**

#### MEMBERS

Mr Armstrong  
Mr Farrell  
Ms Forrest (Deputy Chair)  
Mr Gaffney  
Mr Hall (Chair)  
Mr Valentine

#### IN ATTENDANCE

**Hon. Rene Hidding MP**, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Infrastructure

#### Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

**Darren Hine**, Secretary DPEM and Commissioner of Police  
**Scott Tilyard**, Deputy Commissioner of Police  
**Chris Arnol**, Chief Officer, TFS  
**Jeff Harper**, Acting Deputy Chief Officer, TFS  
**Robert Bonde**, Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police  
**Richard Cowling**, Assistant Commissioner of Police  
**Donna Adams**, Deputy Secretary, Business and Executive Services, DPFEM  
**Todd Crawford**, Director Business Services  
**Marijke Harris**, Manager, Finance and Payroll Services, Business and Executive Services  
**Lisa Stingel**, Manager, Media and Communications

#### Department of State Growth

**Kim Evans**, Secretary  
**Gary Swain**, Deputy Secretary Transport Services  
**Alison Turner**, Director, Infrastructure Review and Evaluation, Infrastructure Tasmania  
**Angela Conway**, Director Infrastructure Policy  
**Penny Nicholls**, General Manager Road User Services  
**Shane Gregory**, General Manager State Road Services

**Amanda Russell**, Deputy Secretary Business Services  
**Glen Dean**, Finance Director  
**Lia Morris**, Chief Executive of Marine and Safety Tasmania

## Ministerial Office

**Will Joscelyne**, Chief of Staff  
**Richard Wilson**, Deputy Chief of Staff  
**Randolph Wierenga**, Senior Adviser  
**Jonathan Wood**, Senior Adviser  
**Carol Jones**, Adviser

**The committee met at 9.00 a.m.**

## DIVISION 6

(Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management)

## Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

**CHAIR** (Mr Hall) - I call the committee to order and welcome you to the table. Please, introduce your members at the table.

**Mr HIDDING** - On my right, I have Commissioner Darren Hine and then we have Todd Crawford and Deputy Commissioner Scott Tilyard and then I need to - yes, the Deputy Secretary of the Department. I am trying to think of her division, it is called BES, what that acronym stood for, but it is coming back to me. Donna Adams on my left.

**CHAIR** - Welcome everybody to the table. Our first output is the police and it's got an acronym. I will get the right title there again. We are doing Police, Fire and Emergency Management. In that regard, I would ask if you would like to make some an overview about those output groups.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, with your agreement, Mr Chairman. I would like to make a few opening comments about the first set of groupings which is the Tasmanian Police budget estimates. I am pleased today to present for the estimates scrutiny. This year, it has seen the department consolidate its operations and systems as an integrated police fire and emergency management organisation whilst delivering high quality frontline services to the community. This statement focuses on the Tasmanian Police and the broader department. I will be providing an additional statement later for Tasmanian Fire Service and the SES.

Mr Chairman, as we are today discussing the policing of crime and criminals, amongst other public safety issues. I do want to express a view about the prime minister's current position and his anger about the situation with parole. The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to being tough on crime and keeping the community safe and, accordingly, we are very supportive of Prime Minister Turnbull and his Federal Government's push for stronger parole laws for terrorism related offences and serious violent criminals. The community rightfully expects parole to be granted only when there is no risk to the community. Parole should not be a right and there shouldn't be an

expectation against early release for anyone considered dangerous or having a history of dangerous behaviour.

I am aware, sadly as minister for Police, of deep disappointment within Tasmanian Police itself, particularly by hard-working frontline police officers who have put criminals before the courts, had them sentenced, and then have them released early, only to see them re-offend and, in fact, having to charge them again and put them before the court. I am aware of a number of cases involving bail and parole where offenders have been charged for serious crimes. But, of course, under the laws of justice, those people, as their matters are before the court, they can't be identified and spoken about that. But that doesn't stop Tasmanian police officers strongly expressing to me their concern about what they see as ineffective use of parole and bail laws.

We look forward to discussing this matter with the Federal Government and every other first minister in Australia on Friday at COAG in Hobart. Clearly, it is going to be a central matter for discussion. Tasmania will not only host the COAG, but will be at the centre of those discussions about parole and bail laws on Friday.

I am pleased to report that the state Budget supports a number of key initiatives in this portfolio consistent with commitments made prior to the 2014 state election. We continue to deliver on its pledge to rebuild the police service by increasing police officer recruitment. In fact, I am attending a graduation in a week or two of the latest graduation. If any member of this house is available for that graduation ceremony, if you haven't done one before, I would encourage you to go and participate in it and be present because it is a really special moment. I think every time this occurs, it is a very special moment. A large crowd and their families are there and the University of Tasmania are there because they are all very much part of the police training now. I would encourage member to attend one of these ones some time. Having made that statement now, I will ensure that everybody is issued with an invitation just in case you weren't aware of it.

The Government has now provided an additional funding of \$13.35 million over the next four years to continue rebuilding the police service. This commitment will see Tasmanian Police authorise sworn strength expand to 1233 FTEs and we are well on track to achieve in the full term of this government.

The most significant new investment in this budget for Tasmania Police is the allocation of funding for Project Unify to deliver an integrated and sophisticated operational informational system. This is a whole new computer digital model that is necessary for this day and age to have the latest gear. \$13.4 million has been allocated over the next four years to replace the department's ageing information system and this will support a responsive 24-hour business with the priority being officer and community safety.

The Budget allocates \$3.45 million over four years to delivery body-worn cameras in a staged rollout to all uniform police officers. I suspect we will be talking about that later. So, I look forward to that. This is a specialised form of technology a user wears to capture video and audio from a first person perspective. The project is a significant step forward for Tasmania Police both in terms of providing a safe working environment and delivering operational efficiencies to officers on the frontline.

The Tasmania Police Fire and Emergency Services workers consistently go and above and beyond for the safety and security of others in the community, but this can take its toll on mental and physical health. The Government has allocated \$1.5 million each year for the next four years

for the department to introduce to a proactive preventative wellness program. Being proactive with early identification of warning signs, adopting preventative measures and providing support to emergency services will help these workers to continue doing their job and maintain their wellbeing.

I touch now on the matter of the computer-aided dispatch system for all our emergency services agencies as well as Ambulance Tasmania. That remains on track for delivery in 2017. It is a very big project. A total of \$17.27 million is going to that and a lot of effort continues there.

Work is coming to an end with the construction of a new police vessel at Cape Wickham. The new 24-metre offshore police patrol vessels in the final phases and I am looking forward to it being delivered to Hobart within a month or so.

Remote area policing is a critical role for Tasmania Police and housing in good condition available encourages police officers and their families to live and stay in country areas. This budget provides 1.25 million each year for the next three years for the upgrade to police housing following on from previous allocations. In the coming 12 months, the program will renovate or purchase a further 15 police residences in locations including King Island, Orford, Triabunna, Swansea and Dover, and this is also necessary, of course, because we have got extra police officers out there now available to the community and they need housing.

An important anniversary took place this year, the 100-year anniversary of women in policing and I understand that a lady called Kate Campbell first joined the Hobart Station in 1917 and now, of course, generally when I attend these graduation events, it is about 50/50 and that is just terrific and we have got a very balanced police service, particularly in the area of gender, but also in a whole range of skills.

**Ms FORREST** - A bit of work to do around this table still, though. On both sides.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, indeed, but I will leave that to you.

**Mr HIDDING** - But the aim of Tasmania Police is to become a workforce that truly values all forms of diversity. With those opening comments, Mr Chairman, I am happy to explore the -

**CHAIR** - Thanks, minister. We might just do a couple of overview questions to start off with and glad you mentioned the parole job. That was the first one that I had on my list and that is obviously going to be addressed on Friday coming.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is good leadership by the prime minister to use the coming together of COAG to - and he has flagged early enough for each first minister to get advice and I hope we can move towards a national model of an understanding of how we do these things. After all, terrorism crosses boundaries and, you know -

**CHAIR** - That was the second part of my question was, obviously, what has been happening in the last few days. I mean, it has become alarming right throughout the world and very close to home and likely to continue. The question would be then given those matters, and I don't expect you to get into operational details or anything else, how are we placed in terms of our reactions? I mean, in London, they nailed three people in eight minutes apparently, which is extraordinary, I thought. But, anyway, that was the way it was. How do you think - are you happy with the capacity that we have got here and the measures that we have in place to deal with - those sort of threats can happen here as well as anywhere else.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is something that I regularly discuss with my police commissioner and his deputy and assistant commissioners about our readiness for this and I am very confident that we are as ready as we should be. In Tasmania, we have got very highly trained operatives.

**CHAIR** - Will it require extra resources and will it impact on the Budget at all given the ramping up of what has been going on, I suppose is the question.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it has got the potential to do that a little way down the track. But I might - I will, in fact - I will ask the Commissioner - this is a very fresh conversation that we are regularly having. There is talk about potential funding, extra funding may be required somewhere down the track. As all states ramp up, we have to go with them, obviously.

**CHAIR** - Yes, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - So, Commissioner.

**CHAIR** - Thanks, Commissioner.

**Mr HINE** - Thanks, minister, and thanks for the question. As it is fresh in everyone's mind, we have had a number of events around the world that just shows terrorism is something we do have to be ready and aware of and make sure we have got a capability to address any terrorism issues that may occur in Tasmania and Australia. As you know, our threat level is at 'probable' at the moment and we have a number of mechanisms to make sure that we have a capability to deal with issues that are occurring in Tasmania. As you rightly point out, in the London attack within eight minutes where the van drove into the crowd and then a number of people were stabbed and it was over in eight minutes. Our research shows from around the world that normally a mass casualty incident of that nature is over between 10 and 15 minutes. That is why we have to train our frontline police officers to deal with these sort of events in which we are actually going through and making sure that they are trained to deal with these situations.

But we are also linked into the national counterterrorism environment. The Deputy Commissioner sits on the ANZCTC, which is the Australia and New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee and we have a number of capabilities that are developed under that, so we are at a national standard and we also have a standard where we can operate in conjunction with the other states. We know our capacity, how long we can sustain a situation and then other states come and assist us when required. Because we go and assist other states as well, so there has to be an inter-operability between the states which we do have. Whether it is negotiators, whether it is special operations groups, whether it is bomb experts, we have all those capabilities within Tasmania. It is a very complex environment. We have detailed partnerships and strong partnerships with all the other law enforcement agencies, whether it is the AFP, other states, ASIO or the intelligence agencies as well. We have to be as ready as every other state. Whilst we have no known threats in Tasmania, and it is important to emphasise that, but it is the threats that we don't know about that we have to be concerned and ready for.

We are always talking to the minister about our threat environment, our capability requirements and we continue to develop those, but Tasmania is well-served and should remain safe and feel safe, but they also should remain vigilant to make sure if they see something that is out of the ordinary, then they should report it either directly to Tasmania or to the national hotline.

**CHAIR** - You rely on national intelligence agencies to get your information straight across? I mean, that's the way it works?

**Mr HINE** - It is a complex web. There is a number of leads and connections we have to the national situation and the international situation to make sure we get that information. We have very strong partnerships with intelligence agencies and our own information gathering and we have a number of committees and squads that are set up to make sure that they get fed. We work with the AFP and we have got a joint counter-terrorism team here in Tasmania that they get the information and they work through those issues. We are well-connected nationally and internationally to make sure we have access to all the intelligence that we need to access. But, again, these are only the known threats. We have to make sure that we work with the community that if they see something, they say something that they may be suspicious of or have a concern of. We have to make sure we work with the community because they are our eyes and ears out there.

**Ms FORREST** - Just on that, Mr Chairman, is there a specific program of alert? I mean, remember the old 'Be alert, not alarmed'? I don't think we need to go down that path again. But I think everyone is aware of what is happening in the media and people often don't perhaps appreciate the role they can play, like, seeing something that is unusual and reporting it. How are you getting that message out because it doesn't appear to be getting out there broadly, but maybe it is in other subtle ways?

**Mr HINE** - I will hand over to the Deputy Commissioner, but it is probably one of those things there are national campaigns every now and then. You will see that the national hotline and what number to call or call your local police station or Crime Stoppers. But we need to actually get that message out even broader because it is not only about counter-terrorism or terrorism, it is about all aspects of life as to whether you see suspicious behaviour in relation to a crime or information that you need to actually work with us so we can help the community. We need to get that whole message across to say: "If you see something, say something if there is something suspicious." And it could be terrorism related, it could be general crime related. We need to have the confidence of the community to work with us and we work for them. It is that general message.

**Ms FORREST** - They don't think of that because I have a lot of representations through the office from people who have minor police related matters, generally. I mean, not often major things. But I always say to them, if you let the police know about this because if you haven't, how do they know? You can't assume they are going just because you have seen it, you know. It seems to be this bit of a lack of awareness that people should report even things that don't seem all that significant in isolation.

**Mr HINE** - Yes. No, I couldn't agree with you more. As in, sometimes that small piece of the puzzle actually completes that puzzle and that is the information we need and we work really hard with Crime Stoppers. We have got a strong relationship with them to make sure people report matters of that nature to us. It could be reporting to the local police officer. It could be reporting to the National Counter-Terrorism Hotline as well. So, people must - we want to work closely with them because we get the society that we deserve and want and that is where we have to work really hard to make sure we listen to the community to what they want and so we can provide a service. But it is that partnership and whether it is Neighbourhood Watch or Crime Stoppers or a terrorism matter, we have to make sure that we work really closely with the community and policing has shifted over many, many years to say, "We won't tell you what you need, we need to listen to you to what you actually require."

**Ms FORREST** - Is there a program to actually this message out, I guess, is the question here?

**Mr HIDDING** - I think this is an important time to just place on the record a strong word to any Tasmanians who are listening and who are reading this material that Crime Stoppers has just changed from a dial-up and report something with voice to a full online reporting now. Given that everybody is digital, we expect a much stronger reporting incidents to Crime Stoppers and we really encourage people because it is completely secret, the fact that you reported something. And people trust that with Crime Stoppers and Tasmania Police are very, very serious about that. They have disclosed where that information come from and that gives our citizens out there the confidence to say: "I saw something. I'm not sure. I tell you what, I think I might just" - what a good thing to do. We just say to people: "Please, get the hang of using Crime Stoppers. If you see something that doesn't feel right, say so."

**Mr VALENTINE** - Of course, you deal with the malicious ones that come through who are trying to put somebody -

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Yes. On the same theme, we will just take questions in order.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - On the radio this morning, it was saying that anybody that is in gaol with terrorism, the Victorian Premier is going to bring it to COAG on Friday. That will include ASIO and the Federal Police when their parole comes up. Have you had any thought on that?

**Mr HIDDING** - I think that is the kind of thinking that we are going to need from our first ministers on Friday. It is that kind of thing because, generally, the parole decision is made by a board of people that is appointed by a government of good and wise individuals who sit around and say: "Parole is there for a good reason. Can we let this person go?" They look at all the evidence of how he or she behaved in the prison system, other matters, and then they walk away on parole. It seems to me that anyone suspected of having any links to terror or serious violent crime ought to be referred to other agencies. I just think that makes sense because it could well be that those other agencies know about something and that person's connections and it gives them the ability to flag to say: "Really, despite the fact I know you want to let this person go, I don't think this is a good idea to do. Let him serve his time." I think that is where this discussion will go with first ministers, those kind of things. One would have thought that that would happen already.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Apparently it doesn't.

**Mr HIDDING** - But I think all Australians now are ready for a conversation about bail, the application of bail, how that works. You know, somebody charged with a serious violent offence, the fact that the re-offending is not necessarily an issue for bail. How could that ever possibly be? Parole needs to be looked at. We are very clear that we believe suspended sentences should be out of the ability of courts. They should send them to prison or not. No suspended sentences and, of course, this house is very aware of our view in certain cases, certain limited cases with extraordinary circumstances for mandatory sentencing as well. It is fair for a parliament to have a view about the term or a minimum term of certain sentences under a certain things. Our Government is tough on crime and we believe that the great majority of Tasmanians want us to be.

**CHAIR** - Just before we go to Rob Valentine, just in terms of the terrorism incident in the UK and how they are using catch-words: "Run, hide, tell." I heard a bit of a discussion yesterday that

that may not be applicable to Australia. Is that something that is going to - I think going to - somebody is going to get the right word set there?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, it has already been on the agenda for the National Counter-Terrorism Committee to have a look at that and to see what are the appropriate words and what to look at as well. The ANZCTC looks at all those issues nationally and internationally to make sure and there is a meeting coming up and out of what happened in London, there is a meeting so everyone is briefed up with, what happened in Melbourne as well, so we get the latest information and that actually feeds into the national response as well as the state response if or when that occurs.

**CHAIR** - Yes, thank you.

**Mr VALENTINE** - This is still on the terrorism security sort of theme with regard to Border Force, our interaction with the national Border Force and, I suppose, the issue of Federal Police at our airports. Do you have any comment to make on where things are at in that space, Minister? Someone was saying the other day, I think, on radio that it is a soft target. What is happening?

**Mr HIDDING** - I do feel a bit uncomfortable when I hear members of parliament explain chapter and verse how a Hobart Airport is, in fact, a soft target and how all these terrible things could be done to it. It sounds a bit like an invitation to me.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is not meant to be. It is just meant to raise it.

**Mr HIDDING** - I don't mean that now in this case. This is a different forum. It is a perfectly good question. The fact is that I was called a couple of years ago by Minister Keenan to say that the budget we are about to bring down includes the removal of the service at the Hobart International Airport because it isn't an international airport and we only provide services to those international airports. I argued with him then. We have argued with him since. Our own senators are still arguing with him and the Prime Minister. It is a live argument. What would improve our chances, of course, is when the Hobart International Airport actually does become international again.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They have charter flights occasionally, but not a major route.

**Mr HIDDING** - No. When we have regular passenger transport from overseas and well before that starts, I will be on the phone and having that conversation again and I am pretty confident that one way or the other, we are not that far away from seeing the Hobart International Airport become just that again.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What about our coasts? I mean, is there any reason to be concerned about our coastal exposure at all? I mean, you hear about people, you know, drugs being brought in possibly through fishing boats or whatever at different ports. I mean, is that of concern? Do you have any issues there that need to be addressed?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is fair to say nationally that our coast lines are monitored. We have Australian Border Police and I will hand to the Commissioner to talk about that a bit more, but very closely monitored and widely monitored and you would be aware of the vessel, the Chinese vessel, that was in fact boarded by a Naval Police, a naval boat five or 600 miles from here and yet still in - you know, it obviously was hanging around off Tasmania. Very high level watch over that. Our ports are very closely watched by customs and border patrol and I would be pretty confident, but I will hand over to the Commissioner to give his view on that.



**Mr HINE** - Thanks, Minister. Our Serious Organised Crime Unit has been established and in that unit we have members of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Australian Federal Police and also the Border Force. We have actually a unit. They support the unit and work in that unit as well to make sure we have really strong links with our partners and we have a strong national link as well. As the Minister said, that Chinese vessel was a good example and out at the airport you have probably seen where our drug detection dogs have picked up various people importing drugs. Whilst the airport is not patrolled regularly by police and is our responsibility, I, like the Minister, wrote to my counterpart, to the AFP when they withdrew. We still have police officers out there regularly patrolling and we have had some examples where we have picked up people importing drugs or bringing in drugs to the state as well. But then you actually look around our borders. We have had a couple of examples where, again, we work with our Australian Border Force and AFP and our other national partners to make sure we have a really good connection with our broader partnership and, again, with Victoria and other states. We are well-connected. We have a large coastline. We understand that and we have got Marine Police right around the state. But, again, we are only as good as our partners and we work really closely with them.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Our connections with, say, other security services that are out there is reasonable? I mean, you have good connection with them?

**Mr HINE** - It is actually better than reasonable. It is a really, really strong relationship. We have got access to various government agencies immediately and being a smaller jurisdiction, we have very well-established relationships with them and I would actually say we have got some of the best partnerships with our national law enforcement agencies right around the country. Being a smaller jurisdiction, we can get those really personal relationships. It is better than reasonable, actually it is very, very good.

**Mr HIDDING** - Nobody should imagine that because we are an island and a little way away from anything that we are on our own.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Twiddling our thumbs, we're not.

**Mr HIDDING** - No. Every one of those national organisations and structures are here on the island.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Not everybody knows where they are or who they are, but they are here and a very, very robust arrangement, indeed.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Good.

**CHAIR** - Just on the back of - just on overview, just another quick one, Minister. Just with regard to the challenging natural events we had last year with fire and flood and everything else, I presume that has given the opportunity for all emergency services to have a look at all the protocols and methodologies that they went through.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

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**CHAIR** - I just heard yesterday that there is now talk about a new prediction for an El Niño event coming which would be handy for the fire season. Anyway, you just might like to make a brief comment on a couple of those matters.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. So, you know, because -

**CHAIR** - I mean, a lot of the work done was terrific, but I am just saying.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, yes. Because generally we are a positive people in Tasmania here, we tend to forget pretty quickly what has taken place, but a massive fire event was followed only months later by a massive flood event and a flood event which was really unprecedented in a lot of areas, you know, in the Mersey and Latrobe area.

**CHAIR** - It happened in 1970. Fifty years. Yes, so, there you go.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, yes, in fact, the farmer at Kimberley told me exactly that. He told me that. He was telling me exactly that.

**CHAIR** - I know which one or which ones.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, yes. He was saying: "When I was 16." You say: "How old are you now?" He said: "I'm 66."

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is right.

**Mr HIDDING** - So, it was 50 years almost to the day that that took place.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - So, everybody had forgotten it and to give one example, without pointing the finger at anyone because it is no time for doing that at all, on the Latrobe Bridge there was a flood gauge that when it got over, over the top of that flood gauge, it triggered a warning for a minor flood. The problem was that is the top of the gauge. So, it went up here, it was still a minor flood. Pretty simple stuff. Put a longer gauge in which they done immediately after the flood, of course. But they knew the water was high back at the Kimberley Bridge, but not down there. I really don't want to spend too much time on that flood report because it is now under full review by the government and we will respond to it in due course. But that is an example of us not being ready for floods because we don't actually believe they are going to come there, you know, there wouldn't be a flood. But, of course, this report points out strongly that we just need to be ready everywhere and that is what is going to occur now.

This whole agency is a learning agency from every event, every substantial event. Fire do it reflexively, automatically. After a major fire there is an immediate review carried out by AFAC which means peer professionals come in and critique you. You know: "At that point you made that decision. What else could you have done? Why did you do that? Could you have?" That kind of thing is such a strong learning arrangement and that is what we want to do with the floods as well and the report is critical in some areas of things that could have been done better and that is exactly what will inform the SES and the agency generally on what we could have done before, what we could have done during and what we could have done after including flood support programs and disaster support and things like that. There is a lot of input there to consider. I would

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like to publicly thank Mike Leighton who has delivered that report with his usual forensic scrutiny. He doesn't pull any punches and I think it is an excellent body of work and we look forward to working with it.

**CHAIR** - Members, any more overview questions?

**Ms FORREST** - Just in terms of rebuilding the police force (indistinct) I think you call it, don't you?

**Mr HIDDING** - We call it a service now. Police service.

**Ms FORREST** - Sorry, service, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. No, that's all right.

**Ms FORREST** - Did I say "force", did I?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - I must have reverted to a past life. In terms of rebuilding the police service, Minister, can you give us a bit more of an overview about who the police officers will be and where they will be and their roles?

**Mr HIDDING** - You mean as the new ones roll out?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, okay. Have you got that handy, Commissioner? Perhaps this one coming it, it is being decided where they are going.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, thanks, minister. Basically, we are building back up to 1233 police officers and they will be fully out in March of next year is when they graduate the last course and, as the Minister said, we are into the process. In a couple of weeks' time we graduate another 19. Since the term of this Government, they have been spread throughout the state. Those extra 113 police officers. Five have gone in the family violence coordination unit. We have put extra police officers around the state into our RPOS which is the public order and traffic area. They have gone back into training and education. They have gone back into serious crime. They have gone back into professional standards. They have gone back into our state security area. They have actually gone throughout and we have got a full list of where all those have gone. We are now into our last 27 police officers. That is the unallocated ones and we are just into the process of seeing where they go.

**Ms FORREST** - Geographically, they are right around the state as well?

**Mr HIDDING** - As an example, I was in Launceston last week with shop owners and the police and the commander up there informed them happily that he was getting five to the north from the graduation in two weeks' time. That is out of 19, he gets five in the north. I am not sure where the others are going.

**Ms FORREST** - The north is not just Launceston, obviously.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, no, but he is Northern Command.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - But once before there was eight went to the north as well. This has been happening now for two or three years. We went to the election with the promise of 108 extra and then when we needed five for family violence, rather than taking them off the 108, we added them which became 113 commitment. It is a very substantial commitment.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. This has removed the need for single officer patrols and things like that?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - As I said, it is fair to say that right across the state, these extra 113 police officers or 108 as the government committed have gone right across the state in various areas. With the police association, we developed an operational response model which basically develops certain criteria when the attendance at certain situations must be attended by two police officers and that doesn't mean to say that one couldn't go and assess the situation, but back-up was on the way, as in there was no discretion about whether another police officer was going to back-up or not. That has been taken away and the model we developed with the Police Association and it has been accepted widely. We are just now doing a review in relation to that operational response model to make sure that we have got the resources around the state when we need them and to make sure it is working correctly. That is in the process of the review, but the general feedback has been really good. Knowing that a police officer is going to a scene and knowing there is back-up on the way and, in fact, I was talking to a partner of a police officer and when someone gets called out of a night time, they sometimes actually what they hear what they are going to and it is comforting to them to know that, yes, another police officer is on the way to back them up.

In fact, there is other police services around the country interested in how we are going with the model and it has been very successful and it has been one of those really good partnerships with the Police Association to develop something that meets their members' needs and our needs as well. We have got the same attitude. We need to keep police officers safe and I forgot to mention before, we are wearing our Remembrance Day badges today because of the murder of the police officer in Queensland. The funeral is on today, so that's why Rob Bonde, who is the acting assistant commissioner for operations is not here. He is actually representing Tasmania Police at that funeral. Again, the safety of our people is paramount for us and the Police Association. This is just a really good example of where we have addressed those issues and now we are ready to implement it and now we are reviewing it.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is quite a historic change in policing in Tasmania and we really need to thank the Police Association for being proactive, but working with us in a way that allowed the two sides to come together into a practical model which at the end they all looked at each other and said: "Well, this is not that hard. Actually, what we need to do is keep people safe and keep the police officers safe as well." Police officers deserve to be safe at work, but they are in dangerous environments.

**Ms FORREST** - On that point, we have been dealing with a lot of legislation of late dealing with violence against certain individuals, the police officer is one and others, and we have heard in

briefings and other just broader consultation on the legislation that we have been dealing with - or I have been hearing about perhaps some failings or some lack of support in our health services when you have got a violent patient being transported to hospital and the lack of back-up when they get there because we are told that security officers can't actually manhandle a person and you would call a code black, but you have got to get them there to get the code black called, and then you have still got to get your people involved at that point. It appears at times there are some failings in providing that back-up of police at the Department of Emergency Medicine around our state because these patients are everywhere, yes, and particularly with ice in our regional communities being a significant issue. It is not just in our regional areas. It's right across the State, and to say it's worse in some areas is wrong, I believe. It's everywhere. So what are you doing about that? Because this really is an area where I feel our other emergency services are being let down, and our frontline staff are being let down.

**Mr HIDDING** - Firstly, I need make the obvious point. What we're doing about that is trying to - what we did try to do about that was to have a general understanding amongst the community that for, which is in place now, for a police officer, "Don't even think about lifting your arm, because if that goes bad, you know, that could go very badly for you". We wanted to extend that to other workers for that kind of protection as well. However, if you're saying to me that the police responses, if there are cases where police responses have been too slow or non-existent, well, then, on every occasion I say -

**Ms FORREST** - Well, not available I'd suggest, minister. This is what I'm saying is that, there's more than one way to fix a problem here, you know, in that, if there's a risk of our frontline workers being assaulted, then mandatory sentencing is Government's view, and I have a view on mandatory sentencing per se, regardless of who it applies to, but when you've got a situation that could avoid assault on a frontline worker, isn't that a better outcome anyway?

**Mr HIDDING** - Of course it is, and I always say to people, if I hear things like that, that I really say to people, "I really need you to document that event". From a Government's point of view, we can't do much more than put on 113 new police officers at a cost of \$13 million a year over the budget, of this budget, that's a massive - sorry, \$13m extra over the budget to put on all those extra police officers. A massive injection of putting back police numbers the previous Government took out, so that fewer and fewer of those events are likely to occur.

**Ms FORREST** - But where a paramedic says they called ahead, informed them of what the patient's condition, and had already cuffed him to the stretcher, and there was no police presence there when they got there -

**Mr HIDDING** - So I'm not sure if that's been raised with you, Commissioner but -

**Mr HINE** - Yes, can I say we're not security guards.

**Ms FORREST** - No, no, no, hang on.

**Mr HINE** - The role of police isn't security guards to actually be there just in case. Now, that's - that's not our role. In relation to hospitals and mental health, we have an MOU which we're actually in the process of reviewing at the moment to make sure that it is up-to-date. There is a - we're working with - as State Governments from all the State Service about respectful frontline workers and all Government workers to make sure that is respect and that was launched just recently about respect for people that work in the State Service and about having respect for relationships.

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In those situations, again, you know, whether it's a fire service attending a possibly risky situation, or an ambulance service or whatever, we can't be there all the time in every situation.

**Ms FORREST** - No, I'm not suggesting you can, Commissioner, yes, but this was a call ahead, yes.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, but sometimes we don't have that - we don't have the units available, but of course we need to prioritise as well, but again, it's - I make the point, we're not a security service that actually can be there just in case to make sure, to look after people as well, so we've got to get that balance -

**Ms FORREST** - I'm not suggesting you should be there as a security force. Yes, it was response.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, but sometimes we get those calls to say, the "just in case" calls, and we've got to prioritise that along with our other cases as well, but if we get that information where it is an urgent situation, then of course we'll adapt and reallocate our resources to make sure we deal with those situations, and Scott might be able to add some more to it.

**Ms FORREST** - This patient had already assaulted the paramedic at this point.

**Mr HINE** - All right.

**Mr TILYARD** - I have actually recently discussed this very issue with Neil Kirby, the CEO of Ambulance Tasmania, to - so that we review our protocols that we have, and Glen Frame, our Assistant Commissioner, Operations, has been in discussions with the Ambulance, State Operations, person as well because we will always attend and support ambulance officers, and sometimes members of the Fire Service as well if they're confronted with a situation where they may be at risk, so there is an assessment done on each and every occasion. If it's felt that a police presence is warranted, then we will always endeavour to be there, and depending on the nature of the case they're responding to, sometimes they can wait until the police are there to back them up when they go in. You know, if there are one or two incidents where police haven't been able to get there before the ambulance, then you know, I can't say that hasn't happened, but -

**Ms FORREST** - Oh, no, I'm sure that's not -

**Mr TILYARD** - That would very much be the exception because, generally speaking, the ambulance are very satisfied with the support they get from police, but as the Commissioner said, we don't - obviously we don't have the resources to attend every job just in case there's a problem, but if there is intelligence or information or if the ambulance officers attend and are confronted with as situation, then we will always -

**Ms FORREST** - Well, the police had attended this scene and then had to go to another job.

**Mr HINE** - I was going to say, for handcuffs to be used, there's -

**Ms FORREST** - The police were already there, yes. They had already attended with the assault because the patient did assault the paramedic, and then on transfer to hospital they had to go to another job which was deemed important, obviously, it was another potential violent situation

not that far away as I understand it, but they did phone ahead to the hospital to say, "This is what's happened", and they notified the police. So I mean, I know this is an isolated incident, but this is a person that the Government brought in to brief us in support of their legislation, I think. Well, there's more than one way sometimes to actually deal with a problem of a, you know, it's confronting, you know, frontline workers across the board, yes.

**Mr HINE** - Look, I think the - and the ambulance campaign that they had on TV about, you know, looking after them so they can actually look after your mates and those things, and prevention is always going better than cure, and I'm not sure of that situation, but for handcuffs to be used there's obviously police involved. But I have to say again, that's the uniqueness of Tasmania. We have a really good working relationship with the ambulance, the fire, and all emergency services, so when those situations occur, we can debrief and say, "Okay, what could we have done better? Was there a better situation?", but prevention -

**Ms FORREST** - It was resourcing issues I was really concerned about if, there were inadequate resources. Obviously these other police officers were required elsewhere, and they went to do their job there. Is it - and I mean, you're putting on more police officers. I hope that's being addressed, but this is - I think it's an important area to be aware of.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Joint radio room or the joint despatch system might actually assist here, would it not, perhaps?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, the new SCAD system will actually give us a common platform, and so if we're dealing with, whether the Fire Service or Ambulance or Tasmania Police are dealing with a person, that is actually flagged as an issue, then everyone's aware and then there's a heightened awareness to make sure there is those adequate response -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It's a bit of an alert. It is an alert, I suppose, a point.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, so that's the uniqueness, Mr Valentine, of the new SCAD system so we're all operating off the same platform, we've got access to the appropriate information so that'll make the job safer and better for those attending, and it's one of those policing and resourcing models to make sure you've got adequate resources. You should never resource for the worst-case scenario because we'll never have enough people for that, and there's always going to be those outliers, but that's where the radio room or the despatch service or the supervisor needs to be aware of the information to make sure that they can actually reallocate resources when necessary. Unfortunately sometimes those situations occur.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Craig has an overview question.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, just, Commissioner you were saying before with the single man crews, in some areas like, say, the Central Highlands, if a single officer there requires assistance, does that officer have to call within the Division or can the officer talk to a neighbouring Division if there's an officer closer?

**Mr HIDDING** - Could I just say first that it's exactly that situation, and in fact it happened to be the Central Highlands, and Bushy Park, and that - we're often at the centre of discussions because I'm familiar with it myself. As to how it would practically occur. Would the two up patrol thing mean that every country station needed two police officers? No. It would mean you'd end up with half of the police stations, which intuitively wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing, but we choose to

have them spread fairly widely in those areas, so the Commissioner will explain the protocols of how that's all been set up. That was at the heart of this new method, this new safe method.

**Mr HINE** - Look, it's a really good question, and it is about, no matter where the situation occurs if it meets this - the criteria of the operation response model, then there will always be back up. Now, from my point of view, I don't care if it comes from Smithton or wherever it comes from, there's no divisional boundaries. We all wear these things on our shoulders. They're Tasmanian Police so there'll always be that back up there, and in fact there's a really good example with the Sergeant at Oatlands the people in Campbell Town. While there's actually a district boundary, that doesn't matter to them. If they can actually back one another up when they need to, under the operational response, well, they will, and it happens in the Central Highlands, and whilst they might be a - they work within a cohort with other police officers, and they make sure that that back up is available because there is no discretion. If it meets the criteria, there's no discretion, there is back up coming, no matter where it's from. So that will always occur.

**Mr HIDDING** - And bear in mind, helicopters. We're going to a two helicopter model, available for both Police and Health, and were there to be a major incident somewhere under that model, the availability of a helicopter becomes important.

**Mr FARRELL** - So if an officer had to escort someone in Hobart and the back-up officer would remain on patrol, is that -

**Mr HINE** - And again, if that remaining police officer gets to a situation under the Operational Response Model, that's always done through the radio room. The radio room will call out the nearest police officer to assist them. So it's not suddenly they are left alone, and of course as one of the - Bruny Island, there is always that issue that we talk about. There is a boat, there is a helicopter to make sure that we can actually keep that police officer safe as well. So that's all part of our review, to make sure we've got the right resources in the right areas, and also the relieving arrangements. If someone's on a course or if someone's off on leave, that's what part of this review that we need to actually look at to make sure we've got the right resources in the right place, because at the end of the day, we want our police officers to be safe, and actually to feel safe, and to actually police the community in those situations where it could become dangerous.

### **Output group 1 Public safety**

#### **1.1 Support to the community -**

**CHAIR** - We could move then probably to the first output, I think, minister, 1.1, which is Support for the Community, and a festering old sore, of course, has been the issue of police presence in courts in northern - in Launceston and Burnie, northern and north-western Tasmania, whereas they were removed, as I understand it from the south about 15 years ago, and obviously that takes operational police out of the system whilst they're in there. I note that the Opposition have now said that they will remove that police presence from the courts in the north and the north-west. So what is your position now?

**Mr HIDDING** - Firstly, the Opposition had a stab at what it might cost and they're wildly inaccurate, but that's okay. They wouldn't have had the information that I've had. In Launceston, the current advice, and this is reasonably new advice, so we're still working with this now to bring this about, but at the end of the day it comes down to dollars.



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Under the Treasury Rules, no department is able to shift a responsibility to another department without funds travelling. It's not going to - it would be a nice idea if you could just say, "Oh, you guys do that now". Well, you can't have an unfunded mandate going across between departments. So therefore whatever it would cost Justice to do, what police does now, police would have to, if you wanted to get that service to be transferred to Justice, it would have to pay for it, and if the paying for that meant that you couldn't put on the police officers you want, you would have to - you know, there's your dilemma, what do you do? And so we've been costing it up now, and I can say that the first year the costs would be in the vicinity of \$2.1m, so it's a very substantial ask.

**CHAIR** - It just seems it some sort of inequity that it's happening in one part of the State and not in the other part of the State, and it changes the operational effectiveness, I would suggest.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sure, but the obvious point needs to be made is that the Police are funded for those police officers to be in the courts. Always have been and always will be, and if the police - if that job goes to somewhere else, those funds have got to be found and sent across the border to that other agency, and there's a recurrent - lower recurrent expenditure there. We're working with that - on that right now. We accept the challenge from the State Opposition on that. It is still our wish to do this and we'll have more to say about that in due course.

**CHAIR** - In due course? All right.

**Mr HIDDING** - Well, we've identified the quantum of the funding challenge which is now -

**Ms FORREST** - Mr Chairman, I might say that - unless you're going somewhere else?

**CHAIR** - Sorry?

**Ms FORREST** - Are you going down another line? I just wanted to -

**CHAIR** - I'm going down another line, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, can I just ask another question on that point then?

**CHAIR** - Yes. No, I'm still continuing on that line, I'm sorry.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, all right. That's all right.

**CHAIR** - And that's all in the courts, that's what I'm talking about, at the moment as well. I think I need to just read into Hansard a short redacted email from Pat Allen who is expressing some concerns.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, all right. He's been - you know, we've been talking to him about this since I become Minister.

**CHAIR** - So I just need to put that on the public record and he says: "I've recently attended the Hobart Magistrates' Court for a bail hearing at 2.15 pm. I was the only police officer in the building to the best of my knowledge. There were a large number of defendants and their associates present. Many of them were well-known Hobart recidivist offenders and criminals. Their dislike

of police was obvious and was noted by decent members who were present with me. I felt extremely unsafe for my personal safety in the building without accoutrements, including my firearm".

He goes on to say: "In accordance with new protocols, I will carry my baton, OC and handcuffs in future. Regardless, without a firearm, I am not able to properly protect either myself or members of the public in the event of an armed offender entering the building, armed being a person using a weapon of any kind that may require lethal force, e.g., firearm, knife. In light of the recent terrorist attacks in London and here in Australia, the risk to police officers in a Government buildings is at the highest threat level we have ever seen. Despite this, there has been no increase in security for police or members of the public who went to this volatile court environment expecting it to be safe. Unarmed court security officers provide little or no additional protection.

The problem is accentuated as the direction results in police officers continuing to travel from their stations to and from court in uniform, marked vehicles without their full accoutrements. Whilst Tasmania Police has made available a small number of firearms storage boxes on Level 3 of the City Police Station, it is not solving the problem. Police are still moving between the two buildings without their full accoutrements. I do not believe that the Tasmanian Police or the Department of Justice are meeting their obligations under the Work Health & Safety Act of 2012. I am concerned that my position as a supervisor places me at risk of being in breach of the Act if I do not formally report this safety issue.

And finally, I wish to formally report to you under the provisions of the Works Health & Safety Act of 2012 that I believe that both Magistrates' and Supreme Court courts are unsafe workplaces for police officers, and I ask you to consider any action you deem necessary as a matter of urgency."

**Mr HIDDING** - All right, so what would -

**CHAIR** - So it's quite a long list of concerns here.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, what we're talking about here is an entirely different matter from the Launceston Courts.

**CHAIR** - Yes, from the Launceston Court, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - So the first one we're talking about police actually being in courts and, you know, doing a long-standing thing in Launceston. This is a whole new matter that is best directed to the Acting Minister for Justice and Attorney-General because Tasmanian Police are bound by the decision of the courts, and the courts have decided, both Magistrates' and Supreme Court, that police officers should not be carrying firearms in their courts. That is a matter that they have considered and thought about, and while Tasmanian police officers might rather wear their firearms, those courts are very strongly within the purview of those judges and magistrates to decide what happens in those courtrooms and they have decided that they don't want a firearm in their courts under any circumstances.

So that creates a - it's not a policing dilemma because they just come off the belt. I will ask the Commissioner to go through it further.

**CHAIR** - It is not a question of in other jurisdictions, what happens there in Victoria. Is it the same -

**Mr HIDDING** - I'm not sure what happens with other judges, but -

**Mr HINE** - Look, I can just expand on what the minister already said, that it is the purview of the justice system and the magistrates and the Chief Justice. In fact, the Deputy Commissioner just met with those courts recently and discussed those issues, and I should point out that when you go into a court there is security arrangements there as well to make sure that there is screening. So just to point that out, and if the magistrate or the judge perceives a threat or a danger then obviously police officers can go in with their gear as well, but in other states, every state has got different approaches to it, but I think a lot of them don't allow guns into court, and I can understand where the magistrates and judges are coming from, but again I can also understand where Mr Allen's coming from as well, but there are security arrangements in place before you actually get through or into the building as well.

**CHAIR** - Could that information be provided to the committee on other jurisdiction, just as a matter of interest, please?

**Mr HIDDING** - It's probably a matter for the Attorney-General because -

**CHAIR** - We haven't got that, so.

**Mr HIDDING** - All right, so I guess we could ask our -

**Mr HINE** - And court security in other states, sometimes they are armed as well, so each State does vary, but it is not a policing issue, as the minister quite rightly pointed out, it's a Justice issue.

**CHAIR** - Yes, all right.

**Mr TILYARD** - Minister, I can add to that, that, yes, the Commissioner and I both had discussions around this, particularly in the terrorism context in recent times, but whilst there's a reluctance obviously from the judiciary, at the Supreme Court and Magistrates' Court level to allow police officers to routinely carry firearms into the courtroom itself, as the Commissioner said, there are protocols for emergency responses that do allow police to take firearms in. There are other case by case arrangements where there might be particular information or intelligence where a magistrate or a judge will allow police to be armed when they escort a prisoner in. They're very much the exception, but because the general position is that police should not be armed with a firearm when they're in the courtroom itself, we're actually doing some work with the Supreme Court in particular, but also the Magistrates' Court, to look at the option of providing firearm storage facilities at the courtroom building to allow police to take their firearms - to wear their firearms to the court, securely store them whilst they're giving evidence, and then collect them afterwards. So that's sort of a compromise position that we're negotiating at that time as things currently stand.

**Mr HIDDING** - At the end of the day, Tasmanian Police, they don't control the courtrooms, you know, and I would expect Tasmania Police to have a very cordial and good working relationship with the courts, in spite of the fact, as I said earlier, there's a substantial deal of frustration that I wouldn't expect the Police Commissioner to talk about but I can talk about. I know there's some deep frustration about the number of people who are bailed who reoffend. I would like to place on the record that - I've got a statistic on the number of bail cases of people being charged.

So in the period 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017, so this is the most recent period, police have laid 3804 charges for breach of bail. In 2015-16, police laid 4489 in total for breach of bail and it's

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headed for the same kind of numbers for this year. So that's just charging for breach of bail, let alone what else they've done while they've been out on bail. I'm putting that on the record because of the very frustrating element of being a police officer where you're just continually charging the same people when bail would be much preferred by Tasmanian Police in those circumstances that bail be more strongly considered than it was.

**CHAIR** - And a lot of the community would support that view, too.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, and this is the current discussion over bail and parole laws, and I think the general view in the community is shifting, that, you know, we need to take a side view, so.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I just want to go back to the previous issue. You said that if funding was, or the police officer positions were transferred to Justice, you'd have - they'd have - the funding would have to follow.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - So do those police officers currently only do court duty or do they do other things as well?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, not necessarily as I understand it the same police officers doing court duty, but there are, in any given week, there'll be a number of police - there will be - out of the Launceston Division there will be four or five police officers, for instance, that are doing court stuff.

**Ms FORREST** - Right.

**Mr HIDDING** - So as Justice would argue, "You guys are already being to do that job. If you want us to do it, you need to find the \$2.1 million, hand it to us and we'll do the job", and that is the rules, but that doesn't mean we would want to reduce five police officers. That goes against our policy of -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. No, I understand what you're saying. So if the funding is then - it should be - I'm just trying to understand how this works, that the funding, \$2.1 million was your estimate?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Would be required to be taken out of the Police budget and put into Justice?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Forever

**Mr HIDDING** - No, so the ongoing forever would be in the order of less than a million, so there's a cost upfront.

**Ms FORREST** - So why is that? What is the cost upfront?

**Mr HIDDING** - I don't have the report with me but there is a deal of cost upfront in -

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**Mr HINE** - Modifications to the Launceston in respect, there's modifications to the remand centre to cover the extra prison officers that have to do it, and then there's a recurrent cost.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, practical things that would have to be built for it.

**Ms FORREST** - So what's the upfront cost?

**Mr HIDDING** - \$2.1 million.

**Ms FORREST** - That is the upfront cost, and then there's a recurrent ongoing cost of -

**Mr HIDDING** - First year is - let's name it up. The recurrent is 750 a year as understand it, that's where it's currently costed at. So for the first year, 750 plus whatever up to 2.1 total, but then the ongoing Police budget would be reduced by 750 and given to Justice.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, so in terms of \$750 000 from the Police budget, what does that mean?

**Mr HIDDING** - If I say to the Police Commissioner, "Find me 2.1m and then 750", it would mean things that police officers currently use would have to be reduced, or police officers themselves would be reduced. It is really practical stuff.

**Ms FORREST** - So give us an indication how many police officers that relates to.

**Mr HIDDING** - 750 a year -

**Mr HINE** - On average a police officer, a recurrent cost, about \$130 000 to \$140 000 per year by the time you actually put all the on costs on, the wages, vehicles, all those things, so that's a ball park figure.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, five police officers roughly, yes, which is what - the number that you're talking about anyway. Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - But make no mistake. We're committed to resolving that situation in Launceston and we're now to the point where we've got actual costings that parties can agree to. Now we've got the funding challenge which, you don't just snap your fingers and make that happen. We're involved in that process now, so, and as I say, I've more to say about that in the future, but not that far away.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, the body worn cameras, are you -

**CHAIR** - Yes, will be under this output, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, do it - are you going to ask now?

**CHAIR** - Yes, we'll get to that. Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, Rob?

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, it was only respect to the court situations, and I guess the protocols about security personnel. So just tell me how that works. I mean, you're coming into that court

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situation. Obviously the security personnel are there. Are they allowed to lay hands on a person in a court or not, can you answer that question? And what are the security - what are the protocols between the police and the security in that sense?

**Mr HIDDING** - I will hand to the Commissioner in a moment, except to say that that's a complex question because there are elements - the remand centre belongs to Corrections, the Corrections Department, so if there were certain circumstances in Launceston where there were dangerous individuals, you would have Corrections staff present to do certain elements of it. You would have security guards probably join Corrections staff in walking the offender to, it would be a charged person to the dock across to the court, and then that security guard would sit in the court. The Corrections person wouldn't be in the courtroom. That's not their place to be, but the security guard would take the role that police currently do, and I take it, Commissioner, that the same ability to restrain that is currently used by your people would have to be granted to the very well trained security guards.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I asked the question that there is a well-understood protocol between the two. You never get the situation where both are standing opposite saying, "I can't touch him", and something's happening, but yes, -

**Mr HIDDING** - This is a different level of security guard that we might see elsewhere.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, elsewhere. That's right.

**Ms FORREST** - Outside a nightclub.

**Mr HIDDING** - Exactly. No special training required at that level.

**Mr HINE** - They do have the - normally the court personnel are sworn in as special constables so they have powers of arrest.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They do have power of arrest?

**Mr HINE** - Yes. But there are very well protocols about when in certain situations, so there's -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Instead of going into a situation where there's a demarcation dispute, so there's -

**Mr HINE** - No, but look and it's - and again, it doesn't - if an incident occurs in a courtroom, there's standard protocols. The police get called to assist the security, and in fact we had one situation last year in Devonport where the prosecutor, who was a police prosecutor, actually chased an offender down who, or it might have been the year before, so there is a police prosecutor normally in the courts as well, and they are still sworn police officers, whilst they haven't got their accoutrements, so there are well-established protocols, but our responsibility for general purposes stops at the court door, but we then have, if we're called upon we'll act, obviously.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You could act, just like you would in a house or whatever, anywhere else, yes. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - All right. Just moving on, we're still on this output, then, minister, I'll just turn to firearms, and I've got to warn that Nick Adine is back on the beat.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. I saw his comments in the House on this, so I suspect I know what you're going to -

**CHAIR** - Yes, all right. It might be the same ones. They might be different, I'm not too sure. But anyway I've got some other matters to bring up, but he's saying police are now removing firearms that are legally owned licences in places where they resemble military-style firearms. So in December 2015 one of these weapons, now valued at nearly \$25 000 was taken possession of from the Launceston owner, and I think your good yourself met with him in the presence of the member for Windermere. He was told the matter would be sorted out as a matter of urgency. The owner's health has been impacted through the lack of consideration and, et cetera, et cetera. When will this matter be determined, the question is, and when will some consideration be given to the lawful owner whose name is Heath Morton, as I understand, so that's the first question.

**Mr HIDDING** - So the background to all this, Mr Dean knows impeccably well, because it was all laid out to he and his constituent at that visit. At a time when, as it happens, member for Windermere was likely the Commander at the time in the Launceston area, there were a number of errors made in the big rush to register every firearms in Tasmania. It would be no surprise at all there would be a couple of mistakes made and people actually registering firearms with, say, with the initials of the firearm rather than the full name of the firearm, and somehow or other it being registered as an acceptable firearm.

As one example, because it takes it to the absurd, there was a Bren machine gun -

**Ms FORREST** - A what?

**Mr HIDDING** - A Bren World War II - registered as though it were a bolt action firearm. Clearly, that was an error. As a result of the Lindt Café siege report to COAG, all police agencies around Australia were asked to have a very close look at their registration, their database, and ensure that it is sound. I know the Commissioner would be, just on behalf of - I'm not sure if he was even in the service, yes, I think he probably was a young constable, but there were a number of errors made that have come to light, and they were, let's call them genuine errors, but they are errors that cannot be let stand because these are some very serious firearms indeed.

So I think there are 12 firearms belonging to something like nine owners in Tasmania who have had to have a visit to say, "There's been an error". Almost in every circumstance, that owner has gone, "Yeah, I knew there was because in fact I've got a submachine gun and I shouldn't have it, should I?". "No, you shouldn't." And so that firearm's been taken, put into storage safely, safely in storage. Nothing's been smashed or thrown away or anything like that, safely in storage because it was incorrectly licensed or registered.

In this case, this constituent, and he was named up in Hansard, so I'll name him up, Heath Morton, his case, and that particular firearms case is a great example of what can go wrong in a bureaucracy when something first goes wrong. He is the owner of a Triple A machine pistol, essentially. Now, a machine, pistol, well, they were used - we saw them on television just in the last few days but they can send a hail of bullets in three or four seconds with a single pull of a trigger. They have no business being anywhere in the community -

**CHAIR** - Just a quick question there. Mr Dean's words were "it resembled one". It actually was one?

**Mr HIDDING** - No. It is one.

**CHAIR** - It is one?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is one. Mr Dean knows -

**CHAIR** - That's all right. I just wanted to clarify that point.

**Mr HIDDING** - Mr Dean knows that. However, he's talking about something else there which is the - some look-alike assault rifles shouldn't have been registered as well, and they're also being dealt with. So a number of firearms, 12 firearms, I think, from nine different owners is the total count at this moment.

**Mr HINE** - Close, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - But just let's focus on this particular case because it's a good example. That firearm was first registered in Tasmania successfully because it was registered in Tasmania. It then went onto Queensland where somebody bought it and registered it in Queensland, who then sold it to the US where it's all right to walk around with those things, and then it was sold back to Queensland, and then was sold back to Tasmania. Because it was registered in the first place it was just assumed that it would be, "Oh, well, it's a", you know, "It's a Category C firearm and it's perfectly all right". Well, it wasn't, not in - until it got -

**Ms FORREST** - Because no one checked it in all this time.

**Mr HIDDING** - No one checked it. No one checked it in all that time. It's just one of those things that happen, and it certainly wouldn't - it's never going to happen again, but this stuff happened 20 years ago. This was 1996 when there was a huge rush to register firearms, and so we are - the point we - the position we've taken is that Mr Morton's done absolutely nothing wrong. He's done everything legal all the way along. However, he can't be allowed to hold that firearm because that was an error, but we have to deal with him on just terms. He's able to sell that. That does have, he claims, a high value. Well, he's able to get that high value where he's able to sell it. If he can sell it to Queensland or he can sell it to the United States, he's welcome to sell it, but I noticed in Hansard somebody said, "Well, how do you sell it if he hasn't got it?". Well, it's currently being held at the police station and he's able to advertise it and if he's got a buyer who wants to look at it the police will facilitate someone coming to look at it, and if it was, say, sold to the United States, well, the police would ensure it went into a secure container and it be taken to Customs, no doubt, and be allowed to be sent through the mail.

So under every circumstance this person is being offered the opportunity to dispose of his firearm at no loss to himself, and it's important to me that in each one of these cases there is no, you know, there is - they are given the opportunities.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I get all that, and I suppose the question that Mr Dean had that was when might that occur, that's right.

**Mr HIDDING** - All right, so the long lead time, I make no apologies for, because we've had to stand up as a result of that, we found that. We had to stand up a new process for the - for the testing of whether a firearm is, or substantially replicates a military firearm under our laws, and that



process was eventually set up with a set of guidelines that met the approval of basically most dealers around the place and the key constituents in the firearm owning community. That's a panel that is stood up to do that, a specialist panel, and it recently found, it looked at five firearms in the first go round and it included the Triple A. It had to be formally declared to, yes, five firearms under that arrangement have been assessed under the guidelines with four being assessed as prohibited which is the Triple A semi-automatic pistol, Triple A semi-automatic rifle, Smith & Wesson M&P15/22 and the Warwick WFA1, which is a Colt AR-15 look-alike.

So the Triple A, having then been formally declared, "No, sorry, you can't possibly register that", that's now, I'm sure Mr Morton would have been informed now that he's ready - he's right to dispose of it and that it can't possibly be registered in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - All right, yes, thank you for that, minister. So just following on just on that same vein, just in regard to Mr Jones.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And so he's got three lawfully owned firearms taken possession of, two of which are - they're prototypes, higher value and a third and the similar high value. He's been told the firearms don't have to be sold, I think that says. It doesn't have to be - anyway. And so Mr Dean is saying, "This absurd and to treat good people in this case, our family have provided much support to police", they've trained at his property, et cetera, et cetera, "with contempt". When will this issue be resolved as well. So that's the other question I had to put.

**Ms FORREST** - Take no responsibility for it.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, look, I'm offended that I would be accused of treating anyone with contempt in these matters. I know Mr Jones well. I've known him since I've been a member of parliament. All I can say is, his first statement that he lawfully owns three firearms -

**CHAIR** - Yes, lawfully. Yes, that's what it says.

**Mr HIDDING** - Is not true.

**CHAIR** - Three, it says, 'two of which are prototypes'.

**Mr HIDDING** - I do not want to discuss his personal arrangements. However, that statement is not true. Therein lies the problem. So Tasmania Police have, I understand, have taken into possession again, because he was the manufacturer of Triple A. He has no licence to hold a Triple A firearm and when it became known that he had one, he had to visit. A police officer cannot unknown something, and he has to act and the police officer did act, but the same courtesies are available to him as to as to anyone else. He can explore the full commercial value of those firearms where he can legally sell them, which puts him at no disadvantage, except that they are no longer in his safe because they should not have been from day 1. So he has been treated with every courtesy but I understand his discomfort with all that. He would have wished that he wasn't in that situation but he is. This is another one of these Triple A firearms.

**Ms FORREST** - On firearms, Mr Chairman. I have a couple of questions. Just going back to the point you made in mentioning a couple of those questions there, you said there has been some work done around the appearance, like replica firearms. This has been raised with me by

responsible gun owners and the question really is, is appearance versus function - I mean appearance is one thing but it appears that it might be, you know, a submachine gun but you have to reload it after every shot, I mean, it is an odd thing that you have a gun that looks like that, I accept, but some people have genuinely raised this as an issue. The appearance is not the thing, it is the function. It is how it actually works.

**Mr HIDING** - No, it isn't. However, it is in the law. The legislation we passed here back in 1996 and I recall it well. All three parties behind it and the Upper House unanimous at the time following Port Arthur. Our law has a schedule in it and then Item 6 in that schedule that says, "A firearm that substantially duplicates in appearance, a submachine gun, a submachine gun or other firearm capable of propelling projectiles in rapid succession during one breach of the trigger is deemed a prohibited weapon firearm for the purposes of the Act". Now, this definition there has been a component of the Act since the commencement of the 1996 and it has to be applied.

When people say to me, "But Minister, it's a bolt action. It is one shot".

**Ms FORREST** - That is what I am hearing.

**Mr HIDING** - Yes. So let's just explore that. It has been deliberately made to look like an assault rifle. Why? Goodness only knows. People want to carry something that looks like an assault rifle. However, it performs just like a normal hunting rifle. In reality, if that was to be stolen from the lawful firearm owner's house, and was used in a seize situation in Hobart, the response by Tasmania Police is potentially very different with someone carrying something that looks like a single shot or it looks like a submachine gun or an assault rifle, which I will point out was used at Port Arthur and an assault rifle at close range is just - I mean the shock wave of a bullet going by you. They are a shocking firearm.

So this is what it comes to. At the end of the day, most police commissioners around Australia at the time asked for and got the protections in the various bits of legislation that things that look like a highly dangerous firearm should also be just as prohibited as one that is one because the responses are different, the SOG police officers will make different judgments about that, about how they respond at the time but I absolutely understand the frustration of people who say, "But it's only a bolt action".

One particular dealer who said to me, "Minister, they make a" - and he had an enquiry about an air rifle that actually looks like an assault rifle. It would be shocking if that was used in some kind of seize situation and the offender was shot at the first opportunity by police because they believed he had a - and really was barely capable of wounding a seagull. But the decision had to be made at the time because it looks like something.

So there are people who believe it should not be in our legislation. That is a different conversation to have. Do we want to take it out of our legislation? That is a policy matter for the various parties and that is a separate conversation. It is in there and so we have to work with it and so we stood up -

**Ms FORREST** - I accept that. I am just wondering whether - the rationale behind it. I was not here in 1996 but you were.

**Mr HIDDING** - So I am explaining the rationale. But also this process that we stood up, this new panel, that stood up, looked very closely at those things and one of them that was tested and is

now approved for registration is a Ruger, an international target rifle that previously people might have thought, "Oh, goodness me, you can't have, it's got a faulty stock. Oh, my word, that looks military".

Well, the guidelines that we are using in Tasmania, it has got to look like a known military firearm, not have elements of it, and so many lawful firearm owners were very pleased with that outcome. That goes to show that we are not just blindly say, "Oh, well, it seems to have a front hand hold thing, therefore you cannot have it". None of that. Much more detailed - - -

**Ms FORREST** - Who is on this panel then, minister?

**Mr HINE** - There's our firearms representative which is the inspector in charge of firearm services and one mainland expert from the ACIC, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and an expert.

**Mr HIDDING** - A firearms and ballistic expert.

**Ms FORREST** - I understand that expertise around the table, but there is no sort of community representation or firearms owners' representation?

**Mr HINE** - Can I just say that you have to be careful that you actually do not have industry people on there that have a protected interest, so therefore you would have to have a gun person and an anti-gun person to try and balance it up. So this is the best way to actually deal with this.

**Mr HIDDING** - So I was pleased to see the make-up of that, however followed it through with that same question of yours -

**Ms FORREST** - Where is the community input into it?

**Mr HIDDING** - Where does the community input? It comes in the appeal. There is a very simple arrangement where if you or one of your constituents thought, "That's been harshly applied that test", you can ask the commissioner for a full review.

**Ms FORREST** - Who undertakes that review?

**Mr HINE** - The Commissioner takes the view at the moment and the - sorry, the commander of operations. Assistant Commissioner Richard Cowling for *Hansard*.

**Mr COWLING** - So the process at the moment is, the Commissioner leads the review and actually causes the review to be done and at the moment the delegation is pushed down to the operation commander. Operation supports will conduct that review.

**Ms FORREST** - So there's a right of input from the agreed owner is what you are talking about?

**Mr COWLING** - They won't actually appeal an appeal. They will provide the grounds for the appeal and then they will follow it through and have a look to see when that decision was made.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am sorry, and then after that -

**Ms FORREST** - Then they come to us.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, they still go to the Magistrates' Court for a review and in a number of other states certain firearm communities are testing these things in Magistrates Courts to take them right though. They are winning some and losing some. This tends to - for instance that particular Warwick WFA did not make the cut here in Tasmania. If you look at the manufacturer's website, it actually says "This is a firearm built to look like Colt AR-15 so it actually gives it up, but in other states are allowed, in Queensland which is peculiar. As it happens, South Australia -

**Ms FORREST** - So if you had one in Tasmania, you could sell it to Queensland, is what you are saying?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - So just on the firearms branch, I am hearing also again from primary producers who use firearms in their stock management and wildlife and stuff. Licences are not being renewed in a timely fashion. What is happening, is it under resourcing, what's the problem here?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a bit of everything and as Police Minister I am not happy about it clearly, and it is fair to say a subject on almost every visit for the last six months. This is a major - there's a cycle of years which is a re-registration years. This is one where 17 000 - so 2017 is a major relicensing year with about 17 000 people to be relicensed compared with approximately 3700 the previous year. So we have got this massive spike.

So we throw resources at it, the commissioner does, and there is still a backlog and we continue working with it, but the standard response we make to people who contact us being frustrated is "If you've sent in your application with the money, the law says you are licensed".

**Ms FORREST** - If you are carrying a firearm on a boat, on TT-Line and you are going to Queensland or you are going to even some legitimate competition or whatever, and you do not have a current licence, you could find yourself in trouble. You are pulled up, you driving up the coast, up mainland Australia. The police pull you over in a random check. You've got a firearm, you don't have a licence.

**Mr HIDDING** - In practical terms, our legislation actually has a line in it that say if you have paid and it hasn't been processed yet, you are licensed. How it would actually work interstate.

**Ms FORREST** - So those police would have to ring this police.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is a good question. What if it happened interstate?

**Mr HINE** - Can I use the analogy of a driver's licence? If it has on the driver's licence it's expired, if you have got a receipt to say I actually paid my money before it expired, the same with a firearms licence, you are still valid. If you produce that receipt and you say I've paid my money, under the legislation it says you are still licensed, so you are not actually unlicensed.

**Ms FORREST** - Because your weapon can be seized. They are not going to seize your car. They are just going to say you can't drive it. This is the difference here, isn't it?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HINE** - But you are still licensed as in to say we are not saying if you have not got your card and if you have actually done it in a timely manner, you may get your card. But if you haven't got your card that says it's not expired, if you got the receipt and say "I've paid my money and the law says" other jurisdictions can actually contact us and say, "Hey are they licensed or not?" "Yes, they are licensed". "Have they received - - -

**Ms FORREST** - I guess it is the inconvenience of that. You are trying to get on the boat and they have to ring to police to find out if this is true.

**Mr HINE** - If they have got their receipt, they do not have to ring them. They are lawfully licensed.

**Ms FORREST** - So everyone would have their receipts? They just haven't been processed.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, because they go into ServiceTas.

**Ms FORREST** - Same as your driver's licence, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Same deal. They have got a piece of paper and they would ordinarily pop that in with their firearm licence. Let's go back to the original. There is a time delay.

**Ms FORREST** - How is that going? Has it been cleared? I can see the blip. There may be a way of dealing with it. I don't know.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is frustrating. It is fair to say that I have continued to discuss with the commissioner. He has looked at the entire business of it and it is a live matter for us. Not yet resolved, but -

**Ms FORREST** - How long are they renewed for.

**Mr COWLING** - I could probably jump in here. In essence, what we have done, we have actually thrown in extra resources to try and deal with this. At the moment, this month alone, there are 4,500 licences that actually expired. So we have put extra people in there, extra resources to actually start to deal with that capacity. So at the end of the day the administrative process is the process that we have to go through, so that takes some time. The licences can be one, three or five years so they all vary at different times.

**Mr HIDDING** - Whatever they choose and certain categories.

**Mr COWLING** - So in essence, we know when the licences are going to expire. We can see the peak. It is just the staffing. As the minister said, it is a topic every week we discuss. We have metrics to follow it but there is a lag at the moment, there is no doubt about that.

**Mr HIDDING** - But we have a review.

**Ms FORREST** - Can you smooth it out? Like when you say one, three or five years, obviously some of them have to be one year and so every year that is going to be at least those, but if there is a lot - maybe this year all the five year ones come up or whatever it is. Is there a way of smoothing that?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr COWLING** - What we have done is caused a review now of the whole process and that is underway at the end of June. Part of our process is to look at can we flatten that out over the next five years. So hopefully we can look at either offering a stall period where we can ease that load up.

**Ms FORREST** - Do some fours and sixes.

**Mr COWLING** - Correct.

**Mr HINE** - We had an independent review come in to have a look at the situation to see how we can improve. Somethings we can improve. Some things we need to follow under the Act and we are setting up a - we have got a separate project looking at improvements and see what we can do, whilst the real time business continues on. So we are aware of it. It is a topic of conversation. Then we have got various process we might follow. We have had an independent review and we are working with that to make sure we can flatten out some of these situations, and sometimes there is a misunderstanding between - they will think they have got an expired licence when in fact, if they have paid their money, they are still licensed. We try and communicate with all those groups.

**Ms FORREST** - When someone renews their licence, they are going to pay for it. I do not have a firearms licence so I am not sure how it works. But you pay for it. You then go through a process of assessment to see whether you should have it? I am going to get on the boat. I've got my expired licence but I have also got a receipt.

**Mr HINE** - Correct. It says you have paid it, within your times.

**Ms FORREST** - But you are going to take my licence off me because I have done something wrong.

**Mr HINE** - That would have occurred before. If you have done something wrong and you go to court, the court, then the court will take your firearm.

**Ms FORREST** - Right. So you won't even get your receipt at the time.

**Mr HINE** - You will have your licence and your firearms taken off you, that is a court issue or any other circumstances. So it is a complex piece of legislation and it is one that we are - - -

**Ms FORREST** - It is important to have it right. Like I don't have any qualms about that.

**Mr HINE** - It is.

**Mr HIDDING** - Service is service. I am not happy with it.

**Ms FORREST** - It does make it difficult for some people out there.

**CHAIR** - So it has been a useful conversation to have about firearms and that has fleshed out quite a few of these issues and as members we get those questions out in our community and the resemblance and all those issues, and I think as you quite rightly pointed out, and I am still trying to explain it to some people who don't understand. I have got a good understanding of military firearms and all those sort of things. Anyway, that is beside the point. So we will move on, unless there are any further questions there.

Still on 1.1. Support for the community. It is obviously a two-way street minister. Just go back to changing tact completely, I would like to be advised as to whether the Neighbourhood Watch program is being actively maintained as I have had some reports of failing infrastructure, particularly signage and all that sort of stuff and some groups being no longer active as they used to be. Could you advise on the situation and what direct support is being provided to keep these groups, monitored, supported and active.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is fair to say that the number of people around Tasmania involved in Neighbourhood Watch is much less than it has been in the past. I suspect that's because of the - some of its Crime Stoppers and the digital reporting now. Who knows what's behind that? But the fact is, there are fewer people. I still, from time-to-time, meet with some Neighbourhood Watch Groups.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Same here.

**Mr HIDDING** - They are wonderful people that love their community and they are just terrific people. I am not aware of any reduction in support but I will ask the commissioner to speak to that.

**Mr HINE** - Neighbourhood Watch is still active in Tasmania. There is - we meet with them regularly. We have a liaison officer through our community support area, through our operations support area, so we have an active liaison Neighbourhood Watch and Neighbourhood Watch does go through periods where some Neighbourhood Watch close up, some form, and it is normally about getting members to be able to support Neighbourhood Watch, whether there is an issue in the neighbourhood area as well.

But I have to say under Jan Nunsby and her team, they are doing a really good job and we certainly have a very close liaison with Neighbourhood Watch Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - Is there any data to indicate the performance of community groups in Tasmania in that respect?

**Mr HINE** - I am not sure. I am not aware of any data to say the performance of the Neighbourhood Watch. We have various, what we call rules, the statistics about policing, but not about the neighbourhood groups, but I have say, Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Stoppers, those sort of community groups work very hard and in the individual Neighbourhood Watch, some are more active than others, but I have to say that they are a really good ally of Tasmania police to make sure we have those close liaisons. But they, like a lot of other groups, sometimes they have a different demographic and an aging demographic that actually join them, so we have to make sure we work with them and they have to keep themselves relevant to make sure they are actually dealing with the issues.

I know they are well aware of that issue and they are working with it as well. Some other states, they are actually doing more of a virtual meeting so people do not have to go the meeting. So they are working a lot with those sort of this, but very, very - it is a good partnership we have with them.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Through you, Mr Chairman on that. You do provide statistics to those groups, don't you, of crimes within their communities and those sorts of things which I think - it is probably the older demographic you are right. The ones I have certainly come across - just

confirming that you are still interested in providing those statistics to those groups should they care to have them.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, you are right, Mr Valentine.

**Mr VALENTINE.** So the local police officer provides the local Neighbourhood Watch with the local statistics, the local issues so they have got something to focus on. But yes, we do that as well, but at a state-wide level we have a liaison and at the community level where the Neighbourhood Watch works, we have that liaison as well. So it is a really important group to continue to make sure we have got that connection with because - liaison because they are part of the community, they can actually feedback to us and if they have got an issue in their area, they can come up with certain things to actually address it as well, but it is alike a lot of groups we are finding around, whether it is a community group, it is an aging demographic.

People have less time to get involved so we have got to continue to work with them to make sure that they evolve and to use some of the technologies, whether it is like, what they call an I Watch and you do it virtually through Facebook or other situations to make sure that people can actually connect. The next generations coming through, you know, their connection is different to what other generations connect, it is not face-to-face, it is via social media.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you have any statistics on the amount of newsletters and things that you send out? How widespread is that?

**Mr HINE** - We can certainly get it, but we haven't got it here now. But - - -

**Mr TILYARD** - I am just going to comment, Mr Commissioner. Neighbourhood Watch is an important initiative as has already been said, but it also a community based initiative. It is actually the communities that set up these committees and police are invited to support them. So what we do is, we provide information as does the Neighbourhood Watch Tasmania, but how to do that, how to establish a Neighbourhood Watch in your community and provide information on statistics and have police officers attend their meetings, but it is very much a community based initiative. It is up to the community to set them up and maintain them and we are a partner in it with the communities.

**Mr HINE** - We supply them \$15 000 a year to the state-wide -

**Mr VALENTINE** - To the whole state?

**Mr HINE** - To the committee and how many newsletters they sent out, because that is a matter for Neighbourhood Watch. I would have to go back to Jan and - - -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do they fund that or do you fund that?

**Mr HINE** - They raise money themselves and also use our \$15 000 and sometimes they get sponsorship as well. I know some of the north-west coast Neighbourhood Watch got sponsorship from various areas to help them with newsletters and sometime we - and some actually have - we allow them to use our photocopying and printing facilities as well.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Are they going to Facebook more these days?



**Mr HINE** - Yes, a lot of the newsletters are email now. It is like when you get something in your letterbox compared to your inbox on your computer. So they are certainly working with trying to get electronic. It is cheaper. Normally free. It is just getting the time to actually send it around. So they are adapting and developing but I keep challenging them to say "You have to make sure they remain relevant and contemporary" and they are certainly well aware of that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR** - We might, whilst under this output, minister I noticed on one of your commitments, the shoplifting prevention awareness campaign and there were a lot of words in there and everything else. I noticed on the front page of the *Examiner* this morning, Mr Patterson there and others and it has a huge impact on shoplifting on retail businesses particularly and it seems even though we have got lots of cameras and everything else in place, that there is a level of increase in sophistication amongst shop lifters in the way that they carry out their tasks.

**Mr HIDDING** - In some ways the sophistication is not required because it has now gone from some level of sophistication to astonishing careless attitude. People are walking out of a supermarket with an arm load of meat. They just walk up to their car, throw in the backseat, get in their car and drive off. Then later on, somebody showed me, "Meat for sale" on Gumtree. "My freezer has blown. Worth \$270, sticker still on, \$100". So as part of this story this morning, you will see in that story that is something that I discussed - I had a meeting with all those people in the paper this morning, but I discussed the use of the police Facebook page which is one of the most successful in Australia. Also to publicise the fact that you shouldn't be buying things like that without asking people for their receipt.

Once people become aware that Tasmania Police is actually monitoring those websites, people might sharpen up a little about that.

**Ms FORREST** - Could get a visit from the police to buy the meat or not buy the meat as the case may be.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is not even cheap. So they walk out with televisions.

**Mr FARRELL** - Even in the olden days they use to wear pantyhose over their head. They don't even bother anymore. It is so brazen.

**Mr HINE** - But I can say through our media and communications team, if you follow our Facebook, you will see regularly where people are actually being identified on CCTV as shoplifting and we have had great success. I think our best was about seven minutes where someone was identified through a CCTV for various offences. So whilst people are not covering up with cameras, but through the social media, actually it is one way that we are catching people and people are getting identified but as the minister said, shoplifting - it is not shoplifting, it is a crime. Stealing.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is stealing. It is. It was named up this morning in the *Examiner* and we want to do that everywhere that this isn't - we should not even call it shoplifting. It sounds like someone nicking a packet of chewing gum. It is not that. They are walking out with thousands of dollars every day out of a store at various places, and there are frequent fliers too, don't worry.

**Ms FORREST** - Using prams and things like that. Things underneath prams.

**Mr HIDDING** - The retail community know these people and it is terribly frustrating but they are generally very, very supportive of the support they are getting from Tasmania Police. My local IGA person, when they see somebody walk out, they choose not to - because it is dangerous for staff, they just push the button, call the police, print out the thingy, I suppose on a memory stick. The police officer arrives. Gives it to them and generally the person is found pretty shortly and charged, at the IGA.

**Ms FORREST** - What is the success rate in charging people in this area.

**Mr HINE** - Shoplifting, I haven't got the actual - we would have go through the system and say what is a shoplifting, what is a normal stealing, but out of the last ten people we have put up to identify through CCTV we have identified ten. So we have got a one hundred per cent strike rate, just on the recent ones that we put up but we know it is an issue, and I know the minister is certainly - has raised this with us a number of times. We got the Crime Stoppers awareness campaign which the minister has funded for \$115 000 to actually raise the awareness of shoplifting.

We have discussed it with our districts to make sure we contact shop owners to make sure we support them as well and also give them some advice about how to prevent it, security wise, where to have their cash registers and their staff, and those sorts of things. So again, it is one of those two-way streets.

**Ms FORREST** - Clothing is a difficult thing. They put a lot of clothes underneath and wear them out. They have tags on a lot of them these days.

**Mr HINE** - I was talking to a store just recently and they were finding some of their expensive coats going, so they put the wire through before you can get it out. I know it is inconvenient, but again it is like locking your house and locking your car. Sometimes there is a prevention thing that you can actually do yourself but even though with houses and cars, we find between 30 per cent and 50 per cent are unlocked when stealing occurs.

So again, we have to work with the community to make sure that we target hard in what we say and also we target the offenders as well. Prevention is better than cure, but the minister certainly has raised it a number of times. We have raised it with our districts and the minister has supported the Crime Stoppers awareness campaign as well.

**CHAIR** - Minister, if we could finish 1.1, support for the community and we will knock off and have a break. So we will just move the body worn videos and that is good to see those allocations there. You are trialling, either using or trialling, so obviously the trials have been successful, so why wouldn't you just go straight into the use phase at this stage, I suppose?

**Mr HIDDING** - We passed one around somewhere, where is it? So this is a specialised form of technology a user wears. It is capable of being attached to their clothing to capture video and audio for the first person perspective. There is a whole raft of reasons why you would do this. This is not just accountability on the police officer themselves about how they act. We have not found one police officer that expressed any concern about doing this however. They are all proud of how they behave, they do not have an issue here.

But when we launched it, Gavin Cashin from the Police Association made a very good point. He made the point that so often you will charge an offender with something, who goes to see their lawyer and the lawyers says, "Well, what happened?" "Well, the police came. They arrested me".

“Just plead not guilty because we can argue that the arrest wasn't quite kosher or the interview was not properly done” or whatever. Under this arrangement, you would provide the lawyer or the lawyer would be provided with the video and the lawyer would more than likely say to the offender “Just plead guilty”. “The police officer has done nothing wrong here and here's the proof. This will be shown in court”. So you won't be able to hold a case up by hearing after hearing after hearing, on technical points of policing. So we should get it much better through the courts as well as the provision of this as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Just on that, has there been any discussion, I am not saying there is, that say if the video doesn't work or there's a malfunction, they could use the excuse that “Well, you didn't have it on video, why didn't that happen?” A lawyer might go, “You've purposely” - do you know what I mean? I am not saying that would happen but that would be something “because you have used it seven out of 10 cases today but isn't it funny that this case, it's a malfunction on the video”. So how do you deal with that issue?

**Mr HIDDING** - Over to you Commissioner.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, it is a good question. We have to develop protocols in relation to how it is used, when it is used. How we capture the images and all those things. We have videos in our, for example, our charge rooms. And sometimes it doesn't work or it's a malfunction so therefore we have to have protocols in relation to that as well. So we are not going to capture every situation, every time a police officer interacts with someone. There's going to be protocols in relation to it and that is where the court, when we go to give evidence, the court makes those decisions about whose evidence they are going to believe.

But this protocol around the world is being used. We can actually leverage off those protocols that everyone is using as well. But one of the areas that I am quite excited about where it can be used is family violence. When a police officer walks into a situation, they can capture it as the situation is unfolding there and then, and that is where we can help keep women and their children safer because the best evidence is actually going to be presented to the court and there is no arguments about what happened, who said what, because -

**Mr HIDDING** - How they said it. You know.

**Ms FORREST** - The time and the whole thing.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The verbal evidence. I suppose what I'm concerned a little bit about is the verbal evidence given by a police officer still must hold enough weight if the video camera doesn't work that the judiciary can't say “Well, I don't believe you because I haven't got the video evidence” because at the moment you don't have video evidence anyway, so I am just worried that that doesn't then become a -

**Ms FORREST** - A default position.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - Again, that's the protocols and that's the situation we have now. For example, when we do searches under search warrants, we have to video it. If we are going to take confessions off someone, we have to actually video it, so all those things are in play now, so it is up to the judiciary if we have got a situation where something is not available, then it is up to them to actually

decide whether that evidence will be left in or left out, so where we can, we will make sure those protocols cover that.

Every search we do now we video it. When we have the charge room it is all videoed. But even in the charge room, there is a number of complaints we used to get of what happened in the charge room. Certain things happen. When you show the video, the court's attitude change because "There you are, this is your behaviour in the charge room" and sometimes they will change their mind about whether they want to continue or not.

I hear your point, technology is not the saviour and as we know, when we want that piece of technology to work, sometimes it does not work, but again, those are the sorts of things that will deal with this and it has been used right across the world and everyone is facing that issue.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Just the body camera itself. How long can it film for before it has to be recharge and with the actual film in it, how long does it last?

**Mr HINE** - Now, we have got the money, we haven't been out to tender as yet, so we have to - there are several companies that actually produce, that's just an example of what a body worn video is like, so all those things are taken into account, but obviously they need to last a shift, whether it is an eight or 10 hour shift. Normally those ones you press the button, it will back capture 30 seconds to a minute, so okay, I am interacting with this person normally, you press the button it will actually back capture so it is filming all the time. But it will only capture when you actually press the button. A bit like the videos in cars as well.

What we actually want to get is what we call an end-to-end solution so the cameras, all the storage and the archiving of the video is done by a third party because the camera is the cheap bit. It is actually the storage of the video. Is the dear bit to make sure you have got sufficient capacity. But what we are looking for is an outsourced managed process so someone else does all that. Richard is actually the sponsor for the whole project. We are quite excited about it. The Police Association have been after this for some time.

But again I have got to say the police reputation in the courts is still high, in that it is not about protecting our reputation but it's actually providing the best evidence we possibly can to the judiciary and also to the members of the public, and again, it actually protects police officers as well because we are finding some of the research says if you know you are being filmed, you'll modify your behaviour when you are actually dealing with a police officer. So we can see it as a protection for our people. I am not sure if Mr Cowling wants to add anything.

**Mr COWLING** - No, the other thing is obviously there is advantages for us where the end-to-end service means that we can to look at better integration with the courts, time saving for the officers so that the evidence they record is actually automatically admitted so we do not have to take statements and saving through there. So there's a lot of efficiencies we have seen nationally and internationally that occur as a natural result of the program.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, it was just in relation to the operation of it I suppose. I mean, there is no way that it actually captures who it is that is wearing it. How do you handle that side of it?

**Mr HINE** - Those are protocols that need to develop like a firearm and all those things, the accouchements, they are all signed out by a custody officer and that will be a similar situation and if you go in there, protocol 2, "Okay, body worn video No.10 is issued to Richard Cowling" and

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

then when you bring it back in, when you plug back in, you have to log certain things, who had it, and you have also got - some of the situation you have got a log about the events. You just can't say, "Hey, there's eight hours of tape there or capture of video". You have just got to log some of that as well.

Again, that is the protocol. That's the companies we need to deal with because we have not been out to tender, who is the successful tenderer. We will work all those things through.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I guess, the ease of operation? If it is easy to operate, then others can turn it off too, I suppose.

**Mr HINE** - Police proof are you saying, Mr Valentine?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - We do need to make sure they are police proof.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, I wasn't thinking of that. I was thinking of the offender not wanting to be recorded.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and again, as soon as someone reaches out and touches a police officer, that is an offence anyway. So again, I hear what you are saying.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, that is good.

**Mr HINE** - Police brief is very important. You have to make sure that they are certainly robust and they can withstand several operators and be robust in the environment that police sometimes have to work in.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No worries. Thank you.

**Ms FORREST** - So where are they worn?

**Mr HINE** - Those ones there, it is normally just - I am not sure if you have seen the vest that a police officer wears now, it is a ballistic and stab resistant vest, so it is normally up around where my badge would be. That's the sort of area and you have probably seen some other people wear them around. Hobart City Council will have them.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Parking and information officers have them.

**Mr HINE** - So that's the sort of area where they wear and - - -

**Ms FORREST** - It is easy to operate I expect.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and it is literally just the push of a button. Again, we want to get that end-to-end solution so we do not have to - it is a managed solution by someone else.

**Ms FORREST** - There's obviously going to be ongoing recurrent cost with your data storage and that sort of thing, in the forward estimates and your capital investment program here you have got now \$62 000 in 2018-19, is that just to buy cameras or is that still part of the investigation.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Because \$654 000 in 2020-21 and I shouldn't be - forward estimates perhaps other allocation for those -

**Mr COWLING** - Correct. Fair bit around them once we've done the enquiry. First of all, we have got to go to tender. So as the commissioner said, managed service is what we are looking for. As the data needs increase over the next three to four years that cost will obviously increase as well. Plus, we will obviously not roll 400 out or 500 out tomorrow so there is a gradual introduction. So that sort of represents what we are anticipating but until we go to market, we will not know what the market value is. We only just got an indicative price.

**Ms FORREST** - Which is indicative of the ongoing recurrent cost?

**Mr COWLING** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - That is about \$650 000 year, is it?

**Mr COWLING** - It is indicative based on an RFI that was done, a request for information done in about 2014. So it is an estimate at this stage. As soon as we have got a tender obviously we will have accurate prices based on the managed service.

**Mr HINE** - But you are right. There is ongoing funding in the years which will go through the normal -

**Mr FARRELL** - Almost the cost of a police officer.

**Mr HINE** - As I said, it is the backend capture is the prohibitive cost of it. Now we have been funded for that -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is going to save resources into the future though, isn't it?

**Mr HINE** - Exactly, less court time and hopefully -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Not filling out lots of forms.

**Mr HINE** - Time and more pleas of guilty we hope and to capture all of those savings as well.

**Ms FORREST** - And hopefully less crime as a result and there you go.

**Mr HINE** - And to save the community.

**CHAIR** - I think we are at a stage where we have just about done with 1.1, minister. We will take a break and there are a lot of things which can also flow into investigation of crime which Mr Gaffney has the first call after we finish that. The time being 11 a.m., we will take a break.

**The committee suspended from 11.01 a.m. to 11.20 a.m.**

**Output group 2**  
**Crime**

## **2.1 Investigation of Crime -**

**CHAIR** - I will get the committee to order and president is just now leaving so we can start. Welcome back, minister, after that, and we will move straight onto 2.1 which is investigation of crime.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Some of the questions were asked during overview, but I do apologise if I come with a question that has been asked if I was out of the room.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, that's all right.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So, we will just go from there. If I could ask the Commissioner, it would be good to get an overview, Mr Hine, about in the last 12 months what would you highlight as perhaps three main successes, three main challenges into the future and perhaps some failures or disappointments you can identify perhaps in the last 12 months. To the minister or the Commissioner.

**Mr HIDDING** - I will hand it to the Commissioner, but there has been no favours.

**Ms FORREST** - That is with the police force, not necessarily with the minister, is that it?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Things that didn't quite meet your expectation then. Anything that -

**Mr HINE** - Mr Gaffney, I will probably mix some of these up because there are various issues that I would like to cover. One of the things that is a success and a failure of our community is family violence and that is the way we deal with family violence. I am pleased the way everyone, including the leadership of the minister and the Premier and state government about supplying us with resources in family violence and how that is moving. We still have a lot of work to do to change attitudes and I know you are a white ribbon ambassador as a few of us around the table are as well, as well as the minister. We have had some success and we also struggle with what is the definition of success in family violence. Our ultimate aim is to make sure women and their children are safe in any relationship or in our community. We have a long way to go, but we have done a lot of work as well. We have had a lot of - I am reluctant to say success, but where we have helped save people's lives and make their lives better. But it is a success in some areas, but we have a lot of work to do and it is a failure of we as a community as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There has been some inroads into that issue.

**Mr HIDDING** - There is a higher number of reports.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we are getting some more extra reports which gives -

**Mr HIDDING** - Likely weren't being reported before.

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - That has to be a failure in some ways, but it is a great success in that at least now people feel safe to report and we can get in to clean it up.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - I struggle to say it is a success because I know there is women and their children out there are suffering as we speak and you can't call it a success because while there is individuals and women and children out there suffering and there are some men, I get that, but the vast majority are women are still suffering. Whilst they are suffering out there and they are not enjoying the life that they should, we shouldn't be classed as a success. So we have a lot of work to do in relation to that.

In relation to our business executive services, the integration as a department, we have made a lot of inroads with the guidance of the minister and the hard work of Donna and the team about integrating the corporate services or the shared services of the operational arms. That is being the police, the fire and SES, and the Forensic Science Service Tasmania. We have done a lot of work in relation to it into making sure we are well integrated and acting as one department and having gaining some economies of scale, even though it is not about saving money, it is getting a better service for our workforce and the operational arms, but also giving a better outcome for the community as well because we have a lot of work to do, but we have come a long way in a very short period of time and we are getting some benefits out of that.

Another thing that is really important to me and, again, we have had some success, but we still need to do some work in the future is the welfare of our workforce. We are seeing across all our emergency services and operational arms the stress on our workforce is quite high and we are seeing some of that manifest itself around the country as well. Unfortunately, we have some very sad situations where people in our workforces and emergency services have taken their own lives. We have to make sure that we continue to look after our people and we look after all aspects of their welfare. I was really pleased to receive that \$1.5 million ongoing into the Budget for our wellness program because whether you are a firefighter or a police officer or an ambulance officer or an SES member, we need to make sure that we look after those members and provide the best wellness program and look after the welfare as best we can. Unfortunately, there are some horrible circumstances they have to deal with and we have to make sure we continue to look after them and we are just seeing some not so nice trends, again, we need to work with that money that the government has allocated to us.

I suppose if I then amalgamate all the other issues in relation to our operational response from a policing point of view, our crime, we have some issues with crime and, again, we need to continue to work with the community to make sure that our crime statistics are kept in check. We have some issues with it, but if we go back three years ago, we had a four per cent increase in total crime. The year before, we had a 10 per cent decrease. This year we are having a six to seven per cent increase, so, again, we have to work really hard with that. But if you go back over 17 years, we have had over a 60 per cent decrease in total crime. We used to work 60 000-odd total offences. We are down to the 24 000 - 25 000. We have been hugely successful, but when you are down to that low numbers, any little bounce can hurt, so we have to continue to work really hard with the community. Whether it is shoplifting, whether it is serious crime, whatever the issue is, we have to work really hard to make sure we can keep it as low as we possibly can for the community and that is working closer with the community.

In some of our traffic statistics, if you look at the statistics today about fatal and serious crashes, we are nine fatal crashes below where we were at this time last year and we are a number under the serious. We are doing okay, but, again, we can't rest on our laurels. We need to work with State Growth and the Road Safety Advisory Council to make sure our roads are as safe as they possibly



can be. We have a number of initiatives that we continue to work with to make sure that our roads are safe and, again, we have seen some really bad situations where people do make poor decisions on our roads, so, again, we have to work with the community.

Women in policing, it is a hundred years of celebration of women in policing. Whilst we have 31 per cent of women in our sworn ranks, we still have a long way to go. As the minister said, every recruiting, we always try to get a 50/50 split. We want to make sure that we take out all the barriers in relation to women to make sure they can and everyone in the organisation can reach their full potential. As Ms Forrest said, when we are all sitting across here and we have a 50/50 representation at all levels of the department, then we can be satisfied that we have taken out a lot of barriers for men and women, whether it is flexible working hours to make sure that we take those barriers out. We have come a long way in 100 years, but we can't sit on our laurels. We need to work a lot harder to make sure there is equal representation right across the department and in policing. Thirty-one percent is probably one of the highest in the country. But, again, when we have equal representation across all our specialist units, all our rank structure, then we can say, 'Yes, we are doing okay'. But at the moment, we have some work to do.

I am covering a lot of areas, but the fraud and e-crime is certainly an issue that is continuing on into the future and we need to make sure that we have a capability to meet the increasing demands on that area as well. We know the dark web is there. We know how it is being used, but we have to make sure we have resources and the capability to deal with those issues as well. But if you had a look into the future, what are we going to look at? We need to make sure we are communicating with the community and internally really well. We have to make sure we train our people in leadership to make sure we are taking the leadership that we need to and we have to make sure we have a well-trained sustainable workforce into the future and we are looking at the future. We are about to release our future directions document to say: "Okay, what does the next three to five years look like for us?"

Hopefully, I have answered it in that roundabout way.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is good because it means that we won't have to go over some of that when it comes to questions. The 100 years is a good segue for the question from Mr Dean. This question will make sense to police. It is from the Police Association, Pat Allen: 'What constitutes a clear-up in criminal matters?'

**Ms Forrest** - Clearance or clear-up?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - 'What constitutes a clear-up in criminal matters?'

**Ms FORREST** - That is old copper language, is it?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is probably going to help us if you can explain what that is before we start further questions, I suppose.

**Mr HINE** - Thank you for that. An offence cleared, so 'cleared' used by police refers to the solution of a crime and, again, I can go down to what we - we have a very strict definition about what is a clear-up. Court proceedings. That can be a police action against a person to facilitate a court appearance to answer the matter. A community conference, where a person is directed to attend a meeting with the victim and other persons affected, where their behaviour and its consequences are discussed and the conference may impose one or more undertakings. We have

been doing that for a number of years. A formal caution. A person is formally warned that engaging in a specific conduct is against the law and there are various sanctions that can be applied by the police to prevent or punish such conduct. An informal caution. A person is informally warned the engaging in such conduct is against the law. Infringement notice. A person is issued an infringement notice for various offences and we have a system where we can issue an infringement on these machines called a police infringement notice. An infringement notice caution where people, if they haven't committed various offences under a period of time, they can get an infringement notice but it is a caution so there is no penalty applied.

An instruction of the prosecuting authority. Where the prosecuting authority deems that there is no likelihood of conviction. For example, a death or the absence of the victim. That is counted as a clear-up. Elapsed time limitation or a statutory bar that must be met that could not be proceeded against. Unable to proceed, one or more offenders have been identified, but no action is to be taken due to diplomatic immunity, incompetency of the alleged offender, death of the alleged offender, imprisonment, et cetera. Unfounded, where attendance to investigate investigation police are unable to establish whether or not the reported offence occurred and a withdrawal where the complainant, the victim, does not wish the matter to proceed and will not cooperate further with the police. We have strict definitions to make sure that we meet. We have our national obligations under the Australian Bureau of Statistics and we also have state obligations as well. So, that is the list.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you for that. That is helpful for Mr Allen. As the minister mentioned earlier -

**Ms FORREST** - Mike, before you go to another point, can I just ask a further question on that information?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Commissioner, you said about people withdrawing, this is one of the things that can happen in domestic violence situations particularly where the victim, for reasons often known only to themselves, chooses to withdraw, possibly under coercion, it is hard to know. What is the extent of withdraw? How many cases are withdrawn particularly in this area of the domestic violence space?

**Mr HINE** - In family violence or domestic violence, if someone, the victim, withdraws, we will normally still proceed because we need to protect the victim for those very issues that you have said. We may issue a police family violence order to keep the peace and while it is not going to court, we will issue a police family violence order or take them to court to issue a court family violence order to make sure that there are protections for the victim, because as you said, sometimes the victim doesn't want to go ahead for various reasons. We can totally understand this, so we need to give a protection to the victim and issue these things. Just because they say, 'I don't want to go ahead', we will normally go ahead with it.

**Ms FORREST** - Which ones? When you talked about some withdrawals then, what other areas do the people withdraw from?

**Mr HINE** - For example, whether it is an assault, a general assault, or stealing, sometimes they say, 'I just don't want to go to court', and we have to take into account the victim's wishes. Family violence is one that we - or an assault or something of that nature, but if a victim says a burglary

matter or whatever or they are withdrawing consent or not cooperating or don't want that process, we need to take account of that. But it doesn't mean to say we can't get restraint orders out or family violence orders out. It doesn't happen a lot, but there are some withdraw because of various reasons.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I guess if it is serious enough, the perpetrator, if the perpetrator is put away, there goes their breadwinner, sort of thing.

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In those circumstances, is that the sort of thing, the sort of reason why they are doing it?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and I can give the best example and the worst example is murder. The victim, they can't consent to withdraw or not, so we will still go ahead with a murder case. But, again, in relation to those, sometimes it is family violence that mightn't be always a court case, but sometimes we will take them court even though the victim doesn't want to or we will issue a family violence order as well so that all those circumstances - because at the end of the day, we want to keep the victim safe.

**Ms FORREST** - Thanks.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The minister mentioned earlier about new recruits and it has been brought to my attention that there is some fresh-faced new constables have been appearing on Tas Police's Facebook page. What are the total number of the officers recruited in the last 12 months and what is your hope, I suppose, for the next 12 months?

**Mr HINE** - We are at about, just off the top of my head, 1189 police officers at the moment. We have 19 to graduate in two weeks' time. By March next year, we will be up to the 1233 as the Government promises. Normally it is about three courses per year to take account of attrition and also to take account of increasing or getting our numbers back to where we were before.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is somewhere about 18 and 19 in a course, is that what you just said?

**Mr HINE** - It is normally 20. Sometimes it is down to 19 or 20, so that is the number normally we go with.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a very tough course, so sometimes there is a drop-out.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, thanks. Also, on the Facebook page, a number of people are popping up on Wanted Wednesday. How helpful has this been in facilitating the investigation of crime and would you say it has helped build community engagement?

**Mr HINE** - I have to say our media and communication area has run with this and they do a fantastic job and the feedback through the community has been absolutely fantastic. We are about to reach 150 000 likes which is basically followers and it has been absolutely tremendous. The Wanted Wednesday was an initiative of media and communication again it has been very, very successful and now they are starting those people on CCTV and they are starting to put those people up as well. An example, I will try and de-identify because he is, of course, in front of the court at

the moment. Someone committed an offence and then they were back at the airport within that day. It was put upon the Facebook site and they were identified and they left the state and they were identified very quickly. We have had people come into the station to say, 'Hey, on the Facebook, it is me, can you take me off?' It has been very successful, but it is -

**Ms Forrest** - Naming and shaming.

**Mr HINE** - It is, but the success is - and I am not saying this because our manager is here, but the success is due to the people who manage it and put the posts up. Some have a light-hearted aspect to it and a community aspect and some are a serious aspect. I can only pay credit to the people that run it and it has been a fantastic community engagement to a point.

**Mr HIDDING** - Astonishing good. Amazing.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Can you put a figure on what that costs or is that not - it may not be necessary, but I am just wondering how do you - yes, is there a figure on running that?

**Mr HINE** - I suppose that is our media and communications. We have six in that area.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, and so this is one task.

**Mr HINE** - And that is just one very thin slither what they are dealing with and that includes the fire media and communication, internal communications. You can just imagine the amount of media queries we get in a day from a policing organisation. That is one little bit of it -

**Mr HIDDING** - It has to be monitored too because if something goes up that is not quite right, it has to be -

**Ms FORREST** - Are all posts moderated in that way?

**Mr HINE** - We have a - and you would be surprised at the list of banned words.

**Mr HIDDING** - Including mine, so if you try to -

**Ms FORREST** - So we can't put anything nasty about you, right.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, or something nice. That could happen too.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, let's get on with it. Let's stick to reality here.

**CHAIR** - Keep going.

**Mr HIDDING** - But it just doesn't - you can't physically - you put "R-E" it just doesn't go up. It is doesn't come up. It is banned.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Return on investment for that project is really good - is really high.

**Mr HINE** - They monitor it out of hours. They only work office hours, so they monitor it after hours and as best they can possibly can. They were put up for an award for the public sector awards.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

They do a tremendous job and when you look about some of the other teams that are a lot larger than we have, they do a really good job, so I have nothing but praise for them.

**Ms FORREST** - Just on that point, Mike, before you go on, you have 150 likes on the page -

**Mr HINE** - 150 000.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thousand.

**Mr VALENTINE** - 150 000.

**Ms FORREST** - 150 000, sorry, yes. I had the "K" in my head. Do you have any idea how many young people are engaged? Because this is one of the challenges engaging young people with the police. I don't know if you can do the demographics on that or is it impossible to track that?

**Mr HINE** - We can. Lisa is our manager, so we have all those statistics in relation to that. So, we do have a demographic.

**Mr HINE** - We can get that. We have all the monitoring tools that Facebook supply in relation to demographics and all those things.

**Ms FORREST** - Would you be able to provide that to committee then, like the age and region demographic?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, yes, what is available, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - It would be interesting because if there is, say, in the north-west region there was a really low uptake, it could be good for us as members in that area to promote it.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - It is just an example. I am not sure if you saw that one where the police officers took that person who was a little bit under the weather home and they took the selfie.

**Ms FORREST** - That is right, yes, yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, that is right.

**Mr HINE** - The take-up of that, we were getting emails on Facebook from all over the world. Some I couldn't understand because they were in different languages.

**Ms FORREST** - Really?

**Mr HINE** - We received an email from someone in the United States to say, 'It's fantastic, congratulations'. So, the spread is worldwide.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, good-o.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I note that the number of total offences has decreased quite significantly and your offence clearance rate has increased. Page 160, budget paper 2, volume 1. This shows that the department's aim of offence reduction is being realised. However, what is being done to respond to the - to use an academic-speak - the dark side of offending, that is offending that is either not reported or not detected? In essence, what methods or programs are being introduced to stop offending remaining dark? This is a term that I have heard used. I am just wondering if you could illuminate?

**Mr HINE** - It is one of those things as we have been discussing before about we can't react to something if we don't know about it. We work really hard and, again, it is that family violence situation, we encourage people to make sure they report matters to us and whether it is a shoplifting matter or whether it is another crime, we encourage and we continue to encourage whether it is through social media or talking to the community groups. There is a survey in relation to the victimisation that is done every now and then where they go through and do a survey to say, 'Okay, you mightn't have reported this, but' - it is what we call a victimisation rate. Normally, we are in the bounds of statistical error, so we are not getting the major portion of our offences being unreported, but there is. Definitely not everyone reports everything to police because for a start we couldn't cope with every minor matter being reported to us, but on the major offences and some of the things that should be reported to police, we are within the statistical errors. It is like I keep talking about the dark web, the criminal activity that happens in the dark web, but we need to work with our major partners to make sure we can continue to try and address that. The technology is great. It works for us. Facebook and Twitter works really well, but we also know that it works well for criminal groups as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, as well

**Mr HINE** - We need to make sure that we continue and that is that under-reporting because we know a lot of people are too embarrassed to report some things to police when they have been involved in scams. But, again, if everyone poured every little thing to us, we would be overwhelmed really quickly.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is probably a good lead-in to, we know that federally the government has commenced storing metadata from internet service providers over the last few months. There have been some relatively high profile cases involving child exploitation and exploitation material. Do Tas Police have the ability to access that data?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, under certain circumstances we can access that data and we need a warrant and I am not sure which case you are talking about, but if it is Commonwealth legislation and we can access the metadata then we need warrants or we have the law to follow. We are like every other state, we need to follow what the legislation says.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So, you have never had any issue about not being able to have access to that data?

**Mr HINE** - No, no, it is always - and, again, we have the same access as every other law enforcement as long as we have the right warrants and we are reviewed by the Commonwealth Ombudsman about how we access that data as well. There is a really robust checking mechanism. There is robust internal mechanisms to make sure that when we apply for warrants we have a very robust process that we need to make sure and then apply to the courts.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I notice as well that serious offending is down slightly over previous years. I have to ask, is that because of a decrease or is organised crime getting better at the criminal game? How do you measure that or what is your experience in that sector?

**Mr HINE** - It is a really good question as in you can have the best statistics in the world, just don't stop taking reports so, you know, think crime is down. We have some checking mechanisms through community satisfaction surveys, through the victimisation surveys, and also the work of the Australian Institute of Criminal Intelligence to make sure that we are not under-reporting or we have a good handle on crime. For example, there are various other surveys that are done just to make sure that we are checking and we are working with the community to make sure there isn't that under-reporting of serious crime. We have to continue to work with the community to make sure that they feel comfortable with reporting. We don't always get it right. We have to continue to make sure we work with the community so they feel comfortable to come along to us and report the matters that should be reported to us.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. With regard to the Removal of Fortifications Bill yet to realise itself in our place, but we are waiting for it, do you expect this is to play a large role in further decreasing that figure and are there any other areas where the police would like to see further reform with the serious crime and serious offending?

**Mr HINE** - We have a number of pieces as you know about legislation that the minister is sponsoring. Fortification is one of those issues because we realise that fortification, especially some of the outlaw motorcycle gangs, they use that fortification to defeat the police trying to get in there under a warrant. So, that is a handy piece of legislation once it is passed by the parliament and also there is a number of other things that the minister is - whether it is the consorting legislation, whether it is some of the other legislation to deal with offending by serious and organised crime. But we have the Serious Organised Crime Unit and they are working on a number of issues. But one of the things that we have that has worked really well, I am not sure if the minister wants to comment, is about the proceeds of crime and the unexplained wealth legislation. I am not sure if the minister wants to talk about that.

**Mr HIDDING** - This is very modern policing and it is called follow the money. It is often easier to find the money than to at law charge the person with anything. If you can find the money under our laws, you can require that person to explain where it came from. If that person is unable to explain where it lawfully came from and let's face it, in this day and age you can't say, 'I found it, it fell off the back of a truck', because there are all sorts of reporting things that manage that. But you can take it off them and there has been already a number of successful cases where properties have been sold, cars have been sold, boats have been sold, and that money just goes straight into the consolidated fund, straight to our schools and hospitals. That is a process that is now as a result of the new extra police numbers we are able to staff or provide staff to a unit in the DPP, the Director of Public Prosecutions, where together between them they follow the money. At the moment there is a significant number of attachments of people's wealth that are yet to be explained. The person is not necessarily charged with anything, but it seriously disrupts the activity because that person would have to wonder after he loses all his money, \$800 000 or something, 'Why would I keep doing this if you are just going to take it off me again?'

**Mr Gaffney** - Yes, good call.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is very strong policing.

**Mr HINE** - To give you some of the figures, in the last three years about \$4.6 million has been restrained and there is unexplained wealth declarations where people have to give up their money. We are nearing a million dollars now. As the minister, we have followed the money and why would people continue on in a criminal activity if there is no money involved or a criminal offence and jail.

**Ms FORREST** - Where does that revenue show up in the budget papers? Is that in fines and fees?

**Mr HIDDING** - Good question.

**Ms FORREST** - In Finance General, I expect, is it? Is that where it comes in?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we don't get the money.

**Ms FORREST** - No, no, I'm saying - no.

**Mr HINE** - But it just goes into consolidated revenue.

**Ms FORREST** - It goes into the pork barrel, does it?

**Mr VALENTINE** - That was a shot and a half.

**CHAIR** - That was a cheap shot. Keep going, Mike.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - We saw at the end of last year a joint effort involving Tas Police and the Australian Federal Police in intercepting a large vessel with a significant amount of drugs on it. If these offenders were extradited to Victoria despite their arrest being in Tasmania, how does situations like this reflect in the figures we have before us in the budget? I imagine it was a Commonwealth offence, but you would still be expected to be releasing our figures. I am just wanting to understand.

**Mr HINE** - No, that is a really good question. It was intercepted in international waters, so it was not a Tasmanian offence. It was a Commonwealth offence. We were the nearest port to bring them back and so they brought them back here to port and that is where they were put before the courts and charge with Commonwealth offences. We don't show Commonwealth offences and that is why they have been extradited to Victoria to answer the Commonwealth offences.

**Mr HIDDING** - In the meantime, of course, they needed to all be accommodated in our system which is fairly constrained.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Is it not possible to have a section 'Commonwealth Offences' blah, blah, blah, and it cost you X amount of dollars? It wouldn't happen a lot, I imagine.

**Mr HINE** - There are some cost recovery issues in relation to that. The Commonwealth covers all those costs. We don't cover the Commonwealth offences and our state offences. We only record state offences, not Commonwealth offences where the Commonwealth AFP do that.



## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There is a workload impost there for our police. Is that recorded or reported anywhere within budget or is it just an annual report? How do we know how many of those cases there have been in the last 12 months? Do you know what I mean?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I just want to know how that is recorded.

**Mr HINE** - Yes. I suppose the short answer is it is not recorded because there is a lot times we work with our partners where we assist other states, they assist us. We have an AFP office here and we work with them, but we don't divide the workload up. But if there is a significant cost to us to assist another jurisdiction or whatever, then we will recover costs. But normally we don't charge each other for wages because that would give us a real burden. But with that one, there were some costs that the Commonwealth did pay for.

**Mr Valentine** - A bit of a two-way street.

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The offences against property are also down and so insurers would be rejoicing about that. However, within the data, it is unclear if they are incorporated under total offences measure or not. I would presume not as this would mean over 75 per cent of the offending is against property. It just doesn't seem as if it is clear and so if it could be more clearly differentiated - and I am not sure that is because something has gone to a different output. Could you explain how that works?

**Mr HINE** - I am not sure if you have seen our corporate performance report on our internet site. It probably explains it a lot better. For example, 'total offences' is a wrap-up of all offences. If you need more granular definitions or where we are in relation - we report those very issues every month on our internet sites. I was trying to wrap it up into an output group, but total offences does take into account all offences.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The total offences on that output group 2 is 24 860.

**Mr HINE** - As I was saying before, we used to report about 60 000, now we are about 24 000 total offences.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Offences against property is 19 741. That is nearly 75 per cent of your investigations.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, exactly. But on our internet site, every month we produce our corporate performance report about all our offences, our divisions. It goes into a lot of detail, but we make it publicly available.

**CHAIR** - I notice that there is a 4 per cent increase in clearance rate, up from 34 to 38, which is good. Do you think that figure is still relatively low? Or how does that compare nationally - how do you compare that with other jurisdictions? What is your KPI on that? Do you want a clearance rate of 60 or 70? It just seems to be low.

**Mr HINE** - Offences against the person normally run between 85 per cent and 90 per cent. Offences against property, if you go back 15 years ago, were at 8 per cent or 9 per cent. We thought getting towards 30 per cent would be almost nigh impossible, but we are now exceeding that. We certainly compare well with other jurisdictions and states. I am quite pleased with the amount of work that we put into this and the figures we are achieving. In utopia, I would much rather than the crime wasn't committed and therefore we didn't have to clear it up. We are trying to work on the preventative side to make sure that they are not committed, but if they are committed, then we put a lot of effort into trying to clear it up. I am pleased with the clearance rate. We will always aim for higher and it will fluctuate, but if you had asked me this question 15 years ago, if we have double figures, I would say we are doing all right.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I note that with property offences and with other most types of offending, it is common practice to have many charges and many counts of certain offences. The one person comes in and it is just not one offence. There might be two or three. How are these reflected in the measures? Are we seeing one person with multiple charges inflating the offence rate? You say there are 24 860 offences; is that 24 860 people, or is that say 18 000 people and 6000 or 3000 have two offences to it?

**Mr HINE** - It is not the people. That is the actual incident. So if two houses are broken into, that is two offence reports. It might be the one individual doing the one, two, three, four houses, but as an individual offence report, if my house is broken into, that is counted as one offence report, one crime. But someone may be charged with multiple offences so that is normally -

**Mr Gaffney** - That would be three or four.

**Mr HINE** - Three counts, three different houses that person has broken into.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If one person goes into a house, that is entering and that is one offence; kicks the dog, so that is injury to an animal, and that is two offences.

**Mr HINE** - It is the one offence and it is counted once, and there might be multiple different offences and crimes committed in that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I understand. One more question. Two, but they are not that long. I note with the performance on page 160, budget paper 2, volume 1, the number of serious drug offenders charged has decreased. First, what differentiates a serious drug offender from a non-serious drug offender? Is the distinction along the summary/indictable line? Second, whilst a decrease in these figures is good and is about 10 per cent, is this a reflection of a greater number of charges being for non-serious drug offending or more effective policing, or with something else? It is the distinction between a drug offender and a non-serious one and how that works out in the stats. My other question is a firearms one and then I will open it up to others.

**Mr HINE** - Thanks for that. There is the distinction between what we call supply or trafficking in an amount of drugs, so that is in the serious. That is always what we want from a policy point of view. We are always after those ones who are dealing or trafficking in drugs. That is a loose distinction in relation to what we class as serious. What was your second question, Mr Gaffney?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Whilst a decrease in these figures is good and is about 10 per cent, is this is a reflection of a greater number of charges being for non-serious drug offending or more effective policing or something else?

**Mr HINE** - I suppose it is a combination of both, in a short answer.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Is it about resourcing, say, instead of having five people or six people looking at serious crime, you then up it to eight and so you are expecting a greater inflow so you can target different groups with different resourcing?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, I suppose. We have dedicated drug investigation areas and we have the serious organised crime areas as well and we will classify them. The information or the investigations in relation to those dealing in drugs will always take primary over information about a low level user. We need prioritise. Like everything in the way we do things, we need to risk-manage and prioritise investigations. If we have a murder, that will always take our resources off other investigations to deal with that. If we had a serious importation of a drug, that will always take our resources off other things. It is about prioritising, and that is policing in general. We always prioritise to make sure we deal with the highest risk or the issue that needs our attention. So, sometimes that is diverting people off other investigations.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - My last question, and I apologise if this is asked whilst I was out of the room, but within the notes, budget paper 2, volume 1, on page 160, it states that firearm-related offences were removed as a specific indicator. Why was this?

**Mr HINE** - Because the number was so low. It's wrapped up in the total offences and it's getting down to so low that it really didn't make up any difference. The Auditor-General gave us some advice when they did an audit and said, 'Maybe you need to wrap some of these things up and reallocate them amongst some of our output groups', and so where it was in the total crime, that's where we removed it.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Commissioner, is there a question I should have asked you that would make the front page tomorrow?

**Mr HINE** - I can't think of any, Mr Gaffney.

**Mr FARRELL** - I can but I'm not going to.

**Mr HINE** - No, thank you, that's all.

**CHAIR** - All right. I remind the committee that we're falling way behind.

**Mr HIDDING** - It's that overview went too long.

**CHAIR** - No, it wasn't. There were other parts of it as well. If members of both sides could be succinct. On this particular matter, we have Craig and Rob, and the other Rob, on investigation of crime.

**Mr FARRELL** - Mine probably fits more into general overview, but seeing that Mr Gaffney brought up recruiting of young officers, on the other end of that where you lose experienced police officers. There was a case recently with the retirement age and one of our local police retired, and he was fairly keen to keep going for a while. Are plans in the system to review this process, or how you hold on to these fairly valuable resources for that bit longer?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, this has been a matter of some interest to me for some time. I became aware of the officer in New Norfolk and also the coverage of his retirement. There are mixed feelings amongst the policing community as to whether there should be a requirement to leave at 65 because of the nature of the job, which is a different issue because the federal government is shifting the retirement ages to be more in line with our expectation of years of life. So already somebody born after a certain time is looking at 67 now, and it'll go to 70 eventually. I have open mind on it. The Police Association's view is that it should stay, or they're not pushing for a change which is interesting.

I've an open mind on it - not that I'm not prepared to look at it. I'm still taking advice and thinking about it. I do feel a bit uncomfortable that in my job I'm welcome to go past 65, but a police officer is not. It is quite specific in the law: you cease to be an officer at age 65.

**Ms Forrest** - That's to stop Mr Dean going back! We did say that in the Chamber the other day.

**Mr HIDDING** - True. That could well be true.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, some people at 65 are still very fit and active, and other people aren't.

**Mr HIDDING** - That's my view on it. I'm not sure if the Commissioner has another view.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - This one might not come under your jurisdiction. Do you more phone calls now through the phone scams that people are getting, 'Your computer has a virus', or whatever it may be. Have you seen an increase - do you have any jurisdiction over it or do you get any - have you seen a spike in the number of calls coming to you?

**Mr HINE** - That was probably one of those issues about what's into the future. I'd be surprised if everyone around this table hasn't received one of those phone calls.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - About five a week, I reckon.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, so it is an issue. There's what we call ACORN where you can ring up a number and it's reported nationally. Then they then filter down those ones where it is a crime and it comes back to the state for investigation, so we're aware of it. It certainly seems to be increasing, but it'll only increase. I talk to various groups and we put the information out there, 'if it sounds too good to be true, it is going to be too good to be true, and never give your details over a telephone', and all those things that we need to protect ourselves. But they'll only keep doing it while they're still going to get victims, and unfortunately there are still people are falling for some of the scams.

We saw the world-wide events in relation to the Ransomware on the computer, so we have to continue to educate the community. It's that theme about prevention is better than cure. People need to be resilient and take some responsibility and help us help them so we're getting the message out there that if it sounds too good to be true, it is going to be too good to be true.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - That was my next question. Do you run an education program or an advert or anything about these things? I've heard of some elderly people caught on these scams. I suppose they don't know who they're targeting when they're ringing up. Should there be some sort of education program?

**Mr HINE** - We have done various campaigns in relation to those nationally and statewide and through Facebook and sometimes you have to target, in relation to those older in our community, and there's some very savvy computer literate older generation, but if they're not, then of course, you've only have to ask a younger person to help them. So it is about education. We need to educate our kids, we need to educate our older community and there's some national campaigns, there's some state campaigns.

We're doing it through Facebook where we go out and talk to various community groups. I always raise that issue myself whether it's Probus or Rotary or Lions, I'm always raising that issue, and then we all can get around it, but again, it's that simple thing, if it sounds too good to be true, it is not right, and banks don't ask for details over telephones and all those things. We need to continue educating. You're exactly right. The more we talk about it, the more hopefully people listen and the more we can prevent these things because whilst there's a market, these criminals, no matter where they are in the world, will continue to exploit that market.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Rob Valentine on this item.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I note that there are even old-fashioned methods via post, scratchies, coming through, 'You've won \$90 000', or something, seeking to get your details. I don't know how much you can talk about this, but modern policing is quite different to what it was many years ago. The digital systems that you employ in fighting crime, are you able to talk about some of that, that sort of helps to, I suppose through this process, educate the community as to how sophisticated it is these days so that people are aware of your -

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and it's -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Without touching on areas that you would prefer not to. I can understand that there might be some there.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, I understand your question very well. It's one of those things as in we always talk about the Peelian principles of about 150 years ago about the modernisation of policing, and some of those principles still apply, as in it's about we need to make sure we guard against crime, community, safety and the community's, the police are the community, all those things.

But as we know through the electronic and technology there's various ways we can help protect the community, and one of the things that we've found has been a great success if what we've got here. Every officer has one of these devices and on this device is the information that they need to do their job, and information for policing is key, and again we're looking at national systems, and no matter where you are, then we've - we're still developing them nationally. If you, wherever you live, we know we've got a very fluid community. They move around, people, move around, so if you come from Queensland, come down to here then we can get that information about you and what your offending history, or what we should be looking at for.

We have other technologies that we employ to make sure that, and we can, and we need to make sure that we get the proper warrants and we're working within the law, and there's lots of guidelines that we need to follow and quite rightly so, but there are various technologies out there that we need to work with our partners to make sure if we need that technology, or if we needed to develop ourselves, we'll continue to develop, but as you said -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So DNA sort of records and fingerprint records, all those sorts of things are all available electronically right across the nation.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, the DNA database has been around for 10 to 15 years now, and all the other records that we need, and it's been a tremendous help to solve crime and keep the community and those offenders held to account, and we have had some great successes where a crime has been committed many years ago, the person is not on the DNA database, then they get charged in another state. Their DNA then comes up because their DNA is taken, and then we can solve a crime that's committed many, many years ago. So all those advances in technology, we have facial recognition, biometrics is being used a lot more, so whilst we're a smaller jurisdiction, we have to make sure we have those connections with our partner agencies right across the country and the world to make sure we tap into that and we use it the best we can because we know criminals exploit technologies too.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you.

## **2.2 Poppy security -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We will move on to the next line item which is probably security. Minister, I noticed on the performance indication there's no actual figures for interferences per 1000 hectares for 2016-17. They are not available yet? Is that the - up, down, in between?

**Mr HIDDING** - I do have some figures here. We are saying, they are not -

**Mr HINE** - They are not available until the actual end of the year but we have some up-to-date figures.

**CHAIR** - Yes, very briefly.

**Mr HINE** - These numbers are to 31 March.

**CHAIR** - They can be tabled, can they?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, I'm happy to table this, these numbers.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. That's good. The area of poppies is only half of what it was because, different market, world percentages, as you know, minister. Is there any sort of break-down of data between what I would term local pilfering and the illicit market? Is there anything you would go to that level or not, or is that too hard to determine?

**Mr HINE** - It is a little bit hard, but the number of caps were stolen, which the minister will supply, and the numbers recovered, and those ones this year so far, we have charged eight people for stealing poppy capsules, and as you said, the hectare zone up until 31 March was 9600 where the previous years was 14 000. So as you said it's -

**CHAIR** - That's right, the previous year before that was 25 000 so it goes down.

**Mr HINE** - 21, 25, 31, as you said, the hectare zone is certainly reducing as well, but those ones that we've charged, it's normally the local market, and unfortunately we've had some deaths as a result of that as well. This year we have charged eight people with poppy thefts.

**CHAIR** - In any particular area, or pretty widespread?

**Mr HINE** - I don't have a break-down of where those eight were.

**CHAIR** - That is fine.

**Ms Forrest** - It wasn't in the centre of Hobart.

**Mr HIDDING** - I can provide some assistance there. All interferences during the 2016-17 growing season of 28 poppy interferences with 12 000 capsules stolen, that is an increase, no question.

**Ms Forrest** - 12 000 capsules?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Ms Forrest** - It is a lot, isn't it.

**Mr HIDDING** - There was one major, I think, but all interferences occurred on the north-west coast.

**Ms FORREST** - The majority of poppies grown on the north-west coast.

**Mr HIDDING** - North-west coast, sorry, yes.

**CHAIR** - Although most of the area now is in the northern midlands. Isn't that the biggest area?

**Ms FORREST** - I suppose it is expanding down that way, isn't it.

**CHAIR** - Yes, northern midlands, that's where most of them are.

**Mr HINE** - I'm not sure where the offenders came from.

**Mr HIDDING** - The interferences occurred on the north-west coast, and as a result of investigations eight persons were charged in relation to poppy thefts, and 7200 poppy capsules were recovered, so there was that one major one.

**CHAIR** - We're getting that tabled. Thank you, minister. I have no further questions. Does anybody else?

### **2.3 Fisheries security -**

**CHAIR** - You need somebody else at the table, minister, or are you all right with that Fisheries security.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr VALENTINE** - Minister, I'm interested in the vessels involved here in terms of your Fisheries security. A number of FDEs that you have, and I know you have the *Dauntless* and the *Van Diemen* and you need to maintain those in the future. You must have a lot of smaller vessels. We don't hear much about that. Can you give us a bit of an overview as to the sort of service, rather than force, that's involved here, and maybe what some of the biggest challenges are in this space.

**Mr HIDDING** - At the top end the *Van Diemen* stays in service, but there's a similar sized vessel, same design, on the way. That is imminent. That will become the No.1 vessel which will be travelling far and wide off the coast of Tasmania.

**Mr VALENTINE** - A well-built vessel?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, beautifully built, and we improve it. The crew received a National Heroes Award for a rescue down off Maatsukyker Island which was astonishing. The waves were the size of skyscrapers and they went down and rescued a person, so that the vessel is very capable, and the crews are superb.

Underneath that, there is the *Vigilant*, the beautiful old wooden police boat, still in service, and just recently came back from an operation down the coast from here, and then there's the *Dauntless* and then there's a range of smaller craft. The next one is the trailered - the trailered vessels which - five of these large trailered vessels.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Ones with about three outboard motors on the back or four outboard motors.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, there's two. Two, I think, and underneath that, it's the Sentinel class, is it? Yes, which are the black acrylic tubular sides -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - You have seen all those vessels?

**Mr VALENTINE** - I understand.

**Mr HIDDING** - There's quite a number of those. Most police stations anywhere near the water have one of those, and they're pretty fast response as well, but we are looking at replacing the *Dauntless* and that will be a reasonably major project because that's an important vessel, but it's a mid-size type of thing. It is not as big as the famous *Fortescue*, but still a substantial sized vessel. It is time for that one to be replaced in a year or two, so we'll see.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So where are they placed around the state?

**Mr HIDDING** - *Dauntless* is at Lindisfarne. That looks after the Storm Bay and down to Bruny Island way. The five trailered vessels, there's one on King Island. There is one on Flinders, Strahan, and St Helens. There's one more somewhere but - Stanley. Yes, that's north-west coast.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You seem to have one or two smaller vessels that are located in North Hobart too in that compound or yard, don't you?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, that's the - that's Marine Police, Marine Rescue. That is their -



**Mr VALENTINE** - That is Rescue, is it?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, so they are rescue craft that we have down here. They look after the larger vessels in the bay as well and they have a number of craft out there so they're Search and Rescue as well as that

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do they do any Fisheries security work, those sorts of things?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, all vessels are available for Fisheries security, and in fact, Fisheries, and particularly rock lobster, pays a certain amount through their levy for Marine Police establishment around Tasmania towards these vessels.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you have any problems with getting people with enough expertise to keep that service rolling?

**Mr HIDDING** - If you'd like to have a look some time, out at Glenorchy is where Marine Police is now, they have a large base there, vessels everywhere and Inspector Lee Renshaw is still there.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It would be good to do at some stage.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, and to be briefed on what they have and as vessels roll over and why they have these particular outboards and what have you. It's quite a thing. They have been centered now at the rear of the Glenorchy big new police station. They are in a large facility there.

**Mr HINE** - We're fortunate. We train our coxswains and also the Master 4 and 5 to run our large vessels. We have some really good people, so there's no skill shortage there, and they do a fantastic job, those larger vessels.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Looking at the offences - on page 160, talking about marine offenders detected. I have a couple of figures there. There has been a small increase in the number of offenders detected between 2014-15 and 2015-16, up 36, and it's also noted the target for 2016-17 and 2017-18 is to have less than or equal to the three-year average. So I'm just thinking to myself, how is it possible to set a target? If you set it too high, people say, 'Well, you're simply after revenue'. If you set it too low, you're accused of not being thorough or active enough. So how do you, in approaching that issue -

**Mr HIDDING** - There is a statistical reason for doing that.

**Mr HINE** - It is one of those things when we set out budget outputs, as in, we're always a couple of years ahead, so that was set a couple of years ago, and a lot of - some of these ones we exceed, so we then adjust it as we go along when we set the budget forecasting for the budget papers for the next year, so sometimes we're about 12 months behind. So all right, we have set that a couple of years ago, now we need to revisit that, and if you look at our current marine offenders, we are, up until April we are 1339.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That was going to be my next question. So, 1339?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HINE** - That is up until April, and the same last year was 1247, so we have exceeded the previous 12 months.

**Mr TILYARD** - I was going to clarify an issue about why the target is at or below the three-year average. That is because we have a big emphasis on preventative activities, and some of these offenders are people that aren't wearing life jackets or don't carry the flares that you need to carry on a vessel. What we are trying to achieve is a reduction of offending.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can you give us a table later? A break-up of the detections, type of detection, and whether they are recreational and/or commercial. Is that possible to provide?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That would be great.

**Ms FORREST** - And Fisheries related, as opposed to Marine -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, Fisheries.

**Ms FORREST** - Of not having a life jacket or whatever, yes.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we have what the various tins and fins - yes, we can certainly give you a break-down of those figures.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And it's just on Fisheries security?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The number and percentage of detections that result in no further action of either a fine or prosecution, and essentially are a warning to the fisher, so can you give us details on that as well?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we can provide that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - All right.

**Ms FORREST** - And just on that, Rob, the amount raised, that's come in in fines, related to the Fisheries? Do you have that amount?

**Mr HINE** - That might be through the Fines Enforcement Unit but we will see what we can do, but it's normally done through the Fines Enforcement Unit in relation to - for them to get it. We don't hold that information. We are just about - I can tell you how many people we have proceeded against and the fine enforcement, but we will put that as part of - we might not have that information but we will -

**Mr VALENTINE** - That was going to be my question.

**Ms FORREST** - Sorry.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What it was, was the number of percentage of detections which result in undisputed fines and the revenue obtained from those split between recreation and commercial fishers.

**Mr HINE** - That's probably more the Fines Enforcement Unit rather than us. We will just have the raw figure that, the break-down of the offences, not the money associated with, but we will put that as part of our response if that's, Fines Enforcement need to - so we will put it in, whether we have it or not, and then if the question needs to be further explored.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The number of percentage of detections that end up in court and the success of prosecutions, can you give us that detail?

**Mr HIDDING** - A lot of these offences are done by infringement notice.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and the courts -

**Mr HIDDING** - In fact, most of them, aren't they?

**Mr HINE** - Court outcomes again, that's probably more of the judiciary as in the Justice Department rather than ours. If we haven't got it, we will explain that we haven't got it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That's interesting in the sense that - yes, wouldn't it be useful for you to know what that is or not?

**Ms FORREST** - The outcomes, you're saying?

**Mr VALENTINE** - In terms of how you target your service?

**Mr HINE** - We have a specialised prosecutor for marine matters, as in, we have a lawyer or solicitor that does the majority of our marine enforcement activities in court. So we have one centralised area that can provide all that feedback if there are any issues with some of the prosecutions, and also our prosecution area for the minor ones. So we do get the feedback if there's an issue in relation to the evidence presented or the deficiencies in the prosecution case. In all our prosecutions we are always getting their feedback to make sure if there's an issue that we learn from it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So maybe the last one which was the number of fishers, commercial and recreational, that have had their entitlement to fish suspended due to non-compliant detective activities, but again, you're not going to have that.

**Mr HINE** - No, we won't have that influence.

**Mr VALENTINE** - All right, thank you, Chair.

**Ms FORREST** - We have a vast coastline and I hear anecdotally in my electorate, which has a vast coastline, that a lot of people do recreationally fish there, that anecdotally there's a lot of people who will make sure there's no obvious police presence, or police presence that could get them for being over their catch limit, bring it ashore, give it to their family, and family takes it

home. They go out and do it again. Do you know how much of that goes on that is undetected and not prosecuted?

**Mr HINE** - I suppose it's 'how long is a piece of string'. That's where we work the community. We have a dedicated phone number where people can pass information through to a dedicated phone number, or Crime Stoppers if they believe an offence has been committed.

**Ms FORREST** - And that's all confidential, is it?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Because people do worry. When you live in small communities, if you dob someone in, you're in their line of fire.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, that's right.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and there's a mobile number for information for marine offenders they can go to or Crime Stoppers, and anonymity is really important and we make sure we guard against that as well, and you're exactly right as in, a small community, but again -

**Ms FORREST** - A lot of small communities don't have mobile phone reception either, where they are occurring.

**Mr HINE** - It's one of those things. Normally people come into those receptions, at some stage, and they can pass that information on. The penalties for infringing some of the marine offences is severe.

**Ms FORREST** - Pretty strict, yes.

**Mr HINE** - And you only have to get caught once to understand that you could lose your boat, your diving equipment and face severe penalties, so again, that's, certainly if there's a bigger deterrent than that, but again, it's the information that we need to make sure that it's free-flowing.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you have to catch them in the act, because it makes it more difficult, doesn't it? If they bring in a certain catch, it might be within the limit. They leave it on shore but then go back out, and they come and perhaps someone has notified, 'I think these guys have gone out again', then they only have the allowable catch on board when they come in the second time.

**Mr HINE** - That's part of the investigation process to make sure we get all that evidence.

**Mr HIDDING** - The marine police are aware of all this stuff that goes on and are pretty smart with this stuff. They pull cars up as well to check what they have in the boot and -

**Mr TILYARD** - Last year we did nearly 24 000 inspections of vessels at sea and nearly 6000 land-based inspections, so there's a lot of inspections.

**Ms FORREST** - So in vehicles as well as -

**Mr TILYARD** - Yes, and at landing points and things when they come in, so there are a lot of inspections that happen. As I say, nearly 24 000 on water inspections alone, and then another nearly

6000 last year on land, so it's quite a lot of checking that does happen. Some of that's very overt and we also run covert operations as well, surveillance operations, but we find that these days especially, the other commercial and recreational fishers, they are the best source of information, because they will soon point out if someone is pulling pots, or doing the wrong thing.

**Ms FORREST** - That's right, yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That's right.

**Mr TILYARD** - Because they have a vested interest as well.

**Ms FORREST** - It is in their own back yard.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Especially if it's their own gear that's being targeted.

**Mr TILYARD** - That's right, exactly.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, or their own fish stock is being adversely affected.

**Mr TILYARD** - So there's a lot of eyes everywhere.

**Ms FORREST** - So you would hope that in terms of the total marine offences detected, it would go down, you would hope?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we are aware of the issue that you do speak about.

### 2.4 Support to judicial services -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - All right. Anything else on that one? If not, we will move to 2.4, Support for Judicial Services. We have covered a fair bit of this earlier in the overview, but there may be other areas you would like to go to.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - In the figures it shows that state charges prosecuted have increased from 44 182 to 46 898, that's an increase of 2716, a significant increase of over 6 per cent. Can you suggest what has contributed to this increase? It is a reflection on increase of crime reporting or more effective policing, yes, that's that one to start with.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, probably it's a bit of both, as in when clearance rates go up we are detecting more people, and when we put more resources in to certain activities, we will naturally detect more people.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So is the increase in prosecutions met by increases in budget funding provided for support for judicial services, or do you find that funds have to be drawn from other areas of this output to meet the increase. So how does that relationship work?

**Mr HINE** - There is a correlation between the increasing numbers of police officers we have experienced in the last three years, as in, you have more police officers, therefore they will be out there detecting more offences as well which will turn into prosecutions, but it's - and at certain times we have, at the moment we have a crime focus and we have additional resources into the investigation of crime, and therefore we will detect more offences and hopefully clear up more

crime as well. So there can be a correlation as well as a cause and effect, but it is about having dedicated resources to do some dedicated offence detecting, will increase the number of prosecutions that that we are seeing.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. I notice this output deals not only with prosecuting offences but providing support to victims, bail and warrant processing and others. These are all jobs that will have increased cost as prosecutions increase, and as family violence reporting increases, which in turn will place pressure on victim support services. How does a modest budget increase cater for the increased needs for these varying services? Do some suffer as a result of the needs of others? Certain coronial investigations can go on for months and years, and have associated a high cost for them. How does this all balance in respect of them having separate budgets for different roles?

**Mr HIDDING** - You're talking about a budget allocation here for the DPP and for Justice, with the support services. So it's not our budget.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is not your budget?

**Mr HIDDING** - No.

**Mr HINE** - Safe Families, some of those issues, are coming through the department from Cabinet as well, that funding, and the Department of Justice look after the victims of crime as well, so there is a many-faceted approach to supporting the victims of crime.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Has there been any geographical trends in relation to family violence or has it been spread quite evenly over the last 12 months?

**Mr HINE** - It is fair to say it's spread quite evenly across geographic, across demographics as well, so I'm always really careful to say that one area is not higher in statistics than other areas. In relation to the demographics, there are some areas that are certainly experiencing a higher rate of reporting than others, and we will make sure that we keep across that and to make sure that we keep an eye on it. The figures that we keep for all districts about where the offending is occurring are in divisions as well, and again we report a lot of those in our reports that we do every month. In fact, we have those figures daily available to our managers, and our area is to see where the offending is occurring.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is pretty well population-based around the state. Yes, there's a south, north, west, it's pretty well spread.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - How do you think the introduction of recording measures on a person's criminal record will affect policing in this area including the Safe at Home program, for example?

**Mr HINE** - Sorry, the recording?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Measures on a person's criminal record, introduction of -

**Mr HINE** - I am not sure I understand the question, Mr Gaffney.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - will affect, including the Safe at Home program - expand a bit on that?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HINE** - Yes, I'm not sure if it is court outcomes or it's the bail conditions. I'm just not quite understanding the question.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I'll have to look at that too. I will have to leave that one alone. There are some diversion programs that are well-established and have had a great deal of success. Do you have any thoughts as to where these efforts should be focussed next?

**Mr HINE** - Diversion programs, I've got to say, we have been doing them for many years, and they are, especially in the youth diversions, juveniles, if we look at some of our statistics, we are diverting - we prosecute about 49.7 per cent of juveniles. We informally caution about 29 per cent, formal caution about 16.4 per cent and conference about 4.7, so about 50/50 we prosecute and 50 per cent we divert out of the court system. So we find that the definition of success is if people don't, especially juveniles, don't reoffend again, and that's always going to be our aim, but there is obviously an escalation process. When people come back to our attention, then there are different outcomes and different processes, but diversionary processes work very well, and again, it's that timely intervention to make sure kids don't reoffend.

**Mr HIDDING** - One of our best successes in diversionary programs is funding of \$250 000 per annum for four years to assist the PCYCs in Tasmania. That was a finite number, but recently went up by one in New Norfolk, something that was cooked up in the -

**CHAIR** - In the Lyons Electorate, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, in the office of the local upper House member where we're meeting with police and I have to say, I visited them yesterday, and they have nearly 500 members. The schools are all involved, the local police officers are so impressed with what it's done for the community, and it is a serious diversionary program in its own right in that area, and doing a great job.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - On that, the college program has been having a lot of success because that's obviously an area where you have young people excited about some of the decisions they have to make, so is that to continue or is it to expand, or now that you have year 11 and 12 in some of the high schools which are 17 and 18 year olds, has there been any thought given to some support to those as well? Because before it was confined to the colleges as such, but you're now having - so how does that impact on that program, or - because I have heard it has had some great success.

**Mr HINE** - You are right, Mr Gaffney, it's been really well accepted and the department does fund us, not the full funds, but for police officers in the college. We are in Elizabeth College, Rosny College, Claremont College, Don College, Launceston College and Newstead College, and it's worked really well for us. The interaction with young people and supporting them and putting a human face on police officers is immeasurable. The Education Department does supply funding for that program as well, and we need to continue to work with the Education Department. We had one in the western district, the college withdrew that funding so that the police officer couldn't be there, but we've had great success with the other ones. The other area we have is Adopt-a-Cop in schools, and they are all volunteer police officers as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - My point would be, has there been discussion with the Education Department now that 17 and 18 year olds are staying in the high schools and not going to the colleges?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, correct.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There may have to be some discussion about how to utilise the resource to rethink, because otherwise they were all going to one spot, and now they're not. They are staying in the area so.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a good thought. We will bend our mind to that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, I'll ask the question next year to see what has occurred in that space.

**Ms Forrest** - Just for the heads up!

**Mr HIDDING** - I will be ready for it, if I'm here.

**CHAIR** - How are we going, Mike? Good.

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

**CHAIR** - Bear in mind, members, we have Infrastructure people coming back in at 2 o'clock, so we are going to have to get the skates on a bit. The minister wants to do Fire in two minutes - 10 minutes.

**Mr HIDDING** - If we could have 10 minutes or so on Fire, there's something I want to share with you on the fuel reductions - hot off the press material. You will find it exciting.

## **Output group 3 Traffic policing**

### **3.1 Traffic policing -**

**CHAIR** - We will move on to 3.1, Traffic Policing.

**Ms FORREST** - Thank you. I assume that some of the new police who have been on put will be involved in traffic policing, and there's a lot of evidence that high visibility has a positive impact. I spend a lot of time on the road, and I'd say the visibility has been less of late, my personal experience. Last year when I went down to Midlands, there were marked cars everywhere. Maybe there are more unmarked cars. I'm talking about the visible presence here, so has there been a change in that or is it -

**Mr HIDDING** - I hope not. It is the same kind of mix between overt and covert. You do need the unmarked ones as well. Over the last few years, almost every operational vehicle that's not an unmarked has gone now to a higher level of visibility and I'm assured that Highway Patrols levels are around the same, so.

**Ms FORREST** - Maybe I'm just not seeing them as often.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. For instance, over Easter, people even wrote into the newspapers to say, 'Driving everywhere at Easter and didn't see one police car', and so I checked up on it, and basically there was hardly a police car not out there.



## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Ms FORREST** - On the road, yes. I am just thinking of my own experience last year. There seemed to be a much increased visible to me, so if you could just give us an update on that visible presence.

**Mr HINE** - There is the same number of unmarked and marked cars as there were last year, we haven't changed that, so there is a mix. Unfortunately, 57 per cent of our fatal and serious crashes occur on rural roads, so we have a rural roads strategy where we are putting more cars out in there as well. It's probably one of our - I'm reluctant to raise it, we are nine less deaths on the roads, but as soon as you raise it, it's saying we have put a lot of effort to make sure our roads are safe. There are different makes and models of unmarked cars we are putting out there.

**Ms FORREST** - I have noticed when they pull someone up on the road, 'Oh, that's an unusual one', so, yes, unusual car make.

**Mr HINE** - Through the Monash University into road policing and accident investigation, one of the best deterrents is not knowing who is around you from a detection point of view. The thought of being caught is the greatest deterrent. You don't know that a vehicle behind you could be a police car, it might not be a police car. That is one of the best. Whilst you have to have high visibility policing, but it is also -

**Mr HIDDING** - You have to have covert.

**Mr HINE** - Yes. Is that a police car behind me? Is that a police care or that car behind me? Is it a police car or not a police car? As you said, there are different makes and models we have around. It is one of the rural road strategies that have worked really well for us. The other area of concern for us is the number of fatal motorcycle crashes as well. We are doing some work with the Road Safety Advisory Council. They are doing some work as well.

**Ms FORREST** - Are they more on rural roads as well, the motorcycle crashes, or is it -

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, mixed, but in this year there were a number of tourists as well. Lake Leake Highway, Great Eastern Drive.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Mostly paved roads.

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Not much on dirt?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, they were highway. You are right, paved road crashes, yes. A matter of grave concern, obviously, the numbers there and we are looking at a lot of things.

**Mr HINE** - In about 24 per cent of our cases, speed is an issue and alcohol, again, clearly in the statistics we have, it is about 14 per cent are alcohol or drugs. Sorry, 14 per cent are alcohol and 10 per cent have drugs as a factor. All those things we need to take into account when we develop our strategies to make sure we get that right mix.

**Ms FORREST** - I notice on the alcohol and drugs section in performance information there, in 2015-16 there were 3738 oral fluid tests done. The target for 2016-17 was 2000, but how many have you done to date thus far? The target was set a bit low, quite frankly, minister.

**Mr HINE** - Oral fluid tests, if we go to the latest figures, we have done 3194 up until April, compared to 3200 the same time last year. We have upped it a fair bit from our three-year average and that is about funding becoming available whether it is through MAIB or targeted approaches to drug testing. So, yes, we put a lot of work into this.

**Ms FORREST** - What drugs are tested for in that test?

**Mr HINE** - We have what we call a five-swipe drug test - it is for cannabis, methamphetamines, those sorts of drugs. But we are looking at a two-swipe which most of the other states use as well to detect the main drugs that we are seeing as well. If we find someone testing positive for a drug then they go in for a blood test to see example what is in their system.

**Ms FORREST** - That is much more comprehensive, obviously, in terms of what they have been using.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, yes, and sometimes it is a mixture of both alcohol and drugs.

**Ms FORREST** - In terms of your drink-driving offenders, what are your current figures on that? Your table is 2550 up until the latest figure.

**Mr HINE** - If we look at the drive-driving offenders for the state, we have 1843, that is up until April, and at the same time drink-driving offences for the state was 1900 for the year.

**Ms FORREST** - It is a little bit less.

**Mr HINE** - It is 190 less to a hundred less and if you look at drug-driving as well. What we are finding is we are finding most of the offenders are coming from mobile patrols rather than static RBT sites, so that is why we are concentrating on the mobile random testing rather than static. But you still need the static sites to make sure people are aware.

**Ms FORREST** - I might have mentioned this previously that last year we were out late at night coming home from an event and saw a marker going in the opposite direction, past us in the opposite direction, but then turned around and followed us and pulled us over which I thought was proactive because it was late at night and we had been out, but not been drinking.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and that is what we are finding we are getting the greatest hit rate as in through the mobile targeting of drivers. But there is still a place for static RBTs because people mightn't get intercepted for a while, but it is keeping in people's minds and we are still getting people with that as well.

**Ms FORREST** - It is not included in the performance information here and I am not sure if it is in your annual report, but the number of unlicensed drivers that you are intercepting and this should have been improved a bit by the numberplate recognition software as well as unregistered vehicles.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, if we look at the various areas, like restricted licence contraventions, when people aren't billing, up until April, it was 16. If you look at suspended driving where they shouldn't be driving, we have had intercepted 1200. It is only about 10 compared to the year before. Disqualified driving was a bit over a thousand and there was about 1100 the same time last year.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Unlicensed driving, the current year to date I haven't got the figures. It seems pretty low, but just unlicensed driving it is where they haven't renewed a licence, it is quite a low figure.

**Mr HIDDING** - Or never had one.

**Ms FORREST** - Never, yes.

**Mr HINE** - Or never had one, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - What are the trends in this area?

**Mr HIDDING** - From my point of view, they are shocking numbers and for that reason it was led -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, shocking numbers, I accept, but are they coming down or are they going up?

**Mr HINE** - If you look at the disqualified and unlicensed driving offences in totality, for the same time as in for April last year, we had 6227, but this year we have 5514; so coming down. If you look at a five-year average, it is a bit over 5000. So it is starting to come down towards the five-year average this year compared to last year.

**Ms FORREST** - We have increased detection of some of these, haven't we?

**Mr HINE** - With ANPR, automatic number plate recognition, and we are just into a project to update some of those systems as well. Again, some people will take the risk, but as soon as they take the risk - and then, of course, you not only have an unregistered vehicle or you haven't got your licence, you have a fine to pay as well. So, yes, compared to last year, we are down 700 or 800.

**Ms FORREST** - With more police on the roads, I guess, we are more likely to detect these.

**Mr HINE** - And these things.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, true, yes, that is making a difference.

**Mr HINE** - This is where we are making a huge difference, the passengers -

**Ms FORREST** - These things being a computer on the road, just for the purpose of Hansard.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, Hansard couldn't see that, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - The tablets. Every police officer now carries an individual tablet and they are able to do a face-match on the spot rather than being told that your name is Albert Hall of 1 Tamar Street, Launceston -

**CHAIR** - First cousin.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, your first cousin. You could look it up.

**Mr HINE** - The number of checks that our people are doing has gone through the roof because normally the passenger is sitting there doing checks, see a vehicle, do a check and then they know who normally the driver is, whether they are disqualified, whether there is a warrant out for them, they can bring their photo up as well. If they need to do an infringement notice, they can do it on the computer.

**Ms FORREST** - You need a few years of this in place to really see what the trends really are. You are obviously going to protect more people more quickly this way, which is a good thing.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, there is a greater deterrence value as well. They don't have to get onto their radio to go through a convoluted process. They can find out that information there and then and we are checking a lot more people.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I have a question.

**CHAIR** - Is it on traffic regulation?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes. I will start with the target for speeding infringements. In 2017-18 is an increase in offences. What makes you think that you are going to get an increase as opposed to what we have previously - what the actuals are?

**Mr HINE** - It is probably that where the actuals are telling us that we are going to detect more and if we look at it again up until the end of April, we have detected 39 198. The same time last year it was 38 000. We have other devices and, for example, our motorbikes now have mobile radar on them. That gives us a great ability to detect speeding offences. We are seeing an increase in the number of speeders, unfortunately.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It has increased because the detection mechanisms you are using are uncovering more people doing the wrong thing more than you are artificially putting it up and saying, 'Let's aim for this'.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, it is about -

**Ms Forrest** - Not revenue raising.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Not revenue raising.

**Mr HINE** - It is always interesting when they say 'revenue raising'. As I said, speed is the cause of over 20 per cent of all crashes. So, we have to make sure that when we say low-level or revenue raising, it is about making our roads safer and there is a tolerance. Whilst we don't talk about tolerances, but we normally have about 200 speed detection devices right around the state, more police offices, more cars out there as well. We want people to obey the speed limits, but we are trying different technologies and those mobile speed devices on motorbikes has been a great success.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How do you assess the effectiveness of the different measures that they are taking to know that you are spending your money wisely? Is it over time? Is it just gut feel or do you have measures in place that allow you to check that?

**Mr HINE** - There is various measures, as in the Department of State Growth have various sites around where they measure the speeds and see if they are coming down. There is a couple of standardised areas where they continue to measure. There is a community satisfaction survey when they asked various people when we get a survey in, 'Okay, are they travelling 10 kilometres over the speed limit?' It is going through our various speed camera sites where they are. There is a number of things and some of research is about those ones involving crashes where the speed is a causal factor and it is still far too high where speed is a causal factor.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Perhaps the last one, the 80 kph blanket on dirt roads speed limit, are you finding that that is having an effect on the number of crashes that are being reported across the state? Is it an effective mechanism, that 80 kph on dirt roads?

**Mr HIDDING** - If you were to use serious and fatal - I don't like to speak about fatals only or serious only - if we look at that, there is an improvement this year. No, I am not in a position to drill down to that thing, but I am interested in it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You do measure speeds for speeding - for people speeding on dirt roads as well as on paved road?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. Rural road policing is a large element of it. As the Commissioner said, way too many.

**Mr VALENTINE** - A lot of people think, 'It's a dirt road, you are not going to see a police car'.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, there is a big effort out in rural Tasmania now because so many crashes have been on rural roads rather than highways.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you, Chair.

## **Output group 4** **Emergency management**

### **4.1 State emergency services -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will move onto Craig and we will onto SES, minister. Do you need anybody else up at the table?

**Mr FARRELL** - 4.2, is it?

**CHAIR** - 4.1, State Emergency Services

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we can continue with that. Andrew is here if we need him as well.

**Mr FARRELL** - We are getting towards the end of the integration period, minister, just a brief update on how that integration into Fire Services is progressing?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, I am very pleased with it. In fact, in a few weeks' time, the annual - used to be the TFS Fire Day. They hold it in the north of the state and usually three to 400 people turn up, volunteers and professionals. Last year for the first time it was fire and emergency management

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and it was seamless and there were large numbers of SES volunteers in there with fire, all in the same family, all doing their own thing but working together and it has worked very, very well, indeed. They have physically moved into the headquarters at TFS. That was a win there. They showed me over their new headquarters there and that has all worked very well. Our new deputy secretary role in the corporate management sector has also had a lot to do with bringing that process together. Very successful.

**Mr FARRELL** - Just in time and efficiency constraints, maybe if there are other issues, I am happy to ask them when we have the fire commissioner up here.

**CHAIR** - Robert Armstrong had a question.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - How are you going attracting volunteers to the SES?

**Mr HIDDING** - That is something that is an ongoing issue for us, but the volunteers that we have are very proud people. Middle of the night, in storms, up ladders, holding down roofs, screwing down roofs and doing that -

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - I have seen them in action down my way with the floods.

**Mr Valentine** - It is not without its dangers.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, but they are wonderful people. They have just had the worst possible time. You wouldn't want to be out there yourself. They are out there doing the stuff. It is a wonderful thing to do, to volunteer for it, as is fire and, of course, ambulance as well. But it is an ongoing issue. It is something that I am talking to both fire and SES about regularly. The numbers are holding, I guess.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - That is what I was going to ask. How are they? Are they holding?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, they are holding, but we would like to beef them up a little. I am interested particularly in regional members of parliament like yourself, if you have any ideas as to how we can engage the community to at least keep it at a decent level, to grow it. I would be very keen to have a chat.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - On State Emergency Services, I don't know whether this is the right area to raise it, but I had a member of the public come to me about one of their family that was caught in a car that was on fire. It was just lucky that a commercial vehicle came along with a fire extinguisher in it to put it out. Is there any thought about putting fire extinguishers in all government vehicles throughout the state because so many people travel?

**Mr HIDDING** - They do, in fact, have them in police cars.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - I know there are certain vehicles they are in. But like all our cars, for instance, you know.

**Mr HIDDING** - It has never been put to me, Rob, but I will ask about, yes.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - The number of cars that are on the road and there is an accident, I don't think it would be feasible to put them in every vehicle on the road, but if every state government-

operated vehicle had a fire extinguisher in it when you are travelling, it is not very often when some car don't come along. As this person said, it was just lucky that somebody came along and had a fire extinguisher, otherwise their grandchild would have been killed.

**Mr HIDDING** - Lost.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Yes, lost. That is just something I wanted to flag with you.

**Mr HIDDING** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - We can go a bit beyond one.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

### 4.2 State security and rescue operations -

**CHAIR** - I have a bit just on state security and rescue operations which is the next one, 4.2, and we gave state security a good old beating in overview. Yes, we did. Just on rescue operations, I just have a couple of questions there and one was on - and you mentioned helicopters before. Could you indicate any particular pattern in the use of the most frequent and demanding uses of a helicopter and by that I mean surveillance versus rescue, et cetera.

**Mr HIDDING** - Almost exclusively in search and rescue and medivac use of helicopters and a lot of it related to the very strong visitor economy we have. We invite people to Tasmania. They are coming in their droves and they have issues. They have issues out in the bush and we have some of the finest pilots in the world for the terrain that we have and they get them out. I can recall 10 years ago, regularly we had one or two deaths a year from bushwalking, people lost and what have you. But these days we do encourage people, obviously, to carry an EPIRB. But mostly from that kind of rescues.

**CHAIR** - Yes, we still have some very under-prepared people going out and deciding to climb Western Arthur Range, which I have done a couple of times, and you wonder.

**Ms FORREST** - What has been the total cost of that, those rescue services?

**Mr HIDDING** - There was the Budget numbers. Yes, we went way over budget and those numbers. We have them somewhere.

**Mr HINE** - The current cost of the contract prior to the recent variation was approximately \$4.2 million a year. It is probably closer to \$5 million at the moment.

**Ms FORREST** - Where does that additional funding come from then? It has to be found within the police budget somewhere?

**Mr HINE** - And across police and ambulance.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is shared in a model between police and ambulance and both departments have had to find it. We simply take the view that there is no discussion about budget, whether the job gets tasked or not.

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**Ms FORREST** - If there is a person out there that needs help, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - You just go and do it.

**Ms FORREST** - It has often been raised that we could look at a cost recovery model from the individual. Has the Government given that any thought?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, we have. It comes up from time to time. My reflex position is that first we rescue.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, that is right.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is not about the money.

**Ms FORREST** - Who can pay, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - So that when you start talking about charging, you may well have people who choose to not press their EPIRB or not take an EPIRB because they wouldn't be able to afford the \$7000 or whatever it costs for that rescue. We don't want people to make those decisions. We want them to be responsible in every way as possible, but we haven't got any interest in a policy sense in that at all. However, there are some people that carry insurance and that is explored with them if that is possible to be recovered.

**Ms FORREST** - Like travel insurance if they are visitors to the state, that sort of thing.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, and that is closely followed and pursued. After all, they are covered.

**Ms FORREST** - Have you had any costs recovery through that insurance?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, we have.

**Ms FORREST** - What sort of amount has been able to be recovered that way?

**Mr HINE** - I couldn't tell you off the top of my head, but certainly as the minister quite rightly pointed out, if we can recover, then we will certainly recover. Obviously under MAIB, if there is a crash issue -

**Mr HIDDING** - There are a lot of vehicle crashes and MAIB picks that up, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, that is right, yes.

**CHAIR** - I will continue that line item and talk about that second helicopter. You talked about that had a cost of some \$9 million, in partnership with the police service. Could you provide me any additional information as to the cost sharing arrangements in terms of capital costs, admin arrangements and ongoing operational costs?

**Mr HIDDING** - If we could take it on notice the bit about the sharing, but the other elements of it, there is \$9 million in there and the department has just commenced commercial negotiations with the provider. For that reason, I am not prepared to discuss anything publicly because we would be disadvantaged in the commercial negotiations. We are currently in a six-month zone where we



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negotiated a six-month period for the second helicopter because of the sheet numbers, we had to do that and we could do that in our contract, but that expires on 1 July and this new deal needs to kick in then. They have just started negotiations on that now.

**Mr HINE** - The review to cost sharing is under review between police and ambulance as well.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is under review as well.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is there any corporate support in there as well, external corporate support, like it used to be the Westpac helicopter?

**Mr HIDDING** - It still is. There is a trust that provides some support to that and that is a charitable body. Westpac supplies money to the trust and a certain amount of money comes in every year from that. That is useful and very welcome.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Significant? What is the level?

**Mr HINE** - It varies and the sponsorship goes from corporate sponsors such as Westpac to the trust and then is applied to by application from the helicopter management committee which is a joint committee of both ambulance and Tasmania Police representatives. I am not sure of the most recent value. We would have to take that on notice of what has been paid for by the trust this year, but it is on application.

**CHAIR** - Minister, given that you wanted to have a good talk about something on fire -

**Mr HIDDING** - I wanted to show something on from there.

**CHAIR** - So we might just do that first and then we will move on.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Excuse me, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - Yes, what?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Remember I had a question on the system side.

**CHAIR** - Okay.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Just with respect to the computer systems you are putting in place under ESCAD and Unify, obviously, that is merging quite a lot of systems together, but in doing that, you obviously introduced the opportunity for a single point of failure. If the system is down, there is a whole heap of problems with the computer systems. How are you covering off on that and the issues of security and vulnerability and redundancy? Can someone just cover some of those?

**Mr HIDDING** - The Deputy Commissioner is full bottle on ESCAD at least. ESCAD is the computer-aided dispatch system and the Unify process is the full back office thing.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I understand that yes.

**Mr TILYARD** - Thanks, minister. In relation to ESCAD, the system has built into it a significant degree of redundancy. There are several servers. If a server goes down, the other servers

pick it up. In fact, all of them can share across each other so, essentially, all but one server could go down and you can still deliver all the services -

**Mr VALENTINE** - They are not all on the same site, presumably.

**Mr TILYARD** - No, no, that is right. There is significant redundancy built into the system and, similarly, with Unify, there is redundancy built in so that if you have a failure of the server at one location, then another server can pick it up.

**Mr HINE** - That has just gone out for tender so that will be part of the issue that we need to look at with the successful tenderer for Unify. I hear your point loud and clear about single point of failure, but that will be covered with the successful tendered.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so things like cabling to those sites need to be secure as well.

**Mr HINE** - Exactly, and it is all those things.

**Mr VALENTINE** - All those things are being taken into account in that tendering service side.

**Mr HIDDING** - Rob, could I just place on the record that this department is the only department in the public sector that has a dedicated work unit focusing on information security and protocols. Because of the nature of this department, they have this special unit.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, and that will basically cover all the others that are connected to that then, won't it?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you, Chair.

**Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Mike, I will just hand it over to you to start off with.

**Mr HIDDING** - Mr Chairman, as we are not going to have a long time on the fire budget, what I wanted to bring to your attention is the success of the Fuel Reduction Unit. We have some information hot off the press that I would like to share with you as to the success and the outcomes of the fuel reduction to date. The reason that we have come for another four years at \$9 million is to double down on this great success we have. I will hand over to Sandy Whight and the chief fire officer, deputy fire chief, Chris Arnol. Sandy, if I can just ask you to speak about this research that we have which is attracting national attention.

**Ms WHIGHT** - It is pleasing to talk to the committee today about what we have been able to achieve in a very short period of time with the fuel reduction program. Prior to the fuel reduction program being introduced, on average in Tasmania we were doing about four to five planned burns a year and since the program has commenced, we have done 390 burns over the course of the last three years. The difference too is that those planned burns that were undertaken previously were for a whole variety of different reasons. This doesn't include civil cultural burning at all, about 45 burns a year. Some were for fuel reduction purposes, some were for ecological management

purposes. But the 390 burns that have been achieved over the last three years, we can say are being done specifically for fuel reduction burning and for strategic fuel management. We have been using a process of risk assessment modelling using landscape burning models to model fires across the landscape where we ignite the whole of Tasmania to look at where bushfires are likely to impact based on a series of different fuel conditions including our current understanding of where the fuel loads are at and then we model different change in fuel loads.

Out of that, we then were able to do what we call a relative risk analysis and we can talk about the relative risk of each different human settlement area in Tasmania and give it a score. What we were aiming for is to reduce the relative risk of bushfires in Tasmania on a priority basis and naturally we focussed on where the highest risk was first. Our target for the first few years has very much been in around the suburbs of Hobart, also in parts of Devonport, around Launceston and also on parts of the east coast. They are the four main study areas I would like to present today.

**Mr HIDDING** - And New Norfolk in the southern -

**Ms WHIGHT** - In that area, yes, and that goes out to New Norfolk. I have a series of maps I would like to table. That is one package that goes - so there are five packages of maps.

**Mr HIDDING** - I see. That is one package.

**Ms WHIGHT** - Yes. If you don't mind, sorry, I will -

**Mr HIDDING** - You get a free clip.

**Ms WHIGHT** - I will just keep this one here so that we can talk to it. The first map shows just the Hobart area. It shows the green. It shows the planned burning that has been undertaking. The red shows the bushfire. These are the planned burns that have been undertaken since 2014. This is just really your 2014 to 2017 fire history. Then if you look at the next map, what you can see is the changes in relative risk as a consequence of the fuel reduction program. All those areas that are in the shades of green to blue, we can say that risk has been reduced and you can see the scale of what that risk reduction is. We are seeing on the eastern shore, for example, there is a little bit of increase in risk going on. Fuels naturally re-accumulate in the environment no matter what, so post the Meehan Range fire, you are basically looking at those fuels coming back. But what we have also been able to look at is how the fuel reduction program is slowing that re-accumulation as well. We are not only just reducing the risk, we are slowing the rate of re-accumulation. Over the whole program, we can say statewide we have been able to reduce bushfire risk to the state about 4.5 per cent. I know that doesn't sound like a lot, but if you consider the whole of Tasmania, the variety of different vegetation types we have, we have been able to achieve a risk reduction of 4.5 per cent in just three years.

**Ms FORREST** - We had a major bushfire in the west coast area last year. You haven't done any work on that area?

**Ms WHIGHT** - No, these are just case study maps that I have provided you with. We have done burning up through the north east as well.

**Ms FORREST** - North-west.

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**Ms WHIGHT** - Sorry, north-west, up around Arthur River, and the next set of maps is a case study of the Launceston area. The third set of maps is around the Devonport area and so you can see there -

**Mr HIDDING** - We can get them for your area, though, that same map.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. There was a pretty serious fire up there not that long ago.

**Ms WHIGHT** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Before the floods.

**Ms WHIGHT** - Yes, that is right.

**Mr HIDDING** - A massive fire.

**Ms WHIGHT** - A lot of what the risk is that where - the priority of the program is the protection of life and property. There is no question about that. We don't back away from that being the priority of the program and a lot of those fires, yes, that was a significant event. There is no question of that. They were quite remote fires, though, as well. In terms of their impact into communities and human settlement areas -

**Ms FORREST** - The people of Arthur River would perhaps dispute some of that. How they didn't lose a property there is just a miracle.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it got very close.

**Ms WHIGHT** - There has been burning in the Arthur River area as well in the last three years.

**Mr HIDDING** - We can get you separate maps for that.

**Ms WHIGHT** - I guess that was the important part, it was to show you these case study areas where we can see how risk is reduced. The overall state-wide risk has reduced by that four and a half per cent. The other part of the program that has been really important as well has been capacity building into community areas and we are seeing that coming through in the increase in the agencies and their ability to be able to undertake these burns. But also we have seen an increase in the amount of registration of burning undertaken on private land as well. That has been another feature of the program that we have been really proud of as well.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that. Very good. We might have to come back. I am just looking at the time. I know Mike Gaffney has some questions (indistinct) output. Ruth, did you want to put a question on notice or do you have some questions?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I do have some.

**CHAIR** - It looks like we are going to have to knock off now. We will resume at 2.15 p.m. We won't be able to start infrastructure at all.

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**Mr HIDDING** - No, that's all right.

**CHAIR** - We will top off that fire stuff and then we will move straight onto infrastructure. How is that?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, yes, good. No problem.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. That was quick but that was where we go to. I fully support everything you do.

**The committee suspended from 1.13 p.m. to 2.13 p.m.**

**CHAIR** - I call the meeting to order. I remind the committee, we have got ourselves into a bit of a bind in that we were going to finish Police and Emergency Management by 11.30 and start Infrastructure at 12 o'clock. What I will ask members, if we could be pretty succinct and not go into commentary and so we can get moving on everything. Otherwise we keep on changing and bringing departmental staff backwards and forwards all the time. Thank you. Minister, we will keep going with Fire, thank you.

The presentation was done so, Mike, you are the lead one here, please.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. The questions on the fuel reduction burns, we have a lot of information, so thank you for that.

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

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I would ask, and I am not sure if anyone commented, what was the number of complaints during last year's burning season? Was it significantly different to previous years? I am asking because you have had increased burns, and how has that corresponded with the number of complaints.

**Ms WHIGHT** - There have been 16 complaints to the EPA.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Sixteen?

**Ms WHIGHT** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You are joking?

**Ms WHIGHT** - No.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, just kidding. Is that all?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, so it was very good.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is very good.

**Ms WHIGHT** - That was to the end of April.

**Mr HIDDING** - The community knows what is going on. So, yes, they can just check and see this is fuel reduction, this is a good thing.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is really good news because it is the education and making aware. Very good. I note the significant spike to the funding for the firefighting appliance replacement program in 2019-20 and 2020-21 Estimates. Is this directly attributable to a large number of ageing tankers requiring replacement or refurbishment at the same time? The increases are quite significant.

**Mr ARNOL** - We have an ongoing fleet management program. The tankers have not been affected. The spike you are seeing is mainly for our urban style of appliances, the aerials which are gradually being funded for. That is where we will see that broader increase in the firefighting fleet. But we have to cover firefighting pumps, the aerial which the pumps being for an urban setting fires, light tankers, medium tankers, heavy tankers for the bushfire setting and their aerials, and some other specialist vehicles. That is all in our strategic asset management plan that we have worked on and it has been one of the benefits we have had with our corporate collaboration being able to start working on our strategic asset management plan.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Has there been any progress towards resolving the issues mentioned in 2016 with regard to local government owned assets example, trucks, for example, only being used within the municipal boundaries. That was highlighted in last year.

**Mr HIDDING** - This is particularly the issue of Smithton, the council up there having put a substantial amount of funds towards a truck. That highlights the challenges we have with SES funding in that we have local government generally wants us to sort this out. It has to be one model or another because councils are getting through on their skin, paying absolutely nothing and yet still getting SES coverage. Do you want to add to that?

**Mr** - Yes, thank you. Yes, I would agree with that. The current funding model is very complex and complicated particularly when under the Emergency Management Act, the councils are responsible for the operations of the volunteer SES units. We are looking at potentially changing that in the future and considering a centralised funding model, but that is dependent on the outcomes of the sustainable funding review that is currently under way.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. I was grateful that in 2016, the minister carried the Fire Service Amendment Bill through the lower House, and I also appreciate that there needs to be some groundwork to be able to get that in place with training and upskilling. Can someone give me a report on how that is progressing and where you see some advantages or disadvantages?

**Mr HIDDING** - Your call.

**A witness** - In short, we are operationalising that legislation through a number of projects that we have in place, but I will ask the deputy.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you.

**A witness** - Thanks, Chief. Mr Gaffney, I was probably with Gavin Freeman, the first day that we tried to scope this. So far, yes, it has been passed through the House. We are currently identifying and going through the training of those people that will be responsible to operationalise that. We currently have a project with our Community Fire Safety Division that is developing the

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fire safe education program and investigating a delivery model that will be readily available. We would like to put aspects of it online so as we don't have to disadvantage people by bringing them into a central place. So we have that. It has been running for about two months now. As the chief indicated, we hope to brief our people and operationalise it for this fire season.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - On that bill, the fire and the infringement -

**Mr HIDDING** - Do you mind if I just clear something up for Hansard.

**Ms FORREST** - If the minister could tell Hansard who is who.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, we didn't do the introductions.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, we didn't do the introductions here. For the benefit of Hansard, yes, Chris Arnol, chief fire officer; Jeff Harper, acting deputy; Andrew Lee, director of SES; and then you had Todd Crawford from earlier but he wasn't in that chair.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Going back to the fire safe course, there is some work being undertaken. I get the impression that the fines and the infringement side of it will be perhaps more cut and dried. Is that how you see it?

**Mr HARPER** - Yes, from our first meetings, we were able to tidy that up and make it much clearer. Essentially, Tasmania Police will pick up a lot of it, but we also need to identify some of our senior managers that manager those rural and regional areas and be able to identify them and name them up as people that can do that and that is process.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That will sit into the current computer system, the framework that you have.

**Mr HARPER** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Terrific. Hopefully next year when I ask again -

**Mr HARPER** - It will all be done.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It will all be done. Two more questions. This is to you, minister.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The House's inquiry report into the State Fire Commission in 2016, of which Mr Barnett was the chair including two other Liberal members, a Labor and a Green on the committee suggested 10 recommendations. What is the process once the report is tabled? Of the recommendations, which one would directly - there are 10 recommendations. On those, I don't think there has been a report back. I couldn't find a response from the Government. If you could update us on those recommendations and where it is at.

**Mr HIDDING** - Recommendation 1, the committee found that on the evidence presented a review and reform of the Fire Services Act is necessary. We have triggered that review. Currently, I have asked that that be independently chaired and the agency head, Commissioner Hine, is progressing the process to advertise to achieve somebody to chair that process.

Recommendation 2, the committee finds on the evidence presented that section 107 of the Fire Service Act should be amended to provide greater clarity, et cetera. Agree, and that will take place in that review. However, we have legal advice to say that that clarity is not required; others believe it is. In any event, as we are reviewing the act, that is where we will fix that.

Recommendation 3, a centralised funding model for the State Fire Service and State Emergency Services - agree. That is well and truly under way and we have the corporate division now that is managing a deal of that. Incidentally, your House participated in some of this by passing the bill that allows for an independent chair of the State Fire Commission. That has happened and in case that is not public yet, that position has gone to a long-term member of the State Fire Commission, Rod Sweetnam, from the Launceston City Council. He was the LGAT appointment and a very experienced volunteer fire officer himself. He is now chairing the State Fire Commission which everybody on the Commission was very appreciative of so there was continuity there. LGAT then will nominate a replacement.

Recommendation 4, recommend the State Fire Commission be fully reimbursed for the cost of the state emergency service transfer - has been done. There were some figures being bandied about that it was a cost of \$10 million. It has been independently verified that the net cost was some \$2.4 million and, in any event, in this budget, there is \$3.75 million for aerial fire appliances that the State Fire Commission does not have to find, plus I can inform the House committee that I have provided a \$5 million injection into the State Fire Commission to retire some debt. They were in a debt situation that just kept on. It was a bit of a dead hand that the State Fire Commissioner couldn't really act because of this debt that they had and they have used that sensibly to retire an overdraft debt that they had with Bendigo Bank. That has freed them up. They have a pathway forward now. It still needs strong financial management and they will do that, but with other costs, the state Budget is supplying the State Fire Commission. We added up recently that it is closer to \$18 million with that \$5 million and the appliances, closer to \$18 million, in fact, that has come to the State Fire Commission. So, we well and truly complied with that and then some.

Recommendation 5, the fuel reduction burn program, has been funded at the same amount for the next four years because we are excited about the outcomes that they are presenting to the state.

Recommendation 6, due the success of the Community Engagement Programs, the State Fire Service and the State Emergency should be centralised. Mike Blake also made that observation that the TSF does the community education very well and compared to that, flood information is nowhere in the ballpark and the observation can be made that you could use the same process. Different message, same process, to do, and I know that the Tasmania Fire Service has no issue to work together on that process.

Recommendation 8, should undertake a review of how firefighting equipment and gear in Tasmania can be better standardised with interstate equipment and gear to improve cross-jurisdiction resource utilisation. The chief fire officer has been aware of that and he is bearing that in mind as we look through the future purchase of equipment and gear.

**Mr ARNOL** - To make a comment on that, Mr Gaffney, what we have done, which is very important, is that we standardise within the entities in Tasmania. We have standard hose lines for Parks, Forestry and TSF. That has been the big kicker because it is really hard because all the state are different. They are not completely different and they are slowly almost nationalising what the hose is like and we can purchase hose with collaborative purchasing with other fire authorities, but we can't always. So, it is a very hard call to do that right now, but as we progress, I suspect it will



take some years to ever get to that, if we do ever get to that point with interstate and even if we are talking international through New Zealand, if we can make those things complete compatible. But certainly a lot of equipment is compatible and we are in discussions regularly with our fleet, with our small equipment folks and interstate to see what compatibilities and cost sharing benefits we can have.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thanks.

**Mr HIDDING** - Moving on, the committee also found that volunteer firefighters are at risk of being undervalued and underrated. The Government should use best endeavours to ensure the full acknowledgement and recognition of these services. From my point of view, I always want to do that because we are in such a great position of having so many volunteers that want to do this for their community. There are some lines that apparently you shouldn't cross and that is that they are volunteers. Any notion that you should pay them or would pay them, the volunteers go, 'Well how will that even work? Then I would not be a volunteer'. But what is important too is that we have with the setting up of new corporate services a more structured arrangement for the TFS to engage with their volunteers better and the appointment of an officer. What is his name?

**Mr ARNOL** - Yes, we have Mr Leon Smith appointed as the go-to person as a project officer for volunteers. Aside from that, we are largely a volunteer organisation. To support that frontline, we have training officers and senior officers that administer the districts that the volunteers are in and so on. There is a range of support for volunteers and this particular project, the first project he has is volunteer sustainability. It was mentioned earlier that there is some issues around volunteer availability and that is a demographic change that we need to account for and think about that. Going forward, we will look at our resource to risk analysis of our risk in the community and how we are delivering our services and what our service delivery model will look like and then how that works collaboratively with the SES for all hazards and how we deal with our fire response, bearing in mind we predominantly utilise volunteers.

**Mr HIDDING** - Recommendation 10 is about the independent chair which we have done and largely delivered.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, thank you. A matter of process, minister, if a report is tabled downstairs, I am not sure how it works, is the Government - it was tabled in April.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am not sure if there is a formal process for that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I don't know. Is the Government required or expected to respond to community recommendations and reports?

**Mr HIDDING** - I don't think so.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You don't think so.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, but I will find out. I would be given -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Because it seems to me -

**Mr HIDDING** - given the level of compliance that we have -

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, you have answered each of the 10 recommendations. It seems to make sense to put it on the record just to follow the report. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Any further question on fire?

**Ms FORREST** - This matter has been raised with me so I am seeking some information. Is it the case that federal funding can be accessed for a fire once it becomes classified as a wildfire as opposed to a smaller scrub fire, or something like that? Does federal funding kick in at a particular point to assist with the costs probably after the event? When you get like the massive fires we had down in the Circular Head region and the west coast last year. Was it last year? The year before, whenever it was.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sixteen.

**Ms FORREST** - Sixteen, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - There is a new - there is an acronym for it, but there is a new funding model under discussion by emergency ministers around Australia for fire and flood and that funding model is a way to - after an event you have to get absolutely everything priced and it takes ages and then you go to the feds and ask them for money, then you may or may not get it, but where they can quickly using - all states have the same model to be able to say, 'That was a fire in that area, give me \$20 million and we will work it out later'. There is an upfront payment.

**Ms FORREST** - From the feds.

**Mr HIDDING** - From the feds, yes, under this, the National -

**Mr Harper** - National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangement.

**Mr HIDDING** - NDRRA it is called. That is it. And much surety of the flow of dollars earlier for treasuries around the place and our treasury is working with the federal government now to finalise that before that is agreed to by all ministers.

**Ms FORREST** - There must be a point where that kicks in, in terms of - is it the size of the fire, the location of the fire, what is it?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, there is a dollar figure.

**Mr HARPER** - There are different thresholds for different types of disasters and once you cross those thresholds, you get a certain percentage back from the Commonwealth. The big issue with this review which they are hoping to implement on 1 July 2018 is to allocate some of the funds to mitigation kind of projects to mitigate the costs of the disaster rather than being response.

**Ms FORREST** - Prevent it, yes.

**Mr HARPER** - That is the big potential change that we hopefully will see.

**Ms FORREST** - What is the benchmark now? This is the point. If you have a small fire, I know there are people in charge of these things will make assessments about which ones you need to fight and when, but if a small fire in the big scale of things, you will not ignore, but not actively

fought, it becomes a bigger fire potentially and then the question is here that are some of these little fires being let go to become big fires so that we meet the threshold and then we get federal funding to assist with the fighting of them?

**Mr ARNOL** - Really, all fires start small. We want to get hold of them. Our general attack approach is for early detection and rapid respond to extinguish fires at the early stage. Of course, you may not get them all. Given the climate changes influences that we have these days, we are going to go to these larger disasters more frequently. That is why we are looking at this federal arrangement. Anything for us that is over two hectares, we need to be looking at support funding. We have a limited amount and it is about \$350 000 and then our normal recurrent budget covers a number of things. But after that, that is the threshold within the fire service to then look for Treasury support and then we have the triggers that will need us to go to the Commonwealth. But we still have to get the definition around the disaster level for the Commonwealth.

**Mr HIDDING** - Chair, there is a dollar limit when your exposure gets to a limit. We have all got in our mind we think it is 20, but it is a matter for DPAC and Treasury together that they work it out with the Commonwealth government. Perhaps if I get that information provided to the committee as to what the thresholds are and where they kick. We can get that for you.

**Ms FORREST** - I accept that some of these fires that happened in my area in 2016 were in remote areas and it is hard to get to, but some people have a view that if they had been attacked more vigorously earlier when they are smaller that they might not have got away.

**Mr HIDDING** - There are major reports done on that fire and those matters were considered and addressed and reported upon. From the point of view of understanding in the middle of those fires, that was costing around \$1 million dollars a day and the fire went on for some 66 days.

**CHAIR** - We are talking about the Central Highlands and all that. The whole lot, because we had massive fires there too.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, about \$1 million dollars a day, particularly Strathgordon. It was a shocking time. These guys didn't need to know about that because they had from Cabinet complete backing, 'Just go fight the fires and we will worry about how we pay for it later'. On the report itself on the fire, Jeff might recall what the answers were about that. Cloud cover was a problem.

**Mr HARPER** - With the 2016 fires, there was a whole range of things. We had 82 fires all at once in remote and isolated areas. At times, we didn't have the resources, even with the numbers of people that came from the mainland, if we could have got them there the next day, we couldn't have operationalised them into the area. While they were hot days, there was areas of the west coast and the Central Highlands that the fog would come. We couldn't get up there. Or there were days where we put crews in and then had to pull them out early because they were going to get stuck there because the weather was coming in. People understand what the west coast weather is like. We were really hampered in being able to operationalise enough people into the area. That is why we went through a really intense process of assessing which fires were going to have the biggest impact based on NRAG risk assessment. Sandy has headed up a unit, our strategic planning unit, that looked at all of those fires. We had 82 fires on the first day. Over the coming weeks, we ended up with more because lightning strikes in that type of vegetation. They don't always pop up, so we monitored and had monitoring flights over every day over areas that we already didn't have fires in because we felt that there is a potential. So, there were significant issues in operations.

**Mr HIDDING** - Those lightning strikes come with heavy cloud cover. So you have the strikes. There have been strikes. There must be fires, but you have absolutely no idea where they are because you can't put up your FLIR aircraft to go up and spot those fires until the cloud is all gone and in one key time there was three days before you can get an aircraft with forward looking infrared to find those fires and by then a number of them were away. It was a terrible time.

**Mr ARNOL** - To add to the commentary around this, the time for firefighting for remote areas is quite different to our urban interface firefighting. We are well geared up for urban interface faces. We can drive a truck to it. In remote fires, we have to insert personnel to deal with it and they have quite different techniques. That is a significant challenge. The way to go, and the texts will tell us, that the investment should be in prevention and the Government is seeing that our fuel reduction program will include the TWA going forward so that we are addressing our risk in a balanced way in looking at it. I commend us for doing that.

**Ms FORREST** - I know everyone is an expert on the day.

**Mr ARNOL** - No. By and large, what we are saying is that the return on investment for fuel reduction compared to response or the dollar cost for response versus fuel reduction is huge. It is like 20 to one.

**Ms FORREST** - That is right.

**Mr ARNOL** - I could trot out the latest stuff, but it was 26 last time I looked at it. So, it is big.

**Mr HIDDING** - The budget papers show that of \$9 million going forward, there is \$500 000 minimum, but \$500 000 dedicated to fuel reduction in those sensitive areas. That names up, but it is going to happen. There might even be more than \$500 000 available in Parks from their other burns. But it was definitely \$500 000 a year. That wasn't ever identified before from what we learned.

**Ms FORREST** - Fire breaks - burning is one thing, like fuel reduction burns, but particularly around the Arthur River and places like that, people who were there who miraculously didn't lose their properties or their lives had a very strong view that if they had been able to put a bulldozer through the back of that area which was a sensitive coastal area, that it might have prevented the loss of vegetation. We didn't lose any property, but it is only through sheer luck.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, I know. We have that all around Tasmania where farmers say, 'If only I had got on my bulldozer and put in a firebreak like I used to be able to'.

**Ms FORREST** - What is the view on that and the process around that?

**Mr ARNOL** - Fire breaks could be mis-termed because what happens in our forests and depending on the vegetation, we have a thing called spotting distance. In other words, carrying embers to a distance. So that will be the problem. With gum trees it can go 30 kilometres. That is the dilemma we have there. What they are talking about probably at that time is having a position where you have a line that you can burn off to do a fuel reduction essentially and whether it be in the moment or whether it be ahead of time. But the fuel reduction approach is the way to go so you can either do it adjacent - and our focus at the moment, as you will have seen with the maps this morning, is around the cities and townships. Once we have that safer, then we go to the landscape scale stuff that means that we can deal with these TWA areas and the virgin forests that aren't

production forests or whatever. We can deal with those that way. It is a longer term think about that. But just to say I can just put a little small break in, it is really an access. That is what we use it for and that is what the benefit is for us to have the access.

**Mr HARPER** - It is also important to understand through the fuel reduction program while burning and fuel reduction through burning is one of the most effective ways through the planning processes through the fire management area committees, they also look at other fuel mitigation processes. Around Zeehan at the moment where there are some sensitive fuels and fuels that aren't suitable to burn, there has been a considerable process of mulching and reducing the vegetation around the township in that manner. So, they look at a range of mitigation processes to be able to reduce the risk around those areas.

**Ms FORREST** - In terms of your staff costs, how much have you spent in the last two years, if you can provide it, on sick leave?

**Mr HIDDING** - We might bring the deputy secretary up in a minute. Perhaps if we go onto another question.

**Ms FORREST** - The follow-up from that is how much of the sick leave is related to stress leave or mental illness.

**Mr VALENTINE** - With respect to that sort of thing, insurance for volunteers, is that available? Is that something you cover for the whole of the volunteer fire service across the state or not?

**Mr ARNOL** - Yes, the volunteers are covered by insurance just like a career firefighter. For worker's compensation, for example, they are an employee. If they are on duty then they become for all intents and purposes an employee. It is along the same lines as an employee would be.

**Mr HIDDING** - Just for Hansard, Donna Adams is back at the table about to answer this question on the topic.

**Ms ADAMS** - In relation to TFS mental health related worker's compensation matters, we have had five cases up until 31 March 2017. I can only give you the costs of the full suite of worker's compensations claims that the TFS has had for that same nine-month period where they had 37 claims. As I said, five of those related to mental health related issues and the cost of those new claims was \$647 247.

**Ms FORREST** - How does that compare to the last couple of years?

**Ms ADAMS** - The last year which again this is a full year, so the full year that the costs of the new claims was 70 and they had two mental health related matters. The claims have come down which has been -

**Ms FORREST** - But mental health has gone up.

**Ms ADAMS** - Yes, we have had three additional mental health related claims.

**Ms FORREST** - The year before, do you have that? I am just looking at trends here.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Ms ADAMS** - No, I don't have that, sorry.

**Ms FORREST** - No. In terms of staff turnover, do you have a breakdown of staff turnover by region?

**Mr ARNOL** - What we generally have for fire service?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr ARNOL** - Traditionally it has been about a 6 per cent attrition rate. You may be aware that we have an establishment of 302 and we are recruiting 15 now to fill gaps that we have in that 302. That is generally how we operate.

**Ms FORREST** - That is right across the whole service?

**Mr ARNOL** - This is across the career firefighters, I beg your pardon.

**Ms FORREST** - I am talking about all your administrative staff as well.

**Mr ARNOL** - The administrative staff we share with the department as well and we have 127 other staff that are not firefighters in the TSF that do not have firefighting jobs. Some of them may be firefighters but they are doing another -

**Ms FORREST** - Working in administration in other roles.

**Mr ARNOL** - They are doing an administrative role.

**Ms FORREST** - Does the worker's compensation and sick leave cover just the career firefighters you were talking about there?

**Ms ADAMS** - Those claims also include the state service employees that support the career firefighters in the regions and the administrative staff that support the corporate area are in the police related figures.

**Ms FORREST** - Have you got a breakdown by region of where these people are?

**Ms ADAMS** - No, as I said, there is only a small - five claims that are mental health related and I don't have the specifics of each of those claims.

**Ms FORREST** - There has been some criticism that I have heard about some cultural issues in the north-west not so much the career firefighters but in more the support staff in the way some staff are treated and which may be contributing to high levels of sick leave and mental health related issues. Are you aware of that?

**Mr HIDDING** - I will pass this to the deputy commissioner.

**Mr HARPER** - Yes, we are aware that there is at least one person in the administration staff on the north-west coast that has left us. That person has a pre-existing mental health condition from her previous employment with the Defence Force.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HIDDING** - We need to be a little bit careful that we don't - there is only a low number like this, we can -

**Ms FORREST** - The question was, is there a cultural problem there or is it just isolated instances?

**Mr HARPER** - When I was promoted to the north-west coast in 2012, there was some issues in amongst that area. We worked really hard with both myself and the current regional chief, Shane Batt up there to address the culture and the behavioural issues that were in there. We are comfortable that we have got on top of them. We are continuing to monitor them, but the current person that has just left us has raised some questions about whether that still exists. We are confident that that is not a TFS related issue, but it is something that has been left over from a previous employment.

**Mr ARNOL** - Ms Forrest, we have invested again. With support of the whole department, we are looking at that investment of 1.7 to increase our welfare. Our welfare is very important, of course, and the changes that we had with the service delivery particularly in our career firefighters is that we go to road crash rescues. Over the last decade or so, that has been a change in the service delivery. Whilst we are quite proud of our service in that way, we do know that that can be - so what has happened, we have had fewer fire deaths. We still get them regrettably, but we have halved those in the last 15 years and done a good job there. But there is that exposure, so we try. We have procedures to reduce exposures, but we know that there is an inevitability about it just like police, just like ambulance, that we have to deal with and so we are ramping up our welfare to account for that and be proactive. Rather than physical injuries, we are now really focusing on those mental injuries.

**Ms FORREST** - There is formal debriefing after every incident like that. Is it compulsory? Can people opt out? I find it odd that people would to opt out.

**Mr ARNOL** - No, they don't opt out.

**Ms FORREST** - They don't.

**Mr ARNOL** - It is generally seen as a matter of course now. I don't know that we enforce it. I don't think we have to enforce it. We just say, 'We'll meet you in the mess room or the school room', or whatever, 'and we're doing the debrief'.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you have counselling services to help that?

**Mr ARNOL** - Yes, we have a range of counselling services, Mr Valentine.

**Mr HIDDING** - For the record, I will indicate that sick leave actual expenditure over the last three years has been stable - 1.2; 1.12; 1.108, so a slight reduction.

**Mr FARRELL** - One of my local volunteer fire brigades brought up the issue of breathing apparatus. Apparently, the volunteer brigades are trained for using a breathing apparatus but they aren't issued with the same kits as the full time firefighters, as I understand that. There some discussion around using Fair Air Masks and I was told, this is only what was represented to me, that TSF issued a safety alert in January to say they weren't to be used and they had purchased 30 sets for one brigade, but they hadn't trialled them. So that was the representation to me.

**Mr HIDDING** - To be clear, and this is fully operational so I will leave it to the chief, but the fact is it is the chief fire officer that declares what the correct equipment is. Imagine the military, if each unit was able to get its own kit, it would be an odd situation. The advice that went out was that people should only use the issued gear and there was an owner of a company running around trying to sell gear to individuals in volunteer groups. The principle is, it is not about the merits of any mask, it's about the discipline of sticking to the kit that's required, but if you could just briefly address the matter of the masks themselves.

**Mr ARNOL** - Let me just be clear about breathing apparatus. Clearly that protects your respiratory system. So breathing apparatus might be a full mask with an air tank on the back. That is what we use for internal offence in fire attack in structural situations. No, it's not necessarily supplied to all volunteers because a lot of volunteers may only be required to go to bushfires. That's when we use a particulate mask. With all these things they are, because of their importance, we need to be standards compliant, so we won't accept any equivalent that's not standard compliant.

Now, if we want new equipment, we have a Safety Consultative Committee that we could present those through and that's how we do that. So there's a process for that to occur. So the types of mask you're talking about is simply what we call a P2 mask. Now, we have the 3M Standards compliant, and that's the only thing that we'll have on the trucks for our volunteer firefighters for their safety. That is what we use there.

So the Fair Air mask doesn't comply to particulant protection. It is not standards compliant -

**Mr HIDDING** - They haven't been certified?

**Mr ARNOL** - It hasn't been certified. So it hasn't been certified as standards compliant for particulant. It has been certified around heat, but that's not what its primary purpose is. It is for particulant protection so that people don't ingest those things. That's essentially the short story on that one.

**Mr FARRELL** - Do the volunteer brigades have any of the proper breathing apparatus? Is that issued?

**Mr ARNOL** - Certain brigades that have a response to urban firefighting, they are supplied with breathing apparatus, they go through the same training, and refresher training we have for our - those backpacks and the face masks, and we issue all brigades with the P2 types of masks for a bush fire. They all go to bush fires.

**Mr FARRELL** - Is it desirable to have all volunteer brigades with full breathing apparatus or is that seen as an extravagance?

**Mr ARNOL** - No, because it's no good having a remote fire brigade that there's no real structural response to have breathing apparatus and they wouldn't even be interested in doing the training or doing that themselves as volunteers.

**Mr FARRELL** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much to your staff, minister. As long as you don't get yourself in the same state as Mr Andrews in the Victorian Fire Service. It has been a saga.



**Capital Investment Program -**

**CHAIR** - Minister, just the CIP bit we missed there so we might need a couple of -

**Mr HIDDING** - CIP on Police?

**CHAIR** - Yes, sorry, we flicked through to Fire because you wanted to get that good story across which we have done, and so we will quickly get Mr Hine back up there and if you could introduce -

**Mr HIDDING** - All right, so Donna Adams, Darren Hine and Todd Crawford again.

**CHAIR** - Members, any questions on CIP? There is a great list there. Anything we need to look at?

**Mr VALENTINE** - The fire station bills, you have funding there. Do you co-locate with ambulance services when you do this?

**Mr HIDDING** - In some places in, say, Sheffield, the volunteer SESs with ambos in Sheffield it is. So it's the State Emergency Service co-locates with ambulance in, let's say in Swansea. There is ambulance, fire, SES and Volunteer Marine Rescue all in one line.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So the point is that you do consider co-location where you can?

**Mr HIDDING** - Absolutely.

**Mr HINE** - It is a requirement if we are putting up a budget in relation to putting a new building in, we consult all emergency services to see where we can co-locate. That is a definite requirement we have to fulfil.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is all I wanted to know, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, minister, and your staff.

**Mr HIDDING** - Cheers.

**DIVISION 9**

(Department of State Growth)

**Minister for Infrastructure -**

**CHAIR** - Minister, we will finally get to Infrastructure and call the legions of troops in. Minister, if you could just, for the purposes of Hansard, introduce your people to the table.

**Mr HIDDING** - To my left I have Kim Evans, Secretary to the Agency, State Growth, and to my right, Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary of my side of, what's it called, Transport Services.

**CHAIR** - Yes, thank you. Minister, I would invite you to make a brief overview if you would so wish.

**Mr HIDDING** - In the interests of the clock, I'll just say that our roads, our rail and ports facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people, both locals and visitors around the state, and provides a network for business and industry to transport product to market both locally and for export through our ports.

Over the past 12 months we have put in a new bus service between Burnie and Latrobe linking the north-west hospitals, as well as a new bus service allowing better access to Burnie for west coast residents. We have launched a new targeted evidence-based strategy to guide road safety activity for the next 10 years, being a major step. It is called 'Towards Zero Strategy 2017 to 2026'. We have embraced the sharing economy by facilitating the market entry of road sourcing services, subject to a range of safety-based regulatory controls, resulting in Uber starting its UberX service in December in the greater Hobart area.

As part of our continuing rolling program to improve customer service, we have launched a new on-line driver assessment booking system. Customers can now book and pay for their driving assessments from their smart phones, tablets and desktop computers. We have made significant progress on road projects, including the Brooker Highway Junction upgrade which is now essentially complete and working a treat at Elwick.

The Midland Highway 10-Year Action Plan will have completed safety improvements on 25 kilometres of the highway by the end of this month with more under way, a bunch of new projects in front of the Public Works Committee as we speak, and over the next month or so for a large suite of more works.

We have successfully negotiated with the Australian Government to bring forward funding for the Perth Link Roads with an EOI process currently under way for a design and construct contract to be awarded later this year, just working some things out with the local council and community in there now. Construction has begun on the Huon Highway/Summerleas Road intersection and there's been a commitment secured from the Australian Government for the upgrading of the Tasman Highway at Holyman Avenue at the roundabout at the airport. Planning work is well under way for a project to commence hopefully late this year. There's paperwork required there, including EPBC, possible issues there.

So in planning for the future, we have our specialist adviser. Infrastructure Tasmania is a small unit which is focused on freight and transport infrastructure matters. In its first years of operation it has become increasingly involved in broader priority infrastructure issues such as the Tamar Estuary Management Task Force. Infrastructure Tasmania will continue its productive collaboration with other areas of the Department of State Growth and right across Government to ensure our infrastructure planning is long-term, strategic, integrated and fit for purpose.

We have provided additional funding for forward planning of our road network, including for traffic planning in Launceston, and as a result of the planned university moved at Inversek and we are planning to reduce further traffic congestion in Hobart at peak travel times with \$1.8 million in the budget for specific works.

Planning for future bus services is well under way with new contracts due to replace the previous five plus five, which is going to time out over the next 12 months. A very sensible approach under way there and I met with the bus industry, we met with the bus industry over this weekend, and it's complicated, but they are all moving forward positively with that.

Consistent with the Tasmanian freight strategy that was delivered by Infrastructure Tasmania, we have committed \$19.1 million over four years to improve access for high productivity vehicles on key freight routes that connect Tasmania's ports, transport hubs and major industries, and this is working on bridges where it's been identified that for heavy transport, they can't go over certain bridges, they have to take the long way around, and we are working right around the state to improve that network for higher productivity vehicles. With that, we are delivering on the largest capital investment program in recent years. More \$827 million has been provided across the next four years for road infrastructure, planning, construction and maintenance, and just this year alone there will be \$294 million including Australian Government funding into our State Road Network. With that I'm happy to move forward.

## **Output group 2 Infrastructure**

### **2.1 Infrastructure Tasmania -**

**CHAIR** - We will head straight into it. Ruth, you have Output 2.1, Infrastructure Tasmania?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, some of these may be more overview, but Infrastructure Tasmania has a role in a lot of this. You said the role of Infrastructure Tasmania has with freight, and freight and transport, what role did they play with King Island Shipping?

**Mr HIDDING** - So Infrastructure Tasmania played a - you have an inquiry starting on that, so I take it that will all be scrutinised in that, but -

**Ms FORREST** - We have an inquiry into the water and sewerage too and that got a fair crack yesterday, so I would appreciate you giving some information at this stage.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sure, whatever you ask, but I'm just understanding the process going forward now. Infrastructure Tasmania was tasked very early in the piece, almost immediately on coming into Government. The deal with the looming known situation was when Chas Kelly from City Rail Transport announced probably six months into this Government's term that he was having a new ship built, that it would be 184 metres and would not be able to go into King Island. We then started on the process, and Infrastructure Tasmania had a key and central role from then right through to now. That's because there were other Government Departments involved.

There were freight strategy issues, connectivity of freight as it came through Devonport and round the other way. Infrastructure Tasmania and its head, Alan Garcia, was at the forefront of that. He led the process of working on the Island over quite a number of visits to understand their needs and their aspirations and their hopes, and sought and got their agreement for a process to go forward and look for a commercial operator. He also on behalf of Government advertised, worked with the four proponents of a service, worked with King Island Mayor, General Manager and their specialist consultant to determine which of the bids or which of the indications of wanting to start a new service. They came up with Port & Coastal Marine Maritime Services based in Kurnell in New South Wales, and they were eventually jointly selected and appointed as the proponent going forward.

He remained the interface between the Government and Port & Coastal Marine Services for quite a long period of time while they went ship hunting, and backwards and forwards to the Island

and talking to the locals about the various ship possibilities. Port & Coastal Marine paid a very substantial deposit on a ship called the *CM Supplier*, it was lying in the Rio De Janeiro Harbour, and proceeded to build his business to go on and sign up customers to the shipping service and had a financing plan in place with a major Australian bank that backed the process. Basically they said, 'This looks good'. The answer to the success of it was going to be the aggregation of enough freight, of most of the freight. In other words, would everybody agree to use the service, and eventually one way or another that was agreed, and Infrastructure Tasmania worked with major shipping customers as well, and achieved agreement, certainly with the majors to support that service.

What took place then was that just as they were about to finalise the purchase of the ship, the bank wanted a final look at the business model, and coincidentally a major customer at that time pulled out it and said, 'I'm out. I have another view now', and that and a few other realities of difficulty with dealing with this vessel in Brazil meant that the bank pulled out of the business. In the lead-up to that, SeaRoad entered into a joint venture with PCMS which, for me, was the perfect deal in that you had the Devonport matter solved. They entered into an excellent joint venture and all was looking good until that major bank pulled its business.

Infrastructure Tasmania was able to step in at this point and had the confidence of more players, and of course what took place when we were told that the service wasn't going ahead, PCMS had to pull out, had lost a lot of money in the process of doing it - I feel terrible for them, but that was a risk they took. Then we immediately spoke to SeaRoad to ensure that for a period of some three months we had coverage while we worked on an immediate solution. Infrastructure Tasmania put that deal together with SeaRoad successfully, and very complex - some complex dealings, and SeaRoad agreed to run its large ship, one small enough to still get in the harbour, before it was sold, for a number of months to a timeline. They did that. In the meantime I had negotiated with the TasPorts board to stand up a shipping company in its own right, a brand new shipping company from scratch in a very short period of time, which was a major challenge. That essentially brought to an end the direct involvement of Infrastructure Tasmania in that process because TasPorts was from that point on their own - they were the shipping provider. Certainly Mr Garcia was still involved at that stage, but TasPorts took over from that point.

I'm sure that will all be unpicked in the inquiry and that timeline. But if your question is what role they played, they played a fantastic role in bringing all this together. King Island did not have a shipping service, and then it did have a shipping service. At the very last minute it fell over, and the shipping service that's now in place by TasPorts has operated very successfully, and albeit given the concerns on the Island about the size of the vessel, which is all down to the simple fact that TasPorts had to get a vessel. There was only one vessel in a condition and with approval available in the Australian region, including Papua-New Guinea and Indonesia, that was suitable to swing straight on to the run without having to be changed, anything rebuilt, and that vessel was available. We were painfully aware it was much smaller than what they were used to, but it was the only vessel.

I'm confident your inquiry is going to find that, somebody used before in *Hansard* that the 'Government dropped the ball'. I am quite confident that you will find that the ball in fact was picked up by this Government when this fell over. I look forward to your inquiry into it.

**Ms FORREST** - Minister, before you were in Government it was well-known that the *SeaRoad Mersey* was going to be taken off the route and a bigger ship was going to be built, going to be put on by SeaRoad. So to say that you only knew that it was going to be a reality after you came to Government when the announcement was made that a bigger ship was coming - I have known that

for a very long time. The Islanders have known that for a very long time. I find it hard to accept that you only found out about it at that time.

**Mr HIDDING** - We're only talking about six months, and when we came to office first we did speak to SeaRoad, and SeaRoad was being targeted by the Labor government at the time with Labor government proposing to direct the TT-Line to go into direct freight competition against SeaRoad. So there was absolutely no plans to build a new ship, and we were told very straight by SeaRoad that there were no plans to build a new ship while that environment existed.

We, in due course, after due consideration, announced that we would not back the business case for TT-Line to get into the commercial freight business any more than they are already, and within weeks of us announcing that, SeaRoad then announced that they were going to order a new ship. That is when it was live, but like you, I was aware that there had been discussions about -

**Ms Forrest** - For some time.

**Mr HIDDING** - Well, *SeaRoad Mersey* was an elderly ship, coming to an end, but until such time as he ordered a new ship, but that's not to say I wasn't aware of it when I first came in. Of course I was, and just like you were, but there was no prospect of it coming off the run in the foreseeable future because he wasn't going to buy anything new while ever the government was going to be building new ships to take his business off him. So that had to be determined first.

**Ms FORREST** - The port in Grassy is one of the challenges - even the *SeaRoad Mersey* would need to get a special pilot to get into the port. It was already a challenge and it was reliant on that. Has Infrastructure Tasmania looked at the port?

**Mr HIDDING** - They have.

**Ms FORREST** - And?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is looking forward, the freight strategy shows that the King Island freight needs will be met for quite a number of years into the future with a vessel of the size of 80 metres to 90 metres which is what the port is currently rated for. Ninety metres is its definite thing, but the other one, because it was -

**Ms FORREST** - It was 93, wasn't it, *SeaRoad Mersey*?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, it's 109, but because it had twin screws and a special pilot exemption, they were able to get in. King Island's freight needs, no matter how you look at it, could be catered for by an 80 metre or 90 metre vessel for quite some time. In any event, it's about a \$60 million forecast job to open that port up for a vessel.

The next size vessel is the size of SeaRoad's new ship, 180-odd metres, a bit like our TT-Lines, they are 189, but it's a whole new port. Where that rock wall was put in at Grassy, a lot of that's in the wrong place. It is a major job, but I am being open with you. I'm absolutely open to the idea, and we need to start moving our thinking forward. Yet the case for a 180 metre vessel is over there - it's not even in the 10-year time frame.

**Ms FORREST** - That's the freight task. There are no people to transport by boat to the Island. I don't know that I'd use it myself. Bass Strait's not my favourite place - I don't travel by sea that

well. But also you have this huge and growing market over there for golf tourism. You can't put a decent set of golf clubs on a Sharp plane very easily.

**Mr Hidding - No.**

**Ms FORREST -** So there's a whole range of opportunities here that we could open up if there was a greater capacity.

**Mr HIDDING -** We agree with you that the Grassy Port is planned for an upgrade; they would like it upgraded. Infrastructure Tasmania knows that, looked at it, has material from the council on all that. However, projections for freight right now, you wouldn't be leaping into it tomorrow, but Infrastructure Tasmania has it on its radar and is working on the port.

**Ms FORREST -** We will leave that to another forum. Regarding Infrastructure Tasmania, I would like to know more about the number of major infrastructure funding submissions they have put to the federal government during the last year.

**Mr HIDDING -** Infrastructure Australia has a new process of working with the state's infrastructure bodies. Each state now has an infrastructure body; we have too. They meet regularly with Infrastructure Australia now and the Chief of Infrastructure Australia addresses the meeting of transport ministers twice a year, the COAG meeting.

They have been tasked with reviewing every job over \$100 million for public funding in Australia. That requires federal funding which is not necessarily good for Tasmania because a lot of our projects will be underneath that. The port at Grassy, say, doesn't even fit into that thing. However, we have had serious discussions with the minister about that and Infrastructure Australia itself and that smaller states like us ought to be able to have a lower threshold, and there is an agreement essentially that we can do that.

**Ms FORREST -** So those projects could be considered through that process?

**Mr HIDDING - Yes.**

**Ms FORREST -** What is the threshold?

**Mr HIDDING -** \$100 million. They have essentially been tasked with saying, 'Anything under \$100 million, don't you worry about that', focus on the bigger ones'. There's plenty of those going on around Australia. But Infrastructure Australia released the Australian Infrastructure Plan & Infrastructure Priority List in February 2016. The plan included 78 recommendations for reforming the way the nation plans, builds and funds infrastructure. So it's a whole new model.

The priority list identified potential infrastructure solutions for investment over the next 15 years, and is updated by IA as initiatives are put forward. The priority list includes four initiatives put forward by the state government: the Derwent River crossing capacity, that's Bridgewater Bridge; the Burnie to Hobart freight corridor strategy -

**Ms Forrest -** Is that road and/or rail or -

**Mr HIDDING - Yes.**

**Ms Forrest** - Both?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. Tranche 2, Irrigation Schemes and Sewerage Infrastructure Upgrades -

**Ms Forrest** - And does that include the Launceston sewerage -

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, the big projects.

**Mr HINE** - We bundled some projects given the \$100 million cap.

**Ms Forrest** - You need to get to \$100 million, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, certainly. Put them together and say there's that.

The University of Tasmania proposed a relocation of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - STEM - facility here in Hobart. It was also identified as an exemplar project for boosting density and growth in smaller Australian capital cities. This urban density discussion is strong around Australia that you're best off filling the cities up with people because that's where you have already got - everything is there. So STEM got a big tick as well. The STEM Initiative Business Case has recently gone through the IA assessment, with IA approving the business case and giving it priority status on the infrastructure priority list. However, no funding commitment has been made by the Australian Government. IA hasn't got a dollar. They assess projects. The money comes from the government. No funding commitment has been made by the Australian Government towards the project, and both the Tasmanian and Australian Governments are continuing to focus on the commitments already made to move UTAS' Launceston Campus to Inveresk.

The Bridgewater Bridge initiative will be the first put forward by the state that will progress to the IA Business Case Assessment Phase with Infrastructure Tasmania in the early stages of developing the business case. It's a big project process that IA has set up.

**Ms Forrest** - A new process?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, of this business case development. In fact, Phillip Smith, the IA chief told the ministers a couple of weeks ago that they have just received nationally 17 full business cases and STEM is one of them.

**Ms Forrest** - Bridgewater Bridge?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, the STEM project. The Bridgewater bridge preliminary business case is with them now for comment. That's a bit more work on that, a bit more information on that, and then that will move to a full business case very shortly. So it's in a phase with Infrastructure Australia now. We have a very strong case for a Bridgewater bridge. After all, there's a four-lane highway on one side of it with a 100 kph speed limit, four-lane highway on the other side of it with 100 kph speed limit. Two lanes - 60 kph in the middle of the bridge. It has to be done.

On traffic count alone, the BCR, the Business Cross-Ratio, it becomes an issue, but we're shaping a business case that we believe will overcome that argument. We are very strong with this. We continue to argue with IA and the federal government and the minister. They know. They know all about Bridgewater bridge. After all, it's been on the radar down here since I started 20

years ago. It was \$100 million in the federal budget then for Bridgewater bridge and apparently that was nearly enough to build it - imagine that. One reason it wasn't built was somebody declared it safe and went off and built the Brighton bid instead. But it has to be done, and so we are in an advanced stage now with Infrastructure Australia, full business case assessment framework isn't far away.

**Mr Valentine** - Including rail over there?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, not on the new bridge, no.

**Ms Forrest** - The rail will stay on the old bridge?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, because there was some \$75 million spent on the Brighton Harbour.

**Ms Forrest** - Rail harbour?

**Mr HIDDING** - Because heavy freight doesn't come down here any more, so they go to Hobart. However, the rail formation as it currently sits, stands, lays, still goes out there and over the old bridge, connects Brighton.

**Ms FORREST** - I gave Mr Groom the prize for the most useless set of performance measures and performance information. You come a close second. With the Infrastructure Tasmania performance information, there's absolutely no outcomes, it is totally meaningless. All it is is a number of proposals assessed. It doesn't tell you anything about the outcomes. So your view on that?

**Mr HIDDING** - Look, it reflects the fact that we started Infrastructure Tasmania with three staff. They are still three staff. They have been going from day 1 on things like King Island shipping and particular projects, a whole raft of projects, knowing full well that when they got settled they would have to develop a proper KPI process that they could be measured against and -

**Ms FORREST** - And we're still not there. I have asked you three years in a row now, minister.

**Mr HIDDING** - And we can accept that criticism, and ensure that by next year there will be a robust process in place that you can -

**Ms FORREST** - What sort of things can we look forward to in terms of outcome measures?

**Mr SWAIN** - Sorry, are you limiting the question to ITAS or -

**Ms FORREST** - No broadly, but we're on Infrastructure Tasmania output group at the moment so I specifically relate it to that one.

**Mr HIDDING** - I'm talking infrastructure, yes. So you -

**Ms FORREST** - I'm happy for you to answer that more broadly.

**Mr SWAIN** - We have been working on a medium to long-term capability strategy for the transport group which is two divisions where most of the money is spent which is the building and maintaining the roads and planning roads and also the road user services which is, as you know,



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Passenger Transport Registration and Licensing and Road Safety Branch. Out of that work we have a proposition around five key performance areas which relate to access, safety, visitor experience, freight efficiency and customer satisfaction, and are running a process through the next 12 months to take the nine branches across those two divisions and line up their performance measure with those five key headline issues so that what we'll be able to do is come back to the minister with a set of recommendations that says, 'Here are a set of measures across nine branches for safety', and there's different emphases you can put on safety, 'Which of those measures do you want us to adopt?'. So we haven't got as far as we would have liked since last year, but we have a process under way for the transport group within State Growth. I've been talking to Kim as Secretary about how that might provide a template for other areas in the department if we're successful in developing up a set of measures. So we have some way -

**Mr HIDDING** - I will point out that this is essentially a new structure with the Department of State Growth. In all areas on my side there has been a task that you could barely jump over. They have had a huge -

**Ms FORREST** - But we do need to be able to measure outcomes, otherwise value for money cannot be demonstrated.

**Mr HIDDING** - You absolutely do.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. On the expense summary under Infrastructure Australia, which is \$800 000 a year, it consistently doesn't change. How do you manage to not require the CPI increase in that application?

**Mr HIDDING** - It funds three staff, and -

**Ms Forrest** - They have had their wages frozen or what?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, to date they have been able to manage under that and so there's no big need to increase and they're managing to come in underneath that.

**Mr EVANS** - The \$800 000 reflected the election commitment made by the Government when it came into force, and so they have honoured and delivered on that. To date Infrastructure Tasmania has been able to live well and truly within those funds but -

**Ms FORREST** - So it hasn't been spending \$800 000 every year necessarily, then. Is that what you're saying?

**Mr EVANS** - I'd have to have a look at their performance, but I know they didn't in year 1, for example. There have been some carried forward, but as their work expands, we would have to review that for future years in terms of funding allocations.

**Mr SWAIN** - There's also a policy tranche within State Growth which has the Infrastructure Strategy Branch which plays a dual role to try to provide some support to Infrastructure Tasmania and also provide some support to the wider transport group, particularly around the national COAG processes. That gives some overflow human resource capacity for jobs. The other reason the budget wouldn't have been under as much pressure is because we're pooling resources wherever it's sensible to keep the cost down.

**Ms FORREST** - So the estimated outcome will be within that \$800 000 then?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

## **2.2 Infrastructure strategy -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Ruth. We will move to 2.2, Infrastructure Strategy. The budget documents for the commitments are already laid out there so I'm not going to reiterate those for the sake of time and everything else. The question I have for you is, in terms of strategy, infrastructure strategy per se, there are a lot of examples of PPPs, for example, which operate in mainland jurisdictions over a range of projects. I'm talking about hospitals, motorways, prisons, the whole shooting match. I note consideration is now being given to a northern prison and the Opposition has also noted that. Is a PPP model something that your Government might consider for projects like that, and for other projects too? We have a lot of expenditure on the main roads and everything else at the moment and I know a lot of that is federal funding but -

**Mr HIDDING** - I can give you a general answer on behalf of the Government because it's a Treasury matter, because financing is financing. Whether you go, build, own and operate, or build, own and operate and transfer back, or PPP or whatever model you use, at the end of the day you still pay. Depending on the quality of the deal - for instance, the prison at Risdon; half of that's not owned by the Crown. It is owned by the people that built it, or it was unless we bought it back off them, I'm not sure. It's not my portfolio, but that was a PPP under the previous government.

**CHAIR** - That was probably the last rebuild that was done, was it? There were about three or four different -

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, the last major rebuild, that was done.

**CHAIR** - I wondered as a strategy - that's why I asked the question. I know it's a Treasury matter in the end.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, I'm aware that none of those matters are off the table necessarily, but Treasury look very hard at why you would do that if you have a structure process as Government now. We have our own TasCorp Finance Corporation. It is generally the first port of call. So not off the table, but it would want to be an exceptional case, I would have thought.

**CHAIR** - I suppose in one way the Midlands Highway at the moment was always going to be. You might say that four lanes was a promise as a strategy to ensure conveyance between the north and the south of the state. That has been changed and we see it every week when we come -

**Mr HIDDING** - To be clear. Back in 2008, the Liberals developed a view that we would like to see a four lane highway to Hobart. Somebody did some costing and we ended up going to the 2010 election with a view to building another two lane road along the existing one, and that would be the four lane highway and it was costed to a point. I know the previous government did the same as we did, which was to go to the federal government and ask, 'What would you fund of that?', and the federal government said, 'Given the amount of money that would be required to rebuild that road, we would want to rebuild it for road safety purposes, not for amenity', which is where we started with this issue.

Every year there were multiple deaths and serious crashes due to head-on crashes and run-off-road. It was about even - head-on and run-off-road. Almost every single time at least one fatality, sometimes two, sometimes three. So a shocking death list on that road.

**Mr Valentine** - There was five in one instance.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. So the previous government looked at the safe systems approach and utilised that at the Symonds Plains work that they did, which essentially was the only work they did on the Midland Highway of any note. We came to office, we went to the federal government and we said, 'We want to do the safe systems approach on the entire highway. It is going to cost about \$500 million. We want to enter into an IIP with you, Infrastructure Investment Program, on an 80/20 split for the whole highway to live up to an AusRAP 3 standard'. That is a standard whereby you have the majority of the highway separated and under the safe systems approach, it is separated by flexible cable. It works very successfully, and is a safe systems philosophy.

I noticed in the *Hansard*, somebody asked, 'Why are the sides of the roads so wide', wondering if that was about bicycles. It is not at all. The safe systems approach, which is developing around the world, is about forgiveness. It starts with the concept that we are human beings and we make mistakes. If we are going to make mistakes, that mistake should not be fatal. It used to be that if you ran off the road this far, if you drifted off the road, you would have two wheels in the gravel and travelling at 110 kph often ended up with you in the paddock or in a tree - it is remarkable how many trees have wreaths around them - or in a ditch through the fence, and upside down and then the shocking outcomes. Because of the unforgiving nature of only about this much -

**Ms Forrest** - Which is how much for the purpose of *Hansard*?

**Mr HIDDING** - Let's say 0.5 metres in some cases away from the white side line. The safe systems approach uses rumble strips heavily, so that if you do drift off a little in your mind, the rumbling tells you that you are either too close to the centre or starting to drift off this way. If you do hit the rumble strip and you are over it, you have another 1.5 metres before you run off the road. So correction is possible, and it is remarkably efficient and saves lives and already has saved a life. I can give you an anecdote of two members of staff in my department who were travelling north for work purposes. They came upon a lady who had her car nosed into the wire. She was distraught on the side of the road and they spoke to her. She explained to them that she didn't know what happened. Suddenly there was lots of noise and she was in the wire. She was very distressed on the side of the road because there were cars going the other way that she would have hit. She saw the ones that she would have hit and she certainly wouldn't be with us anymore and there could well have been one or two or more on the other side of the road.

So we are already aware of it saving lives. The whole system is this: you will make a mistake but the architecture is going to forgive you the mistake and give you time to correct it.

**Mr Valentine** - It also doubles as a cycle way if necessary.

**Mr HIDDING** - So that is what we are doing and the \$500 million will be done on a 10-year project and we look like delivering it in about eight.

**CHAIR** - I understand all that. The question I still have is this system that you have I presume was done for financial reasons, it's a bit cheaper. But when you think about a four lane highway, you have all those incumbent generic costs of consulting engineers and land acquisition and all sorts

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of things. It is going to cost some more, but I wouldn't have thought it would have been expeditiously more to have done the four lanes rather than this system.

**Mr HIDDING** - It was a lot more.

**CHAIR** - Was it?

**Mr HIDDING** - We would have to get some advice.

**CHAIR** - Per kilometre? There was quite a bit of four lane stuff there already.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It was \$100 000 per kilometre. That is what we used to work on - \$100 000 per kilometre but that was not on a federal road.

**Mr HIDDING** - A four-lane separated road is terribly expensive. The federal government said on this IA basis, it will not achieve a BCR on the traffic count on that road. The traffic count on the Midland Highway is nothing like the traffic count of the Bass Highway.

**CHAIR** - No, it is not. You can tell as soon as you turn off, it is another story.

**Mr HIDDING** - Huge on the Bass Highway.

**Ms FORREST** - That is MONA.

**Mr HIDDING** - Good or bad.

**Ms FORREST** - I've listened to the noise, the sound.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is not someone in distress.

**Mr SWAIN** - I was going to say that we understand the difference to be more than \$2 billion, from the \$500 million over 10-year plan to the total cost.

**Mr HIDDING** - And it was conveyed to us with complete conviction, 'You are not getting that money because the traffic count just isn't there', and so your plan to do it to an AusRAP 3 standard, they still balked at the 500 notion but recently the federal minister, Darren Chester was saying that this road will become the benchmark in Australia for safety and for value you get from it.

The following is from an email that the senior manager of VicRoads sent to his colleagues in Victoria after he was here a week or so ago. He sent this around VicRoads: 'I was very impressed on Friday as I travelled from Hobart to Devonport, north to south, south to north, up the Midland Highway. Plenty of wide centre light and median and verge barrier. Central median looked to be off-set 1 metre each side from barrier while others might be narrower. I might try to get in contact with some Tasmanian colleagues to see if they have any design information. Saw a number of Spanish ear they call them, U turn develop treatment also. I was unable to get photos. Would be good to get up-to-date aerial imagery. The sections I drove through were all newly constructed rather than retrofit. This was an eye-opener for me as we hear very little from our Tasmanian colleagues, and they seem to be taking the right steps forward'. So VicRoad is impressed.

**Ms Forrest** - I am glad he didn't stop to take photos. He could have caused a crash.

**Mr HIDDING** - There is enough of that going on.

**CHAIR** - On a minor engineering point - and the member for Apsley always asks a question about it - when you see them in North Queensland, the slow turn-out bays. Any more advances on doing that sort of engineering on some of our roads? We have so many camper vans and it frustrates the traffic behind.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it does indeed. On the Great Eastern Highway we have a budget allocation of some \$6 million and the tourism people and the locals are currently determining which ones to do. These will not be simple little pull outs because we need definite overtaking there. I am looking at more funding to be available to do more of those quite simple pull over and stop. Particularly on the Great Eastern Drive, where they can pull over and stop and take some photographs and that would let slow traffic through as well. The member for Apsley and I have had considerable experience in this matter.

**Ms FORREST** - The Murchison could do with it, although they were doing a bit more work down there. They travel in packs the camper vans, three or four together.

**Mr HIDDING** - So one area we will be looking at is Cherry Tree Hill which is near Freycinet Wines, coming into that area there.

**Ms FORREST** - They used to pull up there and take photos and then just back up. Some of the people just stop and back up.

**Mr HIDDING** - That was a non-standard. People used to cross the white line to get to it. It is really quite dangerous. So that is no longer there. In that area, it is pretty windy, the road area, and people get very grumpy through there so there is going to be some treatment in the Cherry Tree Hill area. The southern one, we have not quite finalised that yet, but we are working on that.

**Ms FORREST** - The Bass Highway west of Burnie, we are pretty happy between Devonport and Burnie, the envy of many parts of the state. West of Burnie there are a lot of serious problems. You talk about sealed shoulders - well there aren't any. Some of them are even narrower than your 0.5 metre. They are barely 20 centimetres in parts. We also have the challenging issues of the Cann River bridge. It is a tension river bridge. It is a single bridge. To get anything up and around, you have to go almost to the west coast and come back. So the section of highway behind Wynyard there continues to be serious and fatal crashes. I know some of them aren't road related - the last one was not road related.

**Mr HIDDING** - Do you want to deal with that one, just now, first. That Wynyard one, because I have -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. There has been so much work done on it. There is some money in the budget but when are we going to see some work on this?

**Mr HIDDING** - I would like to bring up the manager of State Roads, Shane Gregory, to the table. I can indicate that after the federal government, after the election there was an amount of money allocated to the Wynyard turn-offs. We engaged immediately with that council because the solutions had to be on council roads. So they had to agree.

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**Ms Forrest** - The community all want to keep their own road open.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, which means that we had money ready to go. We had all the will in the world. It is not about blaming the council. They had their own issues with, as you say, the locals. 'Not this road. Block that one, not this one, and we could not get agreement on where we were going. Have we landed now?

**Mr GREGORY** - Historically this seems being a bit hard, but in recent years before we even secured the funding from the Commonwealth, we worked very constructively. I commend, particularly council's general manager, in the way that they have really engaged with us on this project. It has worked very well, and we have had to go back to the community a few times because as you have noted, nobody wanted any roads closed.

**Ms Forrest** - They all wanted the problem fixed.

**Mr GREGORY** - So we have a solution now. That has been with the final round of consultation with the community and with a view to going to construction next financial year.

**Ms Forrest** - So can we reveal the plan?

**Mr GREGORY** - We can. It is not secret. It is in the public domain. There is a new roundabout going in towards the western end where the community wanted all the legs of the intersection kept open. That is an area where there's some key traffic associated with some industry. So we will have a roundabout there.

**Ms FORREST** - Which road is that on?

**Mr GREGORY** - I would have to -

**Mr HIDDING** - The last one, isn't it?

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes, the last one, York Street.

**Ms FORREST** - Not Angliss Street? You will close that?

**Mr GREGORY** - No, at the western end - none are being closed. There is one about the middle that gets closed, and the Reservoir Drive gets a general upgrade with some turning pockets. So there's a range of treatments. The best thing would be if we get a copy of the plan.

**Ms FORREST** - So a roundabout at York Street.

**Mr GREGORY** - There is a fork intersection at the end and I can't recall the particular names of the roads, but it is where the key industrial action is happening related to the milk processing. So it comes out of that end there. So there is a roundabout going in there.

**Ms FORREST** - Might be Aldena Road maybe.

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes. So there is a roundabout going in there and then -

**Ms FORREST** - So York Street is not closing, are you saying?

**Mr GREGORY** - No, there is one street that is being closed. There's some realignments. There's some turning pockets. There's some lighting. So there's a range of things that are going. Probably the best thing is we get you a copy of the plan.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, if you could do that.

**Mr HIDDING** - Are you sitting next week?

**Ms FORREST** - No.

**Mr GREGORY** - A copy of the plan is the simplest way, rather than trying to explain what is happening with each one.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have all the motivation in the world to get this done but as you correctly say, there was difficulty on -

**Ms FORREST** - So when does work start? Next year.

**Mr GREGORY** - We will finalise the consultation. When everyone is happy, then we will go to the market and we would look to get it constructed in the next financial year.

**Mr HIDDING** - You mean this one coming?

**Mr GREGORY** - Coming, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - One issue with that section of the road is the number of crossovers there. The other issue is that it is single lane all the way around the back. There is no capacity for overtaking. You may look puzzled but, trust me, that is how it is. It is on a slow curve so you can't overtake - well, people do. It is very difficult to overtake safely because there is a constant curve and there is long grass on the side of the road. There is a really wide corridor there. You have a lot of heavy vehicles using this road. Is there some consideration being given to increasing or adding a lane or anything, in this section of the road?

**Mr GREGORY** - It is not something we are considering at the moment.

**Ms FORREST** - Then going back to further east, the Koo Wee crawl on the Cann River Bridge?

**Mr HIDDING** - So the Koo Wee crawl - there was some funding for a corridor study there.

**Mr GREGORY** - There is some funding available from the Commonwealth. We will be looking at the corridor to understand the solutions there. That funding is available next year so that is when that work will be undertaken and we will work through that, it is about understanding what it is.

Regarding the bridge, we need to understand that there are many places where there is one road or one way in to somewhere and that is fairly common. That is not unique to Cann River. In thinking about do we build another bridge, we need to think about what would cause the existing

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bridge to close. The things you might think of are the bridge gets taken out by a flood, or there's a major accident. That is likely to close a new bridge that's adjacent to the existing one anyway.

**Ms FORREST** - A flood, not a crash, but yes. If they were separate.

**Mr GREGORY** - If you had a crash that people are talking about that would cause the road to be closed for hours and hours on end and they have to do a long detour, it is likely that would have a significant impact on any adjacent bridge as well. So it needs to be kept in the context that building another bridge next to an existing one does not magically make this issue disappear. We really need to understand what the issue is and then resolve how we deal with that. There are many locations in Tasmania where if a road is closed, there are lengthy detours or there may not be detours at all.

**Ms FORREST** - I accept that. You think about the volume of traffic which the minister has confirmed, and the reliance on that access for a whole heap of produce out of Circular Head and that area west of Wynyard, and people accessing health services. The hospital is on the other side of that bridge. All those people who live west of Somerset or in Somerset and west.

**Mr HIDDING** - Just to clarify, when I was talking about Bass Highway's high traffic count, I was talking Burnie because of the port and all the trucks that go to Burnie Port. Still quite substantial further west, but your comments as to the extra lane - certainly the Cann River bridge is consistently brought to our attention. We have a lively interest in the matter, but there is that issue, as Shane has said, just building one alongside might not be the -

**Ms FORREST** - Then we get a bit further west and we have next to no shoulders, Peggs Beach area. I was nearly cleaned up there. I mentioned that in *Hansard*; I don't know if you are aware of that. That was really scary and I am sure I am not the only one who has had similar near misses on that section of the highway. A lot of trucks, a lot of buses - they cannot pass without potentially clipping mirrors.

There was some work done around Sisters Hill area which was good, but there is a whole heap further west that needs consideration. If you are going to talk about safe systems.

**Mr HIDDING** - Recognising that you have just been through a campaign period where a lot of people talk to you about this stuff while it is fresh in your mind.

**Ms FORREST** - It has been on the radar for 12 years, minister.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, I know. But as you are aware, recently there was that other area, it might have been west of Smithton -

**Ms FORREST** - That was brought up some time ago. The Welcome River area, Christmas Hills, Togari. The whole way to Maraway.

**Mr HIDDING** - There was a particular spot where there have been seven accidents.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, that is near the Welcome River, in that area.

**CHAIR** - I make that one point because we do not want to get bogged down in individual capital works projects, but I am pleased to see that the Lacks secondary road is progressing. I have



been on that bandwagon for a long time. Does that finish sealing that right through, that gets done? Done and dusted including Haulage Hill?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Hooray.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Now it can be called a true highway then, can't it.

**CHAIR** - That is right.

**Mr HIDDING** - The last element of it has gone over the limit for public works so it has been referred to public works, more than \$5 million, and the public works will -

**CHAIR** - I know that Mr Farrell will look after it on our behalf. Thank you so much.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I am interested in the real time traffic congestion management. How is it going? Are you getting good engagement with the Hobart City Council on this? I appreciate earlier there was not as much engagement as might have been wanted.

**Mr HIDDING** - Hobart City Council is not just aware of the traffic congestion in Hobart, they are in the centre of it because most of it is on their roads.

## 2.3 Land transport safety -

**CHAIR** - Minister, some of those questions come down to further line items so it is stealing the thunder out of strategies, so we might move on. We will make a grab there. So Land transport safety, 2.3.

**Mr FARRELL** - Minister, in regard to the new driver assessment program, any stats on the number of people taking on driver training and passing driver training. Have the numbers picked up in that area?

**Mr HIDDING** - Overall waiting time for driving assessments across the state have reduced, however wait times at more regional locations remain an issue from time to time, primarily due to unplanned leave of driving assessors. North-west coast has been a bit of an annoyance from time to time but -

**Ms FORREST** - Annoyance?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is annoying to me. Certainly if people tell me they have a long wait. Often it can correct very quickly. Recently the Department of State Growth has endeavoured to employ casual driver assessors to address this issue on the north-west coast with little success. However, in the short time, other staff strategies are being investigated to deliver a sustainable solution to the issue.

The Government recognised the importance of a driver licence in supporting young people to get jobs basically. A number of programs help young people for jobs, education and community activities. We have a number of programs to help young people in the state, the Learner Licence Assistance Program, the Learner Driver Mentor Program and the use of authorised driving

instructors to deliver L2 assessments which was an earlier initiative of mine. The recently introduced case management approach assists young drivers to remain licensed where appropriate, while placing targeted controls to assist them to be safe and compliant drivers. You might recall that is legislation where we had the regression process which was very bad for young people because they were leaving the thing and not coming back.

**Ms FORREST** - You have legislation on the table to deal with that.

**Mr HIDDING** - It has not been through yet?

**Ms FORREST** - No.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sorry, I thought it might be.

**Ms FORREST** - Not through our House. There is a bit of a backlog. You need to get a few things off the table.

**Mr HIDDING** - I had better not talk that up. It will sound like I am promoting. I am sure you will understand what that is about.

Another initiative is the new online booking system for driving assessments. This makes booking an assessment easier and more convenient.

One of the initiatives I am proud of is yet to be developed. It is a trial essentially but there is money in the budget for a trial to take place, likely with the Jordan River Learning Federation, Bridgewater High and their trade training centre. What we want to get to is a situation where that learning system builds into its formal system driver learning from an earlier age. If it is so and it is, that around 19 years of age is when the majority of young people are getting their licence, for those who need to get a job after year 12, you would understand they are not 19 and without a driver licence many companies just won't employ somebody without a driver licence. It is just too hard because they have to get to somewhere and we don't have the public transport that Sydney or Melbourne has and they are just out of the job market. So my idea is, and what we are working towards, that when the trade training centre graduates with a Cert II certificate and a white card ready to start to work, they also get a driver licence, that they have done everything required to get a driver licence at the same time. Completely job ready.

**Ms FORREST** - Including the hours of supervised driving.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, and we would work with the other facilities in the area. The PCYC for instance has, and will have an even better a full driving simulator that they can do training and assessment on. They have the nearby racetrack that they often go up to with kids and get hours up and teach them good skills on the road. So harnessing all that stuff, somebody graduating with a Cert II and a driver licence will make them highly job ready. There is a call for young people with driver licences, particularly in the civil contracting area.

Recently there was on a particular job on the Midland Highway. I know the contractor was looking for an 18-year-old person with a driver licence. Please - it has to be a manual. Our Learner Driver Mentor Programs are assisting a lot of people to get a licence but in an automatic which is okay for a home, but not ideal for employment because a work ute is not usually an automatic. It

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is shaped towards that and I am excited about that. If we can get that trial up and running we can roll it out around Tasmania and get young people employed through driver licences.

**Ms FORREST** - When my kids were little they drove on the farms by the time they could see over the steering wheel and things like that. It sets them up for when they have to formally start and getting the car on the road. It is a trial are you talking about?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is brand new this idea. What they are excited about doing is starting in grade 9 already. They can get behind the wheel of a car. It is astonishing how many young people from -

**Ms FORREST** - More backgrounds than we know what to do.

**Mr HIDDING** - But then the other half do not. They sit there, 'This is a steering wheel, what I do with this'.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Clarence High started it in 1962. One of the only schools in the state that did it.

**Mr HIDDING** - I can tell you there is a certain job provider in Hobart who employs some 900 people and provides the staff for this company, that company, that cherry company, that engineering company, and the principal requirement to walk in the door and get a job at that place is a driver licence.

**Ms FORREST** - So a provisional licence is okay for those people?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. P-Plate in the back window as long as you can drive a ute. I am excited about that. We are going to be moving to roll that out pretty soon.

**Ms FORREST** - Any questions, Craig on that?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, not on that but on that line. As far as the national heavy vehicle law is being rolled out now, what measures are in place as far as the enforcement of the new regulations around that in regard the diary and inspection regimes that have been implemented to date?

**Mr HIDDING** - The log book arrangements are now finally away and running. On-road compliance and enforcement for heavy vehicle mass and dimension, heavy vehicle stands in fatigue management has transitioned to the national system but the department undertakes a range of these on behalf of NHBO via a service agreement. We have the transport inspectors. They still belong to this state. In other states they are talking about them going to work for NHBR and we are not concerned -

**Mr FARRELL** - Not planning that?

**Mr HIDDING** - Not planning that. We think it works fine in Tasmania. In late 2016, the regulator and the department began to discuss a potential transition of core regulatory functions to direct delivery by the regulator, and other jurisdictions are working through these matters. We hope to have a more detailed understanding at the time of any further transitions in the second half of 2017. The central thing with the NHBR, of course, is the oversize and over mass permits. The law always said that you had to get a permit from your government to go on state roads and from local

government on local government roads. But since time in memorial, no one can remember getting a permit from local government. Then when it became national law, it had to be enforced and of course, councils are saying, 'What's that got to do with us?' It is national law. You can't have a truck driver going over one of your bridges when you have no idea whether that bridge can carry that truck. It is your bridge. And so with a great deal of reluctance and edging along by us in last year's budget, a significant amount of money to get them to start spending money on their bridges. The fact is they should have been doing it anyway. So the game is all now about pre-consenting so that a route has a pre-consent and you can achieve your permit within days, rather than the 28 days that it has allowed. By and large, we are almost there, but I did speak to a crane operator last week who was telling me that with certain huge cranes that he has, he still runs into issues.

**Mr SWAIN** - As you would know, the regulator got off to a rocky start and that was around the permitting issue but it now has systems in place so it is now turning its attention far more to compliance and enforcement. The work diaries is now past the policy development stage and with the heavy vehicle regulator for implementation, and in general, they are well advanced in their system specifications for information systems to support the national function. They are looking to go to risk base models. They have done a national baseline survey and all those results are not out yet, but it is demonstrating that the risk based approach as used in Tasmania is standing up well nationally and they are now in a position to start actively exploring as the minister was alluding to, transfer of functions from agency arrangements with states back to them, including compliance and enforcement and like other jurisdictions, we are part of those discussions.

There is a lot going on and after a shaky start, they are going to start to push the level of performance in permit allocations, compliance and enforcement nationally as they develop their capabilities, and just coming off the back of the bridge inspection work which was to authorise permits as of right, that was one of the catalysts for the government's initiative around bridges which I am sure we will come to later.

**Mr FARRELL** - The trial with the cats eyes that lit up when it got cold. Just wondering how that went? Whether it was successful and whether they went blue and died.

**Mr GREGORY** - They did very well. The challenge has been making sure people don't steal them. So we put an initial batch in and then we put a further batch in and we found that the manufacturer had given us a different variety that flashed differently so we got those replaced for free. But we have had a challenge certainly in the early stages, a number of them were disappearing off the road, so that was the key challenge, but they do what they are meant to do, and they are quite effective. We had some very good feedback and some good feedback through the RACT that people appreciated and understood what they were doing and they really liked them. But keeping on the ground was the hardest challenge.

**Mr FARRELL** - Will there be other roads in safer areas, not subject to shoplifting or road lifting?

**Mr HIDDING** - New Norfolk or somewhere?

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes, New Norfolk where the honest folk are.

**Ms FORREST** - It gets cold down there.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, where they wouldn't pinch them is what he is saying.

**Mr GREGORY** - There would be a lot of places where they would be effective. We need to give a bit of thought to how we would use them on roads that are subject to snow and snow clearing. They are a raised marker and they sit proud of the surface and, at nearly \$100 each, we won't want them carved off by the snow clearing operation. There are some other varieties that are set in the road and we will look at where we can put them, but they appear to have been very effective.

**Mr FARRELL** - So how many did you lose in the end?

**Mr GREGORY** - In the first batch we probably lost one in four.

**Ms FORREST** - On this too, this relates to your collaboration, I guess, with the Road Safety Advisory Council and involvement in road safety promotion. Are there any other initiatives that you are looking at targeted at any particular area? Is there a focus moving forward or is it the same as what we have been doing?

**Mr HIDDING** - I invite to the table Penny Nicholls, manager at Land Transport Safety.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - The activities we are targeting defined in the Road Safety Strategy that was released December last year and we have a Toward Zero through your action that is defining them. So in the key direction statement that you will find on line on our website, the minister has talked about the safe systems approach and the four cornerstones there that we talk about are road users, safe roads and roadside safe vehicles, and safe speeds. Under those directions, we have a total of 13 key areas to support the strategy. I can read those out if you would like me to.

**Ms FORREST** - No, that is fine. Is there any particular new focus that you are taking to?

**Mr HIDDING** - You mean campaigns right now?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - In terms of advertising campaigns?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Just one moment.

**Mr SWAIN** - While Penny is looking for that, the motorcycle trainings are a key focus at the moment moving towards the Victorian regime.

**Ms FORREST** - If you can explain the Victorian regime? How it is different to Tasmania's?

**Mr HIDDING** - One of my first acts as minister was to announce my deep concern that we were issuing a learner licence to somebody 16-and-a-half years of age after they qualified by driving around some witches hats on a basketball court, put them on the road for a year and then bring them back and do some training with them at the end of an unqualified period. It does not make any sense. How it even got to that, I do not know, but other states have the same issue. As it happened, as we have started, Victoria said, 'We are doing the same'. So we piggybacked on a deal of that as we would.

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**Ms NICHOLLS** - The program consists of a two-day pre-learner course. What we call a check ride and new provisional test. One of the key benefits of the new two day pre-learner course will provide around about three times more supervised riding experience, and will also, for the first time, include an on-road component.

**Ms FORREST** - This is before you put them out on the road?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Yes. So there's pre- and then there is an on-road component once they have satisfied -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So you get a chance to check-out their dexterity on a bike and all that sort of thing?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - Then everybody gets it. All motorcyclists get it. They have always known that is wrong.

**Ms FORREST** - So any other particular campaigns?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - If you are talking about advertising?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - We are talking about advertising campaigns. We have, in February, launched the Goose Inattention Distraction Phone one. We have just been participating in Road Safety Week which was quite successful. We have a refresh of our Rural Mates campaign which is going to be delivered through some various media channels.

In June we have Road Talk which we have participated in over a number of years. That is five three-minute segments about road safety. We have a two-stage enforcement campaign that the first stage we are focusing on speed drink driving and inattention. We are just in the development phase of that.

To coincide with the changes to the road rule to introduce the minimum distance laws, we have a second stage of our Distance Make the Difference campaign to be launched at the same time, so that will be around that we have a law in place now, so that will be the change there.

**Ms FORREST** - When is that one coming in?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - That one will be around September/October. I haven't got a specific date. We also have another stage of our tourism strategy, road safety strategy and the other one is some material in relation to the top 10 misunderstood road rules which should be -

**Ms FORREST** - Is that merging?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Merging, slip rule, roundabouts, some of those typical misunderstood road rules, so that will be some fliers that will be going out, as I understand it, with registration renewals as well as some booklet information explaining those rules a little bit more which will be on our website.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There are videos that have been produced for that, isn't there? The Kim Smith and Rotary?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Yes, we have already some clips to help with supervising driving on our website around certain manoeuvres around road rules so that is currently -

**Mr VALENTINE** - I know Rotary did some work on it and some videos were produced so if you don't fully know about it, Kim Smith one of the ex-police ministers. Really good work, especially for international drivers too.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Yes. We have our other programs that we have been committed to. Our Vulnerable Road User Program, the Community Road Safety Grants Program is just about to go out with another round of that. Learner Driver Mentor Program Support that we are have in place at the moment and just doing evaluations. A lot of good things that are happening.

**Mr FARRELL** - A little explanation with the strategy infrastructure where it does go up from \$3.6 million to \$6.8 million and then onto \$7 million which is the \$20 million sourced from Road Safety Levy Receipts for safety upgrades to the Midland Highway. I would like more information on the safety upgrades to the Midland Highway - what they are.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is the Midland Highway project. The major project.

**Mr FARRELL** - So it is not general like safety features; it is the whole kit and caboodle.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is AusRAP 3, yes.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes.

**Mr SWAIN** - There is \$20 million coming out of the levy into the Midlands Program.

**Mr HIDDING** - Over a 10-year period.

**Mr SWAIN** - And it is not evenly matched. It goes up and down because it is contributing to particular programs and it forms part of the state's 20 per cent under the 80/20 split, and the Road Safety Council was supportive of that application, first, because infrastructure is part of safe systems and an important element, but second, because it is leveraged funding, so for every dollar we spend, we get -

**Mr HIDDING** - They regularly go out and sometime ago, they went out in a bus and had a close look at what was going on and that council is very impressed with what their money is going into and having a safe Midland Highway compared to what the dreadful count we had on the road. They see it as a great investment.

**Mr VALENTINE** - On that issue, the maintenance of those devices, going forward, presumably you are putting that into your infrastructure budget somewhere along the line because I imagine while they are quite cost effective in the first instance, the maintenance long term is quite expensive, more expensive than say the Armco's wire rope barriers ?

**Mr HIDDING** - I have just been advised that the maintenance of wire rope barriers is far much cheaper than other options. So maintenance-wise, it does not create a special problem.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We might have a 15 minute break.

**The committee suspended from 4.15 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

#### **2.4 Passenger transport -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We will reconvene. We will open up with 2.4, passenger transport. Mr Farrell, the bus man.

**Mr FARRELL** - To get the ball rolling on the passenger transport, to get an idea of how the review on the small passenger vehicles is progressing and what outcomes you have had.

**Mr HIDDING** - Taxis, you mean?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, the review that has been -

**Mr HIDDING** - As part of the Government's work to bring in safely and in a sensible way the right sourcing framework, Uber was ready to come in and it was going to do what they did with every other jurisdiction, just come in and work it out later. But we indicated to them that we take a dim view of that and we work with them and extracted from them probably one of the better deals anywhere in the nation. As part of that, we committed to everybody in that industry that we would do a full review of all the legislation. There are four pieces of legislation and that process has commenced. The various stakeholder groups and key players are around the table and there will be a strong consultation program. The program is being driven by a senior officer, Mr Luke Gregory - no relation.

**Mr SWAIN** - No, Luke Murphy-Gregory. He is a hyphenated.

**Mr HIDDING** - There you go. Essentially it has commenced. It has had two meetings. No, the opening meeting, I hosted in my office but since then there may well have been -

**Mr SWAIN** - Two major meetings industry-wide and then a whole lot of individual ones with the individual stakeholders.

**Mr HIDDING** - Because you have the limousine type people, they have their own issues that they want to work through.

I must say that separately, the department has triggered a program to look at the wheelchair accessible taxis with the transition of services to NDIS. You will be aware of the concern from a lot of people with the new taxi system. We have just announced that we are extending that for another 12 months. The NDIS has still not completely covered the field in terms of transition. There is a separate process under way there because a lot of people bought these wheelchair accessible taxis with a certain thing in mind and payments for wheelchair pick-ups and the



department has a process under way with that sector, separately from that. They are very much inside the review as well, but there is a separate project under way for them because they are an important part of the structure and we need to ensure they are right.

**Mr SWAIN** - Of the 17 responses we have had to the discussion paper, there has been a lot of agreement to the objectives of the review, but there has also been a lot of acknowledgment that it is very complex. Some of the parties have indicated that they want a bit more time and we have put a recommendation along those lines to the minister which he has accepted. That means that we would also start to look at how well the transport commission exemption is working, the specific provisions and we started discussions with Uber just asking them for information which will enable me as transport commission to form some views around that. I guess, where you want to be in the review process and getting good engagement from both the existing taxi industry and Uber at this point.

**CHAIR** - Done?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - I have another one. Minister, the trial that you did with the west coast bus transport, where are we at with that?

**Mr HIDDING** - In April last year that commenced fulfilling the election commitment to allow better access to Burnie for residents of the west coast. It operates on Tuesdays and Fridays providing transport to the nearest major service centre for west coast residents with the opportunity for same day return travel. Following a request for a proposal process, Tassielink Transit was selected as the operator and in October 2016, the service was extended to Strahan in time for the 2016-17 tourist peak. The patronage numbers have steadily risen since the service extension to Strahan and may increase further given recent additions to complementary services between Burnie and Latrobe, and Burnie and the North West Regional Hospital. The initial contract term for the service expired on 12 April 2017. However, the department has entered into a further agreement with Tassielink Transit to extend the service until 31 December 2018 in order to enable these patronage effects to be properly considered. So, it is going right through to the end of next year, which is when a lot of other contracts around the place are coming up.

During the school summer holidays and tourist season, November 2016 to January 2017, passenger numbers increase to an average of 16 passengers per week, four passengers per trip, which includes passengers who utilise the extension to Strahan. We are hoping for more. We think there are. I know in the project 2018 process has identified that services have to provide surety as to what time they are going to arrive. On that particular service, as I understand it, it calls into -

**Ms Forrest** - It does via Zeehan sometimes, doesn't it?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, I think it drops into Waratah.

**A WITNESS** - It does have one or two by request.

**Mr HIDDING** - What happens is that you catch the bus. They say it is going to take X time and you should get to Burnie by 2 o'clock in time to catch the bus going on to Latrobe Hospital. Then somebody by request has rung up from Waratah and said, 'I would like you to come down and pick me up'. It is 28 kilometres. You are sitting on bus and you have to go an extra 28 kilometres

to pick one person up. Those kind of things have been identified as stopping people from getting on a bus just in case. You have no surety about what time you get there. Those are the sort of matters that are being worked through with a review with the local councils in the area, in this case, Waratah-Wynyard, but also the west coast further down. We would really like to see that service develop and we hope we can. I hope we can.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I understand the issue about the timeliness of arrivals and going via Zeehan into Waratah would definitely add to the length of the trip. However, coming down - and I presume it comes down the Ridgley Highway. One would assume -

**Mr Hidding** - No, we don't have that information here.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I assume it would. It wouldn't go through the Gorge, I wouldn't think. It goes down the Ridgley Highway. There is a number of turn-off points from the Ridgley Highway into Burnie. One of them effectively goes down past the hospital and there has been a number of times that people on the bus are going to the hospital, but the bus won't go that way. It goes down into town then they have to catch a link up to the hospital. If it added anything, it would be a minute or two to that trip, to go down Mooreville Road which is on the way and go around that way. It would be really helpful if you could look at that.

**Mr HIDDING** - We will.

**Ms FORREST** - In terms of going back past the hospital for pick-up because some people are going there, they don't know exactly how long they are going to be there. They don't want to go into town. They are going to the hospital and want to spend the maximum time there, so they are dropped off and then picked up. That wouldn't add - it is not 28 kilometres difference.

**Mr Hidding** - No, certainly not.

**Ms FORREST** - No, so, if you can look at that. My constituents would be very happy if you could look at that. But, it has been fairly well received. I did see the bus parked outside the Queenstown Railway Station where it parks and the banner on the front is 'Burnie 747'. They are landing 747s in Queenstown now. It was quite amusing.

**Mr VALENTINE** - With respect to the FTEs within the department dealing with this, how has that changed over the last couple of years in terms of numbers? Can you give me an idea as to what the departmental resources are?

**Mr SWAIN** - They have been fairly stable, so it might be up by one or two or down by one or two based on just the normal transition of staff, people losing jobs. But we have reallocated a bit, so we have taken - there is a couple of people on loan from the passenger transport branch that are working on Project 2018, but globally the numbers are substantially different.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Roughly an even number of resources being applied to this particular area.

**Mr HIDDING** - When you say area?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Public transport.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, passenger transport.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Passenger transport, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - There is a special project under way called Recontracting Project 2018. That has extra people involved in that because it is a massive project, a 10-year recontract of all the public -

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is over and above the FTEs you were just talking about?

**Mr SWAIN** - Yes, passenger transport is about 25, but we have a couple of dedicated projects that are involved in bus related matters as well. So it is not that easy to do an apple and apple comparison, to be honest.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Looking at the figures, it looks like it has dropped about 18 per cent for the appropriation to the end of the period forward estimates. Why is that?

**Mr SWAIN** - That will be budget initiative money that is coming to an end, some of the Project 2018 money. That is what that will be which has partially been spent and some has been carried forward into the next year.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The reason I ask that question, of course, is that passenger transport services are likely to be more and more required as we get an ageing demographic maybe.

**Mr HIDDING** - Certainly, but we want it to be. We have a plan to drive it up, yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I think to myself, if the amount of money is dropping, how are you going to achieve that? It is interesting you are talking about new contracts. Can you explain how those contracts are changing? What is different about the way you are recontracting? I know that you have spoken at a recent bus conference on this so you are probably well up on it and might like to share it with us.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a major initiative of my portfolio and I watch it very closely, indeed. There are some 400 separate contracts of school buses general access bus contracts which you get on a bus to go to New Norfolk, for instance. That is called a general access. In fact, a Metro service is general access as well. Any regular passenger transport that you pay to get on and most of them in the state have a degree of public funding. A complex arrangement of funding to update fleets - a payment model. After 10 years of them going to exactly the same place and exactly the same route, you would imagine that in many places people have moved out, kids have grown up, nobody on the school bus anymore. There has been a major review of school bus contracts and that is well in front of the others, the general access contracts. That has largely landed, but there is going to be a couple of areas where there is going to have to be a contest between, let's say, two or three providers in an area where we really only need two buses. All three will compete for it or one might leave early under a scheme I announced on Saturday which if somebody is thinking of leaving, in any event, they are able to have an early exit arrangement.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The way they earn their money, is it by passenger or by kilometres? What is it on these contract services?

**Mr HIDDING** - By contract, yes.

**Mr SWAIN** - It is different in each case. Some are top-up, some are gross funding of the cost of the bus, some are per kilometre. There is a number of different models and that is one.

**Mr HIDDING** - Ten years ago it was a complete dog's breakfast and the government back then had a major project to contract them all. But they were all contracted at sort of over a six or eight-month period which means they are all going to expire over a six or eight-month period and in terms of bus contracts, we have just agreed to bring them to a common close date which means some people get six to 11 months more on their contracts than they had before and it is a very common sense thing to let them all finish at the same time and allows them to swap contracts between themselves and things like that. There is a contract type called rural school bus. Funding is funded on a fixed payment basis, gross basis. The rural fare paying contract is funded on a patronage basis with top-ups with access to guaranteed minimum payment where patronage is agreed to be too low for the service to be financially viable. There is a whole range of different things with different models that are just suited to deliver that service to that area. They all need to be recontracted. Before the last election, we said that it was our view that all the operators were good competent operators and that we would agree for them to be the operators of the new service subject to the necessity of the service and the funding. In other words, it is fair that you can't just roll over an arrangement.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What about the age of buses? We were talking safety earlier. Is that something that you are stipulating in your contracts that the buses need to be of a certain age or how is that being handled?

**Mr SWAIN** - There is a huge opportunity for an efficiency gain here. We have 468 contacted services, multiple contracts per operator, about 150 operators. We would like to get the contracts down to something like 150, one per operator and simply the contracts, the key operative terms of the contracts and put the standard stuff, terms and conditions, on our website. We do want to see if we can provide some advice to the minister about is there any way to simplify the number of contracts and payment arrangements because we have operator feedback that that would be really welcomed.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You are talking about a common ticketing system with their services and say Metro?

**Mr HIDDING** - That is a separate issue, but we absolutely talk about a common ticketing system because buried into this Project 2018 arrangement is a commitment from all operators that they need to play when it is time to play because all the services are being modelled back into each other which is the west coast bus, for instance, shouldn't arrive 10 minutes after the bus leaves for Latrobe. Clearly, it has to go into there and the plan model is that somebody could fly into the Wynyard Airport and having gone on to the passenger transport website, booked bus transport around Tasmania. Sure, there would be a few waits here and there to go to Coles Bay for the right bus, but you can book the entire thing on a common ticketing system and fly back out of Hobart Airport, for instance.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Services like - I think of the east coast maybe where you have a Centrelink that might be in Sorell but is nowhere else on the coast, trying to link up services to suit their hours of operation, how?

**Mr HIDDING** - That is a great example because right now the bus out of Triabunna goes into Richmond because of a historic arrangement where kids were going to the Catholic school in

Richmond. The problem is we have year 11 and 12 students now between Triabunna and Sorell sharing services. The bus doesn't go to Sorell which is the centre of the south-east. It doesn't go there and so the new service has to go into Sorell. That means that it won't go on to Hobart over Grasstree Hill. It will go the normal way into the city. That is how these contracts are being managed to fix all the things that might have been okay 10 years, radically changed since.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, because a lot of people who are disadvantaged live out in those areas and they might not have vehicles and they rely on their friends to help them out.

### **2.5 Traffic management and engineering services -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will move onto the next output item and that is 2.5, traffic management and engineering services. Rob Armstrong.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Thanks, Chair. Hobart traffic which Rob was touching on the management of that, do you have anything that you have your management team looking at what they can do to manage Hobart traffic?

**Mr HIDDING** - There is \$1.8 million in this budget on top of previous budget allocations and ongoing works here. When we started on this project, we found there is absolutely no data. There was no understanding of where people in Hobart came from, where they were going, how long they stayed and where they went after they hit the city.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So, origin and destination stuff is what you are talking about.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, journey management is what Shane Gregory often talks about. But this \$1.8 million on this occasion is the beginning of a coordinated strategy to implement the best modern technology to help manage peak congestion in the Greater Hobart area. There is \$320 000 to start the process with common ticketing. We have declared passenger transport to be the solution, the most viable solution, to traffic congestion in Hobart. Common ticketing is a key part of it and it is major job, but we need to start on it and now we start that process. \$680 000 for wireless communication upgrades to Hobart traffic signals. This is data collection. We have done a deal of it already and it is extraordinary what we know now compared to what we didn't know before, but there is a lot more of it to go. Essentially, this is a data capture that Greg has passed in his vehicle and the bluetooth link between your vehicle and your phone has a certain signal.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It shuts his vehicle down!

**Ms FORREST** - Sends him back home again!

**Mr HIDDING** - And butts into his conversation.

**Ms FORREST** - And turns you around and says, 'Go home'!

**Mr HIDDING** - That is not identified. It is not identified, but each bluetooth signal has a slightly different identifier and then as he moves around Hobart, another one picks up there and picks up there and then after a period of time, you see this guy drives in from Tranmere and he parks in that parking station so he must live in that area. Or he goes out to North Hobart somewhere and we understand how and where he gets it. We are getting a huge amount of data there as well

and then there is also 800 000 - no, sorry, the wireless communications upgrade. You have explained the wireless communication because it is 800 for the bluetooth traffic information system.

**Mr GREGORY** - If I can, minister, a bit more about the bluetooth system. It is a system developed in South Australia by the road authority there. It doesn't just collect data about where vehicles are going. It lets you know the travel times and you can monitor on a real-time basis what is happening in terms of travel time reliability, average travel times, and reliability of that travel time on any corridor on any part of the network. We implemented this for the Brooker Highway Project. So, before we started construction, we put the system in place and we are measuring times between Berriedale Road and Derwent Park Road and we kept it in all through construction and monitored what was happening and the impact on traffic and now we are able to compare that all back to what was happening before. We have this real information.

**Ms FORREST** - Has it got better?

**Mr GREGORY** - We have had a 20 per cent decrease in travel times southbound in the morning peak and a 45 per cent decrease in northbound travel times in the afternoon peak. That is quite astonishing.

**Mr HIDDING** - You don't normally get that kind of -

**Mr GREGORY** - It wouldn't be expected, no.

**Mr HIDDING** - It shows what a problem there was there before, but it is working an absolute treat.

**Mr GREGORY** - But also the variability in that travel time has really tightened up, so instead of having big swings, it is much tighter. The system allows us to do all of that, get origin destination, what is happening on our network in real-time. In Adelaide, it is used to gather that data live and the system is self-learning and it starts to recognise when the travel times are changing and it flags to the traffic signal operators in the system that something is happening on, say, a main road and we can start to intervene quicker.

**Ms FORREST** - In terms of controlling the traffic lights or something?

**Mr GREGORY** - It basically provides better information. The SCATS system that manages the traffic signals gathers data from each individual site and then looks at what is happening at that site or between adjacent sites for coordination. But this system will allow us to have a whole network of what is happening and what is the impact of a vehicle broken down here and what is the flow-on impact through the system and how do we adjust. It will allow us to do that as well.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What, in terms of timing lights?

**Mr GREGORY** - In terms of knowing when we need to intervene and knowing sooner when we need to intervene, importantly, so we can implement pre-prepared response plans so we can switch on plan that changes a range of signals to get things moving in a smarter way. The next phase that is being rolled out in South Australia is then pushing that information back to motorists through an app. You can have an app on your phone and be driving along and it will tell you, 'Traffic is slow across the Tasman Bridge, there is a breakdown. I suggest you go the Brooker Highway'. Or, 'We have a breakdown on the Southern Outlet, suggest you look at Proctors Road'.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

They are pushing the information back to motorists now, so that is also what we will be looking to do.

**Ms FORREST** - But the app is not available here, though, are you saying?

**Mr GREGORY** - No, it will be. We need to get the system in place and let it start to learn what is normal in the system because it is a self-learning system. The other thing it will allow us to do, so in terms of general motorists, it is just collecting an anonymous bluetooth code so it doesn't know who.

**Ms FORREST** - It is not Big Brother. That was my next question.

**Mr GREGORY** - No, it is not Big Brother.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Where did you get the code from? Off the car?

**Mr GREGORY** - Your phone, if you get it, your car has a bluetooth signature attached to it.

**Mr HIDDING** - Many don't; they are just not in the system.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, I understand.

**Mr HIDDING** - The bluetooth connection has its own little signal that does it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - It is unique.

**Mr HIDDING** - No one knows what it is. It is just -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, yes, I know.

**Mr GREGORY** - But the other important thing it will allow us to do is to work, say, with bus operators in Metro and identify bluetooth transmitters so we can put bluetooth transmitters in buses and know that identity and we could monitor the reliability of bus services and times or potentially move to the point where buses going down a priority bus line are triggering a change in the signals to make sure they get a green light. That is the capacity that it gives us in terms of the bluetooth system. In terms of the other upgrades, by improving our communications around our network and doing some other hardware upgrades, we can layer some more adaptive technology over the top as well, so we can have those pre-prepared plans that when we lose a lane on the Tasman Bridge because of a breakdown or a crash, we can simply click on a plan or have the system itself activate that plan and change how the signals work to redirector traffic.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is pretty exciting work.

**Mr SWAIN** - The passenger transport stuff the minister was referring to before is enabled by this technology because it gives you the smarts to identify whether any bus prioritisation work that you have done is working. And if it is not, you can make adjustments and change it.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HIDDING** - That is where we are allowed to do bus priority measures because in key areas, the Glenorchy City Council, for instance, has responsibility for a main road and we were engaged with them in some bus priority measures that fell in a heap. I had better not go on about that because the commissioner is in the room as we speak.

**Ms FORREST** - I am sure she is on to it.

**Mr HIDDING** - But the Hobart City Council, of course, being the owner of the Macquarie and Davey couplet which joints our roads, we can do it there and there, but the two main roads -

**Mr VALENTINE** - It wasn't always that way.

**Mr HIDDING** - No. The two main roads, it is fair to say they have provided us with a little bit of space for clearways. There isn't any great enthusiasm for any more and that is part of a live and ongoing discussion.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - The Olinda Grove on the top of the Southern Outlet, what has happened there? Is that the completed part of that now? Is there any more work to do that? It seems to have fixed the issue that was there with the back-up of traffic into one of the lanes of the outlet.

**Mr HIDDING** - That Southern Outlet near the top of Mount Nelson is one of Tasmania's busiest roads, particularly in the morning peak and it essentially feeds all of the traffic from Kimbra and further south into Hobart. During the school terms, the traffic volume is increased by between 7 per cent and 10 per cent from school holidays and the difference is 7 per cent to 10 per cent. Given the large percentage of this is transporting students to schools in Mount Nelson, Sandy Bay and Hobart, the northbound slip lane at the crest of the outlet could no longer accommodate the volume of vehicles seeking access.

**Mr SWAIN** - It wasn't long enough.

**Mr HIDDING** - But there is a lot more about it than just transport inefficiencies. There was a serious safety risk due to the blind curve and the relentless pressure from other vehicles needing to use the left-hand lane to remain on the outlet and get down to Hobart. The department has been managing a project to construct a wider and longer dedicated left turning lane approximately 300 metres southwards earlier, clearing the inside of the curve to improve the sight distance for approaching motorists. The additional length and width of the off-ramp will improve the traffic efficiency by allowing exiting vehicles to queue safely out of the through traffic will allow those vehicles a greater sight distance to decelerate safely. The contractor was required to manage traffic at the Olinda Grove roundabout during the morning peak times, 7 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., to prevent traffic queuing onto the Southern Outlet while the roadworks were under way. This proved very effective at managing the through and turning traffic. A further initiative of the project was to ensure a continuous black screen was put in place for the length of the slip lane boundary to ensure driver distraction was minimised. You have to concentrate. The screen was installed on concrete barriers and the anti-gawk screen.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What?

**Mr HIDDING** - The anti-gawk screen, because people said, 'Oh, what's going on here?', and then start wandering all over the place. It was very successful in its purpose. There were also two major rock removals and these were completed at night during the school holidays to minimise the



impact on community traffic. The works have been completed for several weeks now and the pre-work speed settings have been reinstated. We funded this project out of the state's capital works program to a value of \$1.5 million and I commend the work of DCF Civil Tasmania Pty Ltd and the department's project management team.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - On some of these roads, what is the timeframe there? Do you have an update of where that is at? There is a big hole in the road there now.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is a big project. It is a very big project and it is fair to say that ordinarily the federal government would say, 'Well, that's over designs for that traffic counter at that place', but it is future proofed that for the next 20 years.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - I don't think it has future proofed it going into Hobart because you go back to one lane instead of having two lanes going onto the Southern Outlet.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, the design suggested it will work, but we will see.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - We will see.

**Mr HIDDING** - The intersection of Huon Highway with Summerleas Road is also a key access to residential, commercial and educational and sporting facilities at Kingston. A pretty unfortunate history of crashes and notably those related to right turning movements from Huon Highway to Summerleas Road and also cross-traffic out of Summerleas over the highway. Way too many crashes. That is why the Commonwealth Government has committed \$17.5 million and we have committed \$4.4 million to upgrade that intersection. The project will improve safety by creating a grade separated intersection. Roundabouts on Summerleas Road at either side of the Huon Highway will provide access to and from the highway. A flexible safety barrier to separate traffic on the Huon Highway and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians on Summerleas Road. VEC Shore Joint Venture was awarded the job and the current works are relocating services such as sewer, water and telecommunications and construction of a temporary road so that the main excavation for the lowering of Summerleas Road can commence. The construction works are forecast to be completed by mid-2018. So, there is a full construction season about to start on that project. We are very grateful to the civil contractors for minimising disruption for traffic and we thank all the travelling public for their forbearance.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - They have done a good job, the contractors. I travel on that road every day.

**Mr HIDDING** - Great.

**Mr VALENTINE** - With some of that, I don't recall hearing about park and ride as an option to get cars off the road and get people into town more efficiently to reduce the problem. Is that something -

**Mr HIDDING** - Park and ride was a thing for a while, but park and ride has had limited success in some areas. What we need to do is have buses that people want to get on and the reason they want to get on them is that they are going past motorcars on the road that are stuck in traffic.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I understand that - what do you call it - concept.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, but until you have buses getting into the city faster or as fast as cars, the park and ride has limited appeal.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I think of an area like Sorell and Midway Point. I go down there every Monday night and I am blown away at how much traffic there is backed up waiting to get through that Midway Point intersection. It is not much better in Sorell. If there was a proper facility for park and ride at that point and good regular bus services, it might be something that could be worth trying, especially if they are not paying for a car park at the other end.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. This is this recontracting of general access services. It has assessed population movements, how many people move in that area and the eventual outcome of that will be very responsive to the reality, so there will be more bus services. But then we need to focus on getting them into town quicker, then park and ride to start filling them up. So, we absolutely agree with what you are saying, but we have to get it in the right order.

**Mr GREGORY** - If I can add to that too. When you talk about it is better than people having to pay to park at the other end, one of our challenges is people don't have to pay or have to pay very little at the other end.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They park on the Domain.

**Mr HIDDING** - Or in Battery Point, outside people's residences.

**Mr GREGORY** - West Hobart, Battery Point, Fitzroy Gardens. I live in South Hobart and I can say in the last four or five years, the number of people parking in the South Hobart Village is noticeably increasing.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And then they ride in on the bike or they walk in.

**Mr GREGORY** - Or they walk.

**Ms FORREST** - It is not that far.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Which is probably not bad in terms of keeping the population healthy, but it doesn't do a lot for amenity out in South Hobart.

**Mr GREGORY** - That is happening in South Hobart. That is happening in West Hobart. It is happening Sandy Bay and Battery Point and North Hobart. It is happening a lot and those cars still have to get into the city on the key arterial works. And they still have to get out of the city. So, while that bit of walking at the end might be great, it is still putting a load on the traffic coming into the city. Through the work we have done, about three quarters of all the traffic coming off the Southern Outlet, Tasman Highway and Brooker Highway goes into the CBD into the Hobart municipality.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The municipality, yes.

**Mr GREGORY** - That is really a key problem for us and even those people who pay for parking, aren't paying very much.

**Ms FORREST** - I can see a revenue raising opportunity there.

**Mr GREGORY** - Park and ride has to be thought of as a system and it is not about having a car park at this end. It is about having a system where you can park your car and get on a bus that gets you into the city quickly and provides you with a significant advantage over the alternative and while we have really cheap parking or free parking, it is very hard to do that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is right.

**Mr GREGORY** - We also need to identify those bus priority measures, how we get those buses in much quicker.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have a plan on all those matters and we are progressing it on every front we can, including the councils and including park and ride.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is what you are doing. With these fixed cameras that are on the highway, do you employ them for any reason?

**Mr HIDDING** - We don't pay them money!

**Mr VALENTINE** - I should have asked this when the police were around, unregistered vehicles, uninsured vehicles, potentially unlicensed drivers, those sorts of things, are those cameras being used to pick up some of that or not?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, they are straight speed cameras.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They are not reading number plates.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, but there is no reason why they couldn't be back-fitted with another box on them for ANPR. But it blows me away. Everybody knows where they are -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, but they still speed.

**Mr HIDDING** - They know they are on the bridge, but they still speed.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I guess the question is when you were talking about origin/destination surveys and this bluetooth technology or whatever, do they have the capacity to pick up number plates so you can do your O and D properly? Are you saying it is a signature on the bluetooth?

**Ms FORREST** - He said it wasn't -

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is completely anonymous.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, it is anonymous.

**Mr HIDDING** - Nobody knows what kind of car it is attached to or whether it is a truck or a car. It is simply -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Council car parks read the number plates. You are not working in with them.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am not. That is a police matter. ANPR.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, police matter.

**Mr GREGORY** - We did use video capture for some supplementary work we did around our origin/destination work last year. We bought a set that needed some more granularity so we put out a lot of cameras and that was done. It wasn't done through ANPR, but it was done through video analysis.

**Mr VALENTINE** - LED traffic lights, how is the roll out of that going across the state as opposed to the old fashioned ones with incandescent light?

**Mr GREGORY** - We had a project three or four years ago that wrapped up three or four years and that was to convert 70 per cent of the existing signals to extra low voltage LED and that's been completed for a while. All new signals now have extra low voltage LED and we will progressively wrap up the other 30 per cent, but we'll do that as part of other upgrades. So when we need to go in and do an upgrade of a controller or just generally do an upgrade to improve the capability of the signals, we'll convert to LED then.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And final question just on, there's technology around that measures the weight of vehicles in motion. Are you employing that anywhere across the state?

**Mr GREGORY** - We have five of those sites on our key freight network.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is that for purpose of making sure there aren't any overweight vehicles going over certain structures, or is it more to do with policing -

**Mr GREGORY** - No, it's to do with data collection and understanding, or what are the key freight movements and so it's part of that data collection and where freight is going and what type of vehicles are out there. So the weigh-in motion systems essentially have a different way of capturing the class of truck that's going over, so out of that we can find out how many equivalent standard axles, how B-Doubles, how many standard semi-trailers, and so on, and so it's a data collection.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And some idea of length of vehicle, I suppose -

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes, it ties it back into the AusRoads vehicle clarification system so that tells you the sort of the length of the vehicle and we use them for that. There is some technology that is being rolled out, has been used in Canada and used in one site I believe in New South Wales that does use some newer weigh-in motion technology to screen trucks, and when they fall within a certain range of load limit they are then directed off into a low speed measuring system, so it's a completely automated system that directs a truck, 'Well, you're in that zone. We think you're worthy of having a closer look at. Come into the weighing station. Drive through here at 20 kilometres an hour', and then can automatically issue a ticket or let them go. So you're not pulling every truck out of the stream to weight it. You are pulling those that fall within the zone.

Now, that's pretty new technology and we having a look at that, particularly as part of the Midland Highway Upgrade Strategy.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Fair enough. Thank you, minister.

**Output group 6**

**6.1 Shipping and Ferry Subsidies -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We will move on to 6.1, Shipping and Ferry Subsidies, and this is the one, a bit over \$1 million subsidy for the three shipping areas. Is this funding used or is it just a contingency?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a contingency and certainly used initially, the need to sign SeaRoad up with that emergency service that they did, but yes, it is a contingency fund.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So was it totally expended this year?

**Mr HIDDING** - I suspect it would have been because of - probably well and truly. Yes, so the net cost of the SeaRoad solution for that emergency period was \$864 915, so.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So it didn't offload all of it.

**Mr HIDDING** - No.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - But was a bit over \$1 million, yes, all right.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So Bruny Island Ferry Service and Flinders Island didn't require any assistance this year?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, Bruny Island and -

**Mr SWAIN** - Bruny is different. Bruny is an ongoing operational subsidy as opposed to the others' particular contingencies.

**Mr HIDDING** - That's \$600 000 a year. That's not in that \$1 million.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - It was unavailable and all boats were unavailable. There are two now, isn't there, Bruny Island?

**Mr HIDDING** - No. Bruny Island gets a subsidy of around \$600 000 a year every year.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes, but that's not in this line item?

**Mr HIDDING** - No.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Maria?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - No, it's not in that second part.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No? Not part of that?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - That's private business, is it? Yes. All right, we'll move to 6.2, Metropolitan General Access Services.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sorry, could I just mention something. Bruny certainly -

**Mr SWAIN** - Bruny is in Output 6.1.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - That is what I thought.

**Mr HIDDING** - But it's not part of that million.

**Mr SWAIN** - No, it's separate to the million. It is 640 on top of the -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes, so did Bruny Island need any of that funding?

**Mr HIDDING** - No.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Did any of them require any more than its usual subsidy?

**Mr HIDDING** - It's a separate line item for Bruny.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr SWAIN** - It is a contracted amount that sits at 640, and there's an arrangement to access the second ferry, the *Bowen* and the *Mirambeena* with top-up payments if certain thresholds are exceeded, yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - On this line item?

**Mr SWAIN** - Yes, from this line item.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - And it hasn't been accessed for Bruny Island this year?

**Mr SWAIN** - No.

### 6.2 Metropolitan and General Access -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Or last year. All right. So on 6.2, Metropolitan and General Access.

**Mr FARRELL** - With respect, Deputy Chair, these two items, 6.2 and 6.3, were covered rather in depth.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Extensively?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, extensively by Mr Valentine and yourself during the passenger transport area, and the questions that -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So are you sooking, are you?

**Mr FARRELL** - No, I'm okay with it, but I'm happy to go over it again, but -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - No, I'll call you off if you do that.

**Mr FARRELL** - We did spend quite a bit of time, and maybe we should wrap them up into a more concise output.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Sorry.

**Mr FARRELL** - No, that's all right. It's okay.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So do you have any questions?

**Mr FARRELL** - I don't have any further questions. Maybe whether there are any plans to trial free bus services in the metropolitan area at any time in the future?

**Mr HIDDING** - Not at this stage. We have had a growth in boardings in Hobart. We want to achieve the same in Launceston and in Devonport and Burnie. Launceston has a separate review under way. That is still in the consultation phase. Devonport and Burnie are part of Project 2018 where specialist consultants have been brought in to that. They have a high level consultation process, and that should be landed by the end of the year as to what goes forward under the new contract.

**Mr FARRELL** - And there was a lot of things discussed on Sunday at the Bus Conference that I'm probably aware of.

**Mr HIDDING** - So you don't need to hear them.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - All right. Can we move -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can I ask a couple?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes, 6.3?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Sorry, 6.3 or 2?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Sorry, 6.2 we're on, sorry.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I was going to say, I thought I'd missed something.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I was trying to scare you.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In this appropriation, can you provide information with regard to the break-up between Metro and private providers of Metropolitan Access Services?

**Mr HIDDING** - Metro Tasmania has three contracts, Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, I realise that, but -

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HIDDING** - And Merseylink has Devonport.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So it's only Merseylink that's part of that. If you can give me the Mersey link figure that will do.

**Mr HIDDING** - We haven't got them at this stage, so we would have to -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can you provide them?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you. Does it also include appropriations for the provision of private student only bus services that operate within urban areas alongside Metro, and as it is Merseylink as you were saying?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, it doesn't cover schools and there are two - there's Mersey Bus & Coach, Devonport, and Manions Coaches, I'm sorry that's added into the Launceston Road because Legana is seen as a metropolitan service. It's not that far away.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So you'll give us a split-up with Merseylink, Manions and Metro?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That would be good. And the percentage increase in appropriation applied to Metro and the private operators is the same is it? So, in other words, percentage increase you've given to Metro in the appropriation, is that the same for the private services?

**Mr HIDDING** - Metro's co-location may well be a little different because they get around \$40 million every year just before they start, and then there was \$2 million to \$3 million a year for new buses. However, they have just signed a contract for 100 new buses and the Government has provided them a deal of money upfront which means that that doesn't have to be -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So that confuses it a little bit.

**Mr HIDDING** - It does.

**Mr SWAIN** - Yes, so it was \$3.25 million which has been converted into equity in connection with that 100 bus -

**Mr HIDDING** - Basically gave them three years' funding upfront in order to -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So the appropriation has been given for just the general services, and the appropriation has been given to the other operators. The increase in that component, is that the same for private enterprise as it is for -

**Mr SWAIN** - Metro and Mersey are indexing at the same level.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Are they?

**Mr SWAIN** - Yes.



**Mr VALENTINE** - And Manions?

**A WITNESS** - I can't testify to whether it's exactly the same index but it would be based on-

**Mr HIDDING** - It certainly is index A, just private bus. So we think it might be the same index, but it is indexed.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So what is it that makes up that index? What are the factors you're taking into account?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, I invite Ms Babette Moate, Manager Passenger Transport, to the table.

**Ms CONWAY** - The index that we used to increase the payments under the urban contracts is a common one to the major urban providers and that index includes provision for fuel which is a significant component. It includes wages. It also includes some other repair and maintenance cost factors. So it takes into account the major cost drivers of operating a bus service.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And it's basically applied to all providers including Metro?

**Ms CONWAY** - It's applied the Metropolitan General Access Services. It is a specific index that applies to those types of operations where the contracts are funded on a service kilometre basis.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The only other question is to do with projections for passenger numbers. Do you have any figures on that?

**Mr HIDDING** - Certainly, as I said, as a result of a review of the Hobart service, there's an increase in first boardings.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do we know to what extent? Can you give us a table later? It doesn't have to be now.

**Mr HIDDING** - We can provide that later. The Metro review in Launceston is designed to try to get the same lift. It might not be the case but certainly more direct services that don't do that, again people want to get to where they're going, and regular services turn up and go basically. They want more of those. That will drive the increase in Launceston, I'm sure, when that's finally implemented, and it will be the same in the two other cities. So we are - everything we're doing is to get more people on buses. The answer to congestion is passenger transport and we've got to make it a good enough deal for them to get on the bus.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I understand that. So if you can give us the passenger projections at some stage.

**Mr SWAIN** - It's 3 per cent but we'll just need to confirm that - 3.1 per cent.

**Mr VALENTINE** - All right, so that's moving from the base of -

**Mr SWAIN** - So that's percentage - I don't have the base.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Just a 3.1 per cent increase over the last -

**Mr HIDDING** - So they're sort of, Metro contract, that's probably for November GBES.

**Mr SWAIN** - So in the 12 months following implementation of the network Metro experienced passenger increase of 3.1 per cent among adult passengers and 6.7 per cent among concessions passengers compared to the previous year. So very strong growth.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thank you for that. That will be fine.

### **6.3 Rural and special needs school bus services -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We will move on to 6.3, Rural and Special Needs School Bus Services. Craig, did you have anything else on that one?

**Mr FARRELL** - In regard to the special needs buses, there was some concern hanging off the NDIS and that's -

**Mr HIDDING** - I announced on Saturday to the Bus Conference that there are 16 of these special needs buses, bus contracts, and that we hold substantial concerns that NDIS will not be able to transition those clients to something else other than a bus in a way that provides them a service as good. We bear in mind that not only are these bus services, there is also substantial allocation from Education for aides to come on the buses with some of these people with special needs, and so it's a whole structure, and NDIS, we are not, in my view, in a position to take anything over in time in January 2018, six months from now, it looks highly improbable.

So we have written to them and suggested that they agree to us continuing to do it and give us the credit for doing it as well, because you can't pay and keep doing it. That is completely unsustainable, and we have reason to believe that they would accept that proposition happily. Well, reason to believe that they would accept that proposition and we would be doing this on a year by year basis for no longer than five years. In other words, it would still be our intention that, because it's the overall NDIS thing is that they take over all these services, but for now until they work out a way to do it, we would prefer to keep doing it, and so that has provided some contract certainty to the 16 owners, should NDIA, the agency, agree to this, so we have written and we are confident of a good outcome.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So you're waiting a response, you're saying?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - That's all, Craig?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you have a break-down on that appropriation for rural school bus services and special needs school bus services under that item?

**Mr SWAIN** - Special needs is \$1.3 million so it's \$1.3 million off the total.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr VALENTINE** - All right, and projection for bus, for passenger numbers into the future. Have you got any projections for that, using the services, the rural school services and then, I suppose, special needs services, but you - that's going out to NDIS?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, special needs, we want to carve that out. We know there's 16 contracts required to do that because it's working a treat and we want it to keep working a treat. So the rural school bus services are part of the recontracting right now, and because of the movement of population around the place, it's fair to say that there are some school buses running around and we are paying them a lot of money to carry very few kids.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Two or three kids.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is just the way it is. That is the nature of a contract, and so when that, it wouldn't be down two or three, incidentally. It is a different process for that, but still, that process is essentially complete and contract offers will be going out in the next three to six months in plenty of time, and now of course we are extending them all to a common expiry date, but we have committed to letting them know very early what the outcomes are because some will need to buy new buses, some might need to sell a bus.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Buy a smaller bus.

**Mr HIDDING** - Could do, and so on Saturday when we outlined our plan to them, I did that night hear that the school bus operators were pretty warm about that whole idea.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So the number of services being provided, is that dropping or rising? Again, you have to finish so you can -

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, you have to finish the process. There may be one or two buses fewer, but the same number of kids have to be carried out and if it's done more efficiently so that you have half a dozen buses fewer, then that's a good efficiency gain.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - As long as the kids are still getting to school.

**Mr HIDDING** - Exactly. Nobody is looking for savings here. We are just looking to put the buses where the kids are.

**Mr VALENTINE** - To provide the service.

**Mr HIDDING** - Where the kids are. You don't want buses that are over full with kids standing and you don't want to run a bus with no one on it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So the Estimates going forward then, then has to be fairly much of a guess, isn't it?

**Mr HIDDING** - It starts from a neutral basis, this is what is available for school transport. Let's see where they are, and where the kids are.

**Mr VALENTINE** - We will ask next year about how the contracts have gone.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - All right. Thank you.

**6.4 Non-metropolitan general access services -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We will move on to 6.4, Non-Metropolitan General Access Services, Rob.

**Mr HIDDING** - This is like the Strahan-Queenstown-Strahan service.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - This line item?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, these are the non-metropolitan general access services.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Why is there a \$200 000 funding increase for this output group in 2017-18 and 2018-19 when compared to last year's estimates?

**Mr HIDDING** - We made a commitment during this year that Sheffield-Kentish will get its first bus service, and so there's two lots of 200 in there, because under the General Access review they will have a bus service that comes out of that process. So rather than making them wait two years, we are going to give them a service earlier. The funding for that is in this coming year, but there's a full procurement process to take place and we are going to be working at it very hard to get that service up and running efficiently.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The previous couple of output groups said increases of around 12.5 per cent. Why isn't that increase in here? Is there a reason? Especially given the project 2018 aimed to deliver improved services, non-metropolitan services.

**Mr SWAIN** - Sorry, where are you? I am not sure where you are getting those increases from on the other outputs.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is 12.55 per cent increase and appropriation for the previous two outlet groups, 6.2 and 6.3, between 2016 estimates and 2017-18 Estimates you will find -

**Mr SWAIN** - 6.2 is \$39 million going to \$40 million, so that's roughly a 2.5 per cent difference.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, just hang on, 6.2. From 2016-17 Estimates?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Budget, you mean?

**Mr VALENTINE** - With the 2016-17, last year's papers, right, is 3757 compared to 3907, and 2018-19 is - yes, so if you work that percentage out you have increased it by about 12.5 per cent I believe.

**Mr HIDDING** - We would have to do some analysis of that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, but there's nothing in there -

**Mr HIDDING** - I can't quite get my head around that, but we are happy to have a look at that.

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**Mr SWAIN** - The only other thing that I am just wondering about is whether some of those patronage increase numbers have been picked up particularly in the GA service and it's sort of been indexed off demand as well as inflation, so we can look at that more closely.

**Mr VALENTINE** - All right, thank you.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So the west coast service fits in under this - is this where this is funded through, the west coast one?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes, all right, Rob.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And projections for passenger numbers for these services?

**Mr HIDDING** - This is a whole recontract, so except for ones like that west coast one, that's a fairly new service, but that will still need to be - have a five plus five contract applied to it, yes. So there are new services and new levels of services and different levels of services all around Tasmania. We are starting with a neutral position and we are going to need more bus services somewhere and fewer in a few places as well.

**Mr SWAIN** - It is very hard, as you identified, because we are changing the mix of services between school and GA and we're also -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So the first year of operation in the new contracts is going to be pretty well a base thing that you will work off into the future.

**Mr SWAIN** - Yes, so the services have been starting off with some design principles about better state of routes, meeting identified demand, considerations, and then the whole consultation of the industry and the community will lead to an end set of services that really looks quite different to this that we have now.

**Mr HIDDING** - What we do know from the Hobart review, after many years of not being reviewed, an immediate uplift in first boardings, we believe from the general access as well, right around Tasmania. When you get buses - when you put buses where people want them and where they want to go, unremarkably they get on them and so we will see more people using public transport.

**Mr SWAIN** - And this does bring it back to the congestion measures for the metropolitan areas because, just linking it back to the member's earlier question, the key performance area for the buses will be travel reliability, so whether they have an advantage over vehicles, other vehicles. So we have a few changes going on here as well as service mix. We also have some bus prioritisation work going on out of congestion.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can we look at the administered expenses? Page 287.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We are going to that now. That is under Grants and Subsidies so we're going there in a minute.

**Mr VALENTINE** - When you're ready.

**Grants and subsidies -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes. No other questions on that line? We will go to Grants and Subsidies. Off you go.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes, all right, so student only passenger service -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Get on the bus.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Student only passenger services, can you provide a break-down between the appropriation for urban fringe student only services, which bring in lots into the urban areas each day, town-based student services which operate in a number of rural towns, and any other services operating in Tasmania so we can get a bit of an idea on that? Can you provide that break-down?

**Mr HIDDING** - We don't have that. Can we provide it later? Would that be available? It is a pretty complicated process.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I understand. But you don't have that?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, it is not down to that level of break-up.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can you advise why this component of support for bus services in Tasmania is provided under the appropriation for administered items but not as an output grouping as is the case for other funding for bus services?

**Mr SWAIN** - It is historical.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is historical?

**Mr SWAIN** - When I came into this job two years ago I explored that at some length and the conclusion I got to was, it is historical.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So there's no good reason for doing it?

**Mr SWAIN** - There may have been some thinking at a point in time, but I don't know why that one is separated out from the other services in that way.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Maybe something you might revisit at some stage to see whether history is still relevant, minister.

**Mr HIDDING** - Exactly.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can you advise what projections the department has for passenger numbers using - we have already dealt with that, sorry.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So on Grants and Subsidies, West Coast Wilderness Railway, minister, there's no money in the forward Estimates from 2018-19 onwards. It is a really important asset for the west coast. I would just like to know what the intention is.

**Mr HIDDING** - Given some unfortunate coverage in *The Advocate* was due to an error by the poor journo, there is some concern in that area, but it is misplaced. The fact is, the West Coast Wilderness Railway has a very strong future. We are committed to it being, remaining a key attractor for the West Coast. We are making it much more successful than it was before. We are driving the business hard and there is \$4.5 million in this coming budget after which they will have some \$8.5 million in cash holdings; in the next year some \$10.5 million. So they don't need that much, and we will work out a schedule going forward, but you can rest assured that there will be whatever West Coast Wilderness needs and we want to drive it down to a sustainable model so at a time when, say, budget is tough, we don't want anybody looking at it and, 'Oh, hang on, that railway costs us X amount of money'. We want to bring it down to a level where it's protected, but it will always be in the tune of millions and we're all right with that because the west coast needs that kind of attractor and that's a wonderful -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - It is an asset, world-renowned.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is an astonishing asset, and so to give a bit of a clue as to our commitment to this, there's been operational grants made available each of our four years in office totalling \$18.5 million. There is \$4.5 million in this year, not \$450 000 as was incorrectly reported. West Coast Wilderness Railway is booming with rapidly increasing passenger numbers and revenue. Passengers increased by 21 per cent in the nine months to March 31 this year compared to the same period in 2015-16. Passenger numbers are projected to increase by 75 per cent from 31 800 in the current year to 55 500 in 2020-21. That is a big job, but we want to get there.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I must say it was used amazingly during The Unconformity where there was a live theatre on it called *Dark Water*. It was absolutely fascinating. It was late at night on the train, and you didn't know where you were going. I had a fair idea where we were going, but and you got off the train and the performance continued. You were taken up to a mine shaft in a bus, and everyone was standing on the train, it was just going along the tracks, late at night. It was fascinating.

**Mr HIDDING** - What I love about the service, and I direct any international visitor I can to it, is the people. The people who run that service genuinely love their job. They speak beautifully about the experience and we're looking at doubling revenue. We have forecast double revenue within four years.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So in terms of an operator taking it over, because there's still that concern in the town that Tracks Café is competing with local business. So how are you going with that in terms of getting a private operator to take it over?

**Mr HIDDING** - You mean take over the café?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - No, the whole business.

**Mr HIDDING** - Look, it's off the table for now. We believe it's best future for now, immediate future is for us, because we are driving the business upwards, a private operator would be constrained by, we could agree to pay them some millions but it wouldn't have the same - would be unlikely to meet the kind of targets we're setting ourselves for this. We have very dynamic management and the Department of State Growth works very strongly with them to get there. A very safe operation and investing what is required in the track. It is, I am informed by those in the

know, the benchmark for the tourist and heritage rail in Australia, in fact the national regulator is essentially saying to people around Australia, 'What would it take to set up a small tourist railway', they say, 'Get on a plane and go down to between Strahan and Queenstown. That is the model. That is the standard. It has to be at that level'. We have to put millions into that track. The problem with selling the business or handing it on to someone else is you have that same issue when we did that before with our railway. We sold holus bolus off to a company and then frankly, we have had to suffer for, you now, 10 years to rebuild the business because they let it run down.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So are you intending to keep Tracks Café as well as part of that?

**Mr HIDDING** - I haven't bent my mind to that but I was aware of an issues of concern when - seriously as part of the attraction it needs a good café. It was identified very early as a key thing.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - And the upgrade is good.

**Mr HIDDING** - But I will give that under advice perhaps, and have a conversation with you about the future on that, but I have no plans for now but I am happy to have a discussion about that.

**Mr FARRELL** - With the railway line, I did hear the general manager talking the other day in the media about restoration of a fourth locomotive that would cost possibly \$1 million to \$2 million to rebuild. Is that something that the Wilderness Railway would fund or would that be a budget allocation in the future?

**Mr HIDDING** - They could fund it, but to my knowledge I do not think that is in our forward business plan or in our corporate plan, but however, if the general manager thinks that is a good thing to do and it works out for business reasons, absolutely happy to look at it of course. There is one available at Glenorchy.

**Mr FARRELL** - I wasn't really sure how far that had gone, whether that was policy of either the government or the railway or whether it was just a wish.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is that latter, but I am sure the general manager is aware that he can discuss it with me at any time.

### **Capital investment program -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Anything else on grants and subsidies? We move to capital investment program. I think the majority of these things have been covered. It has been covered previously.

Minister, you did mention earlier, in your opening comments, the Bridge Renewal Program, so are there specific bridges that are being looked at in this process and which ones are they?

**Mr HIDDING** - There is a list of bridges that are providing challenges to us, and there is work under way now, now that the money is available, to prioritise, not just which bridges but in the order in which they are done, and naturally we want to do those that have the most immediate value to the state's economy by improving transport options. Mr Gregory can probably expand on that a little more.

**Mr GREGORY** - We identified a bit over 30 bridges and they were around the key freight routes, so Midland Highway, Bass Highway, Lower Highway, there are some that are off that main



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network, but they are predominantly on the key freight routes. Some on Bridport Road. So that was through an initial screening.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Where is there a bridge on Bridport Road?

**Mr GREGORY** - What we class as structures is everything from a large culvert through to what people would traditionally look at as a bridge. So most of our major highways have some of these bridges on them and we are working through - the list we came up with an initial screening and now we go back and verify all of those. I would anticipate over this next four years of the program, some bridges that we thought we might have to upgrade we won't. There will be others that we will change. It will move around a bit, but what we will be looking to do is ensure that we address bridges on a corridor as much as we can, so we can get that corridor upgraded. So it's really about freight efficiency improvement.

We have some corridors, say for example the Lower Highway. We have a couple of bridges that need some work done on them, and at the moment it means that the salmon industry can't fully load their trucks and so there is a fairly quick and immediate efficiency gain in there, so that is what we are going to be targeting.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So once this program finishes in a couple of years, there are still bridges that are going to need to be upgraded and that sort of thing, so how will that be managed?

**Mr GREGORY** - We run through our maintenance allocation, so within the budget papers there's a sort of mid-sixties million dollar maintenance allocation. That covers a range of maintenance activities including our bridge -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So it comes under the infrastructure maintenance -

**Mr GREGORY** - Infrastructure maintenance. So that is our normal program. This program is really about addressing the efficiency gains with the larger more productive vehicles, the greater implementation of the PBS based standards for trucks that, with this investment, we can get to the paradigm shift, a quantum leap in freight efficiency and then we will be able to just continue our normal maintenance and upgrade program which we will continue in parallel to this piece of work.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I do not know whether the member for Western Tiers is interested in this, but the Highland Lakes Road - I reckon the member for Derwent might be interested now when the redistribution occurs.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have discussed that earlier, Highland Lake.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - And the sealing of it.

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I must have missed that. Any other questions on the Capital Investment Program.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes. We will go to Craig first.

**Mr FARRELL** - On page 13 of budget paper 1 the infrastructure investment has a general provision of \$335 million that has been set aside by the Government to be allocated to future infrastructure investment projects, or used to provide capacity to meet cost variation and the impact of rescheduling of projects and a separate provision of \$120 million has been included for future Australian government roads funding. What does that encompass, the \$335 million?

**Mr HIDDING** - In every budget that I have been involved in this place for the last 20 years, there has been an unallocated capital amount. There has to be. It is just seen as prudent because for instance, when we do planning for a major job, say \$30 million, you could come in at \$40 million frankly, because you wouldn't ordinarily be that wide apart, but best endeavours at that stage, when you go to market, you find something different and so you cannot have the whole thing fall over because of that. So it is a standard provision and so for emergency works and emerging issues.

**Mr SWAIN** - To add to the minister, the budget paper 1 does note that there will be some consideration of a Roads for Our Future Program Stage 2 and that is a potential funding source for that, and in addition it is a potential funding source for additional funding for Bridgewater bridge should that be -

**Mr FARRELL** - So there is normally that sort of size provision?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, particularly when you have Bridgewater bridge you notice there is a line item in there, but there is no allocation because it has to match with the federal government funding but if they suspected we had no money for a share, they would just go quiet on us and go 'Oh, well you are not there'. But we are there. So 'There we are so now -

**Mr FARRELL** - So that just sits in the bank until then?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a provision within the system.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So when you look at last year's budget papers and you look at this year's budget papers, there has been a very significant increase in the appropriation for this particular output group, and if you look at 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, the actual increase in appropriation is 658 per cent greater than last year. So when you look at last year's forward Estimates and you look at this year's forward Estimates, there has been a huge increase - and I can see the projects. The real issue is there has been no change to the cost of asset management. So we are adding a heap of work in but the asset management is not going up, although it might go up - I will be talking to the end of the estimates period in any event.

I can give you a copy of the projects that we are talking about, but basically are you able to highlight the differences from the 2016-17 projections and the arguments supporting what appears to be the bringing forward of numerous capital works across the state? That is the first question. I will give you that for reference. It is the ones that are in yellow on there. So basically, looking at those. The ones bring brought forward.

**Mr HIDDING** - The fact is we are doing these because we can, and because it is the right thing to do. So Bass Highway, Wynyard. We have spoken about that. It is the right thing to do. It is urgent. It would have been done last year if we were able to.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr VALENTINE** - If it was in last year's. It wasn't in last years.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Community Engagement Process.

**Mr HIDDING** - There was a federal election that took place.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Oh, that as well.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is new money. Okay.

**Mr HIDDING** - So Bridport western access was also a federal election commitment that we have to step up and deliver it and make a contribution to. Freight access bridge upgrades - as we have said, we have made the commitment for very good reasons. This is an economy builder. That is what infrastructure should do. It should build the economy. Grants to local government, new project work \$9 million over the forward Estimates.

**Mr GREGORY** - There are a range of federal election commitments that are going - the state is the conduit for that money to flow from the Commonwealth, so some bridges for Brighton Council, Tasman, Sorell Council.

**Mr HIDDING** - Industry Road at George Town. Nikolic promised money for that. That comes through us. Most of these so far are related to the federal election.

**Mr VALENTINE** - As a result of the federal election. Thank You. Highland Lakes Road?

**Mr HIDDING** - Also federal election, yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And the Hobart Airport roundabout was federal election as well?

**Mr HIDDING** - Federal election, yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The other four, Midland Highway spending?

**Mr HIDDING** - That was \$60 million over the estimate.

**Mr GREGORY** - We were able to negotiate with the Commonwealth to bring forward money, so it allowed us to roll straight in to the -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So there wasn't a lag and therefore more efficient to use the equipment that's out there on the road?

**Mr HIDDING** - We think we will deliver this project in the eighth year rather than the tenth with the whole thing.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Mowbray connector?

**Mr HIDDING** - Mowbray connector, new commitment in this budget. We have been working with the Launceston City Council for some time, crash record, had to be done.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The CC we have talked about. The Hobart real time traffic congestion?

**Mr HIDDING** - Spoken about that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - And the road safety and traffic management.

**Mr HIDDING** - Then road safety traffic management.

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes, that picks up the extension of the road safety levy.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The next question is, there have been quite a few that have had carry-overs indicating that the works had been undertaken in a slower process. So are you able to outline what action has been taken to make sure the more ambitious programs now have. There's a heck of a lot of it, \$438 million or whatever it is, is going to be able to be achieved with the resourcing and I guess the third party services that are out there.

**Mr GREGORY** - It is incorrect to assume the works have been delivered slower. There is a note in the budget papers that talks about the basis of the numbers and the numbers are developed using the Australian government's best practice cost estimating standard which is a risk based process and it builds a contingency into the number. So all of the numbers that we develop and we provide to the government in terms of projects are P50 numbers which is a number with contingency built in that gives you a 50 per cent probability of delivering the project at or below that number, and then we manage the program to some of the P50s and statistically it all balances out.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So it is not a lack of service providers or anything like that?

**Mr GREGORY** - In fact, no. So we have been delivering, the projects have been rolling along. Occasionally something might get caught up in planning or we get some weather issues, but most of the projects we have under way we would expect perhaps to be finished a little bit earlier than we might anticipate so we build some contingency into the timeframes that we discuss as well. One of the things we have been seeing is a very, very competitive market. So some of what might be considered to be things are not getting done, is in fact that things are getting done but it is being done cheaper than we expected. We moved from schedule rates contracting which was AS standard and we have moved to lump sum contracts and we anticipated that would see some increase in price as risk transferred. That has not occurred, and we are seeing very, very competitive pricing. So that is really the factor.

To date we have not really had anything delayed. We have a project at the moment that we will need to appeal a planning decision so there might be some delays with that, but generally speaking things are rolling out. The construction industry still seems to have capacity. We know there are at least a couple of players in the Tasmanian industry who are still fairly keen for work. There is no indication -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So not presently engaged in other work or are looking at forward -

**Mr GREGORY** - Or just looking to what is coming next. And the other aspect of that is the Midland Highway projects are a bit bigger and we are gaining efficiencies out of that as well. So we wouldn't have sought to bring forward the Perth links if we thought the industry was at capacity, and any capacity constraint is probably going to be more around consulting than construction. So we are finding the key players who are doing a fair bit of work for us now are still bidding very keenly.

**Mr HIDDING** - Which is great for the people of Tasmania and we are getting great value.

**Mr VALENTINE** - At the end of the day, we are getting infrastructure which has to be positive but it is interesting to hear that a lot of it is just as a result of the federals.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you, minister. We will move on. Thank you to your team and everyone for answering questions. We have not a lot on notice but we will send that through to you and thank you for your time.

### **DIVISION**

(Marine and Safety Tasmania)

### **Marine and Safety Tasmania -**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We will get you to introduce the new people at the table for those who might not know them.

**Mr HIDDING** - For Hansard, on my left, Lea Morris, who is the CEO of MAST, Marine and Safety Tasmania. On my right is Ms Sue Smith, the Chair of the MAST Board.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Did you want to make any opening comments?

**Mr HIDDING** - No.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - No, we will defer to the great authority.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am not sure why the Chair has been invited so you are welcome to ask questions.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I will hand you to Mr Gaffney because he has the lead on this item.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - We have some information for Hansard, for people listening and reading, they need to ask some questions about some past projects and see where they are at. I notice that you have Woodbridge and Bridge River jetties in future works, quite substantial funding. However, last year I asked about the Prosser River Project and the *Hansard* stated the project was delayed and funds set aside for it to be quarantined for a number of reasons. How is that project travelling? Has it been finished in the last 12 months? If not, when is it due to be completed? If it is, how effective has it been in achieving its aim and what was the total cost?

**Mr HIDDING** - Since we last spoke about that, there was a substantial concern by Bird Tasmania and the council over the concerns as well and the project was referred to the federal government for assessment which had the possibility of the project being delayed for up to five years and possibly never happening at all. During a planning appeals process, we became aware of another option which was to construct the opening at the Prosser River at the spot where the river was then currently opened and appeared to be reasonably happy at that spot, and it became apparent to all players, including people who had concern over the previous one, that if we would consider transferring the project to that spot and completing it before next year's nesting program, that all players could agree for the project to go forward.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

The impact process granted MAST a development permit on the spot essentially, and we grabbed it and essentially went to market because we were on a very tight timeline because the nesting period starts about 1 October and we need to get it done. So MAST has been to market. They are, last I heard, down to a final procurement process and we would want that project to start as soon as it possibly can which would likely to be in the next month or so?

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes, so the tender has been awarded.

**Mr HIDDING** - Oh, it has?

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes. To Gradco which is a Tasmanian company.

**Mr HIDDING** - Great.

**Ms MORRIS** - So it will commence on 3 July and it is due to be completed prior to 1 October which is the start of the migratory bird breeding session.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And it is expected to come in under budget or what is the -

**Ms MORRIS** - Around budget, yes. It is a little hard to quantify. We have taken a survey at a particular point in time in terms of the quantity of sand that needs removing. But it is weather dependent and if more sand - it is a dynamic coast environment unfortunately so.

**Mr HIDDING** - Just to be clear this is not a capital project because funds are administered to MAST are grants, so it is not capital.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - St Helens Barway work proceeding. Is that likely completed by the end of this year? Where is that at?

**Mr HIDDING** - St Helens Barway, two stages: stage one is complete which was the extension of the training wall, the rock to groyne. Very successfully done over a period of time. The local people who might have been a bit concerned about blasting in the region, when they started asking about when we were going to start, we told them we had finished it. So that was very successful.

The next thing was to wait to see what nature wanted to do to create an obvious channel at Pelican Point which was a serious issue. Fishing boats were bumping coming in over Pelican Point. Nature has done the right thing by us and gone to a single spot and is starting to channel out beautifully, and that spot suggests strongly that that is where we should harden the edges and make it a permanent opening through that.

So Stage 2, and there is funding of some \$500 000 to \$600 000.

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes, \$589 000.

**Mr HIDDING** - Available, ready to go. That can now be considered with this Prosser job. There may well be machinery on the island coming from the mainland where we could successfully tender that, and I have asked MAST to try to bring that together. While we have machinery here use the - hopefully it will save some money, but certainly get the job done. That is a much smaller job than the Prosser.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is said there is \$500 000 for the Brid River jetty for 2017-18. When is the best time to try to get that work completed by or has that been -

**Ms MORRIS** - Brid River. Every jetty is different because of its usage. So Brid River, that's the inner section of the Brid River jetty which is right near the shore and that is a really good area to do because it is very accessible all times of the year.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So there should not be any hold up on that one?

**Ms MORRIS** - There should not be any hold up on that one, no. It is largely fishing. Bridport is important because there is no moorings, swing moorings available in the vicinity so it is a berthing place and they offload about, from memory, about 79 tonne of catch there so it is quite important to the fishing industry.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I am just interested, regarding damage caused by flooding last year, were any MAST funds required to be diverted from maintenance fund or was money able to be procured from other sources?

**Ms MORRIS** - No, we sustained very little damage to our own facilities. MAST owns 63 facilities only. So a lot of the damage was sustained by council owned facilities unfortunately. A lot of those have been covered by insurances, and we have some projects in at the moment as part of the current recreational boating fund, whereby councils have come to us to seek some funding as part of that process to reconstruct some facilities, and one of those is the Burnie rock wall there that is protecting the boat ramps, as an example.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I notice that the National Maritime Board is still in a transitional stage. Last year I asked about the number of FTEs since transition has affected. They decreased from 20 in 2015-16 to 19 in 2016-17. I note that there is a larger rather decrease in employee benefits from 2016-17 to 2017-18, so how many FTE staff does MAST currently have and considering the Australian Maritime Safety Agency, what impact will that have on FTE numbers?

**Ms MORRIS** - We have lost 4.3 FTEs to this point in time, and there is one full-time equivalent to be lost post the transition. So the transition was delayed a year, so it was delayed from AMSA going to assume full service delivery on 1 July 2017 and that was delay at ministerial council to 1 July 2018.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is not negotiable because now that has to kick in then. It was a pain that we had to do it, but there was significant doubt that they were ready for other states. From our point of view, we are the benchmark. We are likely better than AMSA will ever be, but because we signed up to a national deal, that is what these national things are about. You do it for the national but - and incidentally, it is the constitutional right thing for AMSA to do. There should be a Maritime national rule because boats go between states.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - My last question is one for the minister and then I will open up to the others. Minister, the budget states in relation to this transition, significant internal resources have been diverted to the transition outlook service delivery to ensure that MAST achieves the best outcome for commercial operators in Tasmania. But given that the *Mercury* reports both operators angry at price hikes over safety regulations changes, how have their concerns attempted to be addressed?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr HIDDING** - MAST would wish to be able to cover their transition and we have been speaking with them regularly. The transition costs have been absorbed by MAST to date through their own operations, and it is fair to say that the Chair has expressed the view that there should be a coverage provided for that. That has not been provided to date but we are in regular contact on that and the latest will be that we will be seeking the latest expenses that MAST are having trouble with as to why that might be the case and how it might be best - MAST might be best supported to do that.

But up until now, MAST has been able to do everything it has been required to do, and as I say, the extra year is tedious, that is tiresome and it means the costs just keep - we would have been planning to transition now in about what, three weeks?

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - And the pain would have been over, but given - a new set of pain would have started because AMSA was not ready.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. That is all from me, Deputy Chair.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you. You have asked everything that most of the rest of us would have had. Any other questions?

One other point I was going to raise. Are there any other jetties that you are aware of that are going to need upgrading in the near future? I am sure they are assessed regularly but are there any others that you are aware of that are going to need maintenance in the near future?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, there is a priority list and we chose two off the top of that this year by funding two. Just bear in mind that generally MAST expends its funds on say a new boat ramp, and the deal is that the local council takes it over. So MAST is trying to not add to its number of assets that it owns, if anything, reduce the number of them. There are many jetties that you would think that MAST owns but it doesn't. But again, it is a historical thing such as the Dover Jetty down there. It is a major fishing port jetty, and recently had a lot of money spent on it for the fishing industry.

**Ms MORRIS** - We do, in terms of our assets that we own, we do a structural audit every three years and that then helps set the program for maintenance, and also when things need replacement. So we have a good advance warning in terms of when the structure will need replacing.

**Mr HIDDING** - What were the next two down after these?

**Ms MORRIS** - There was Woodbridge next year.

**Mr HIDDING** - Woodbridge is next year. So that is in reasonable shape but it is where the cruise vessel goes and we want to make sure that that is safe and good. And the one after that?

**Ms MORRIS** - The one after that was Cygnet and then Gordon.

**Mr HIDDING** - So we are looking at that next budget with a view to, if we are able to, to knock a few of them over again, so get them in the system.



## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr VALENTINE** - A very quick one. I note the - it is Boomer Jetty Road, the jetty there is a new structure and that is great, but it is absolutely - this is down at Dunalley.

**Ms MORRIS** - Boomer Bay.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Boomer Bay, yes. You don't have anything to do with provision of car parking, those sorts of things. It is the only the structure that you have?

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So it is a council issue for the car park. It is not something you do in conjunction with the council?

**Ms MORRIS** - No we try to talk to them. Some councils are really quite strategic in the way they deal with Maritime infrastructure.

**Mr HIDDING** - And some are not.

**Ms MORRIS** - And some are not.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There up to 52 vehicles and trailers there at peak times.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is worse at Pirates Bay and worse again at Burns Bay in St Helens. It is a serious issue and I am looking at it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is a big issue. Pirates Bay would be too.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - But not an issue for MAST.

**Mr HIDDING** - No. And it is one MAST does not want either. Because it is in a council area, it is not government land or if it is at Burns Bay, it is in fact government land.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, I thought I would check that out just to see whether there was some relationship and how you work with that.

**Mr HIDDING** - For the major fishing comps at Burns Bay at St Helens, because it is past Barway popular jetty so you do not have to go to Barway boat ramp. People just park terribly. Like they just, the first to arrive they just jam their car in. They don't care about -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Same, at all sorts of jetties they do that.

**Mr HIDDING** - There will be a war and so advancing thinking with parks on what it would cost to do some proper arrangements there.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Except at the moment there is some land there that could be utilised.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - It is not an issue for MAST.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, it is not.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - So we will leave that for now.

**Mr HIDDING** - But it reminds me that that is another one to have a look at as well.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you, minister.

**Mr HIDDING** - Pleasure.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Sue and Lea and Garry. It has been a very long day but appreciate your time. We will have a short meeting if you would mind leaving us to that.

**The committee adjourned at 6.13 p.m.**