

Monday 3 June 2019 - Estimates Committee A (Rockliff)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Monday 3 June 2019

MEMBERS

Mr Armstrong
Ms Armitage
Mr Dean
Ms Howlett
Ms Rattray (Chair)
Ms Siejka
Mr Willie

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP, Deputy Premier; Minister for Education and Training; Minister for Infrastructure; Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries

Department of Education

Tim Bullard, Secretary
Robert Williams, Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Business Services
Jodee Wilson, Deputy Secretary, Support and Development
Jenny Burgess, Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance
Trudy Pearce, Deputy Secretary, Learning
Kane Salter, Director, Finance and Business Services
Liz Jack, Director (Libraries Tasmania)
Todd Williams, Director, Facility Services
Shane Frost, Director, Education Performance and Review
Lynne McDougall, Director, Inclusion and Diversity Services
Suzanne Pennicott-Jones, Director, Office of the Secretary

Office of Education Registrar

Katharine O'Donnell, Registrar

Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification (TASC)

Katrina Beams, Executive Officer

TasTAFE

Jenny Dodd, Chief Executive Officer

Scott Adams, Chief Financial Officer

Department of State Growth

Infrastructure

Kim Evans, Secretary

Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary, Transport Services

Alan Garcia, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure Tasmania

Shane Gregory, General Manager, State Roads

James Verrier, Director, Infrastructure Policy

Martin Crane, General Manager, Road User Services

Babette Moate, Acting Director Passenger Transport

Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST)

Lia Morris, Chief Executive Officer (MAST)

Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries

Kim Evans, Secretary

Retired Rear Admiral Steve Gilmore, Defence Advocate

Bob Rutherford, Deputy Secretary, Industry and Business Development

Lara Hendricks, A/G Director, Advanced Manufacturing & Northern Engagement

Skills

Bob Rutherford, Deputy Secretary, Industry and Business Development

Angela Conway, General Manager, Skills Tasmania

Stuart Hollingsworth, Director Policy & Programs - Workforce Development Systems

Business Services

Amanda Russell, Deputy Secretary, Business Services

Glen Dean, Director, Finance

Marine and Safety Tasmania

Lia Morris, CEO MAST

Ministerial Staff

Vanessa Field, Chief of Staff

Vince Taskunas, Principal Adviser - Infrastructure

Anna Jones, Senior Adviser - Education

Adam Foster, Adviser - Infrastructure and Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries

Rosita Gallasch, Adviser - Infrastructure

Geoff Logan, Adviser - Skills, Training and Adult Education

The committee met at 8.58 a.m.

CHAIR (Ms Rattray) - Good morning, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good morning, Chair. Good morning, members.

CHAIR - And also say good morning to members of the Committee B. We have Robert Armstrong, Jane Howlett, Rosemary Armitage, myself, Tanya Rattray, Ivan Dean, Jo Siejka and Josh Willie. That's our committee for this Estimates process, and we welcome you here. As we have done in the past, minister, we would like to invite you to provide a brief overview. We are obviously starting with Education this morning, which is a key pillar of the state's budget and of what happens in our state.

Minister please introduce your team at the table, and if you have people that come and support you through the course of the process then please identify them and also their position that they hold.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair, I do have a brief opening statement which is briefer than last year you'll be pleased to know. I have with me, to my left, the Secretary of the Department of Education, Tim Bullard, and the Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance, Jenny Burgess.

CHAIR - Welcome.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Education is the single most powerful driver for positive change in Tasmania empowering children, young people and adults to succeed and contribute fully to their communities and the future of our state. As the Minister for Education and Training I have seen first-hand how education transforms lives and creates opportunities, and it's precisely because of this that we have placed a real focus since we have been in government on increasing access and providing educational equity to all, so that no matter what circumstance a learner may come from, and no matter where in Tasmania they live, they have the opportunity to access and enjoy a quality education.

The 2019-20 budget provides a record \$324 million over the next six years for education covering \$145 million in recurrent funding which includes funding for an additional 358 new staff including 250 new teachers, with a real focus on quality teaching practice, and \$179 million in education infrastructure. In December last year our government signed the National School Reform Agreement which means the Tasmanian Government will provide an additional \$340 million to Tasmanian Government schools over the next 10 years. This investment increases support for government schools to further address Tasmania's unique and complex educational circumstances with the aim to achieve equity for all learners.

We are implementing a nation leading needs-based funding model for students with a disability which will deliver an extra \$8 million to students with disability in 2020, increasing to \$11 million by 2022. This is on top of the \$93.3 million already being invested in 2019 for students with disability. Implementing a needs-based funding model will make a huge difference for our students, schools and families by providing resources for what an individual student actually needs, rather than being obliged to conform to a disability diagnosis.

We know that a strong sense of wellbeing is fundamental to helping students to engage with and succeed in learning at school and throughout their lives. Our 2020 investment provides an additional \$2.7 million to provide a school nurse in every government senior secondary college by 2021. This will increase our government's total investment for school nurses to \$3.8 million in 2020, a total of \$17.4 million over the forward Estimates.

Recognising our school leaders are key to improving learning outcomes and that the health and wellbeing of staff underpins everything we wish to achieve for education in Tasmania. We are committing \$4.9 million over four years to implement the 2019-2021 Principal Wellbeing Action Plan, and this will go far in supporting principals in responding to the concerns raised in the annual Riley Report.

Over the years I have heard from teachers, parents and young people how traumatic experiences can have a devastating impact on students' ability to function in a classroom environment and learn, and this is why we have prioritised funding of \$7.25 million over four years to increase support for children and young people impacted by trauma. We note that school and community partnerships further enhance students learning and wellbeing, and that families are the first and most influential educators of our children. In June last year I requested the Department of Education to review how it engages families in policy development and decision-making at the school at departmental levels to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Our budget investment includes approximately \$800 000 over four years to implement recommendations from the reviews.

In recognition of the importance and value of vocational learning at schools, we are committed to additional funding of \$1.48 million over four years to increase the utilisation of Australian schools-based apprenticeships. We use 10 to 12 students in Tasmanian Government schools. Our government has maintained our focus on ensuring all children in Tasmania get a great start to learning in the early years, regardless of where they live or their family background, resulting in a wide range of initiatives and programs to support this valuable period in a child's life. Importantly, we are committing \$15.5 million over four years from 2020 to commence in construction of six new child and family learning centres in Sorell, Kingborough, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Ulverstone and Waratah communities. We are also committing \$8 million in 2020 to support the continued implementation of the Working Together for Three Year Olds initiative to provide quality early learning experiences for disadvantaged and vulnerable children in partnership with early childhood education and care sector. Through this initiative we will provide \$10.5 million per annum and support free preschool for those children who are the most disadvantaged or vulnerable.

In closing, Chair, I am extremely proud of our government's strong and continued investment in education, and all our departmental representatives and the teachers and principals and support staff in all our schools for the work they do, for the benefit of all learners and the future prosperity of Tasmania. Education results are improving. However, we must remain focussed on continuing support to provide a quality education in Tasmania for every learner every day. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - She's always short.

CHAIR - It was brief and to the point and that's what we're looking for -

Mr DEAN - I did have a hand in it, Chair.

CHAIR - Well done. Mr Willie, I would like to invite you to, if you have any questions on the overview before we start on 1.1 in School Education.

Mr WILLIE - Sure. This may come as a surprise, minister, but I would like to thank you firstly for providing access to schools and access to the department for briefings. It's not a courtesy that's extended as often by some of your colleagues. So I certainly appreciate that, and if we're going to have a debate I think an informed debate is preferable, so I will start by thanking you for that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - As I have been visiting schools, a common theme raised by staff is staff recruitment and retainment. You committed to 250 teachers in the election campaign.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - I take it now the 95 specialist teachers is off the table. Is that correct? In addition to that 250?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It appears that, we feel, I have had a discussion about where the AEU agreement is at, Mr Willie, and I would hope it's not off the table, but an important part of negotiations where we arrived at enabled us to fund those specialist teachers. So at this present time, given the latest information on Friday, which of course I'm very disappointed with that decision, it appears that that is off the table at this present time.

Mr WILLIE - Okay, so the 250 commitment, you remain committed to that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely.

Mr WILLIE - See, in the Treasurer's speech, he spoke of a 0.75 per cent efficiency dividend and he also mentioned vacancy control. Will that affect your department, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It won't affect the frontline. I understand the importance of ensuring we have teachers and support staff in our schools and we are very committed to our policy of 250 more teachers to roll out over the next six years. 197 of those we are expecting to have over the next four years, or be, well, four years from 2018 when we originally made the commitment. I spoke about that last year, so we are committed to that, and we have also, you know, recruitment should not be a problem as the first part of your question because the first tranche of those teachers, we had 70 teachers, or 70 positions and the 70 new teachers in our schools at this present time, and we had 600 applications for that first round of recruitment.

CHAIR - Six hundred?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Six hundred.

Mr WILLIE - What baseline figure are you using to measure the 250 extra teachers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The baseline figure will be what we're - I'm assuming we will use the figures when we first came into government as well, and when we first came into government we had teachers at a certain level. We have now got 221 more teachers in our school, but the baseline data of March each year is determine - the number is in March each year which is I guess in the first term, 31 March.

Mr WILLIE - So what is the baseline figure you're using to measure the 250 extra teachers, if you're going to be transparent about it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - From March 2018, 31 March 2018.

Mr WILLIE - So what's the FTE number?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of our teachers?

Mr WILLIE - The baseline FTE number you're using to measure the extra 250 teachers, or is it a head count that you're using?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll get the figure for you. So in March 2018 FTE, we had teaching in our schools, 4345.01 full-time equivalent teachers

Mr WILLIE - And do you have a head count number as well?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A head count, I can probably provide those figures for you. Actual head count would be -

CHAIR - Can we perhaps come back to this -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I'll take it on notice.

CHAIR - Can we come back to the head count or is that something that -

Mr WILLIE - Yes minister, you can take that on notice. An extra 250 teachers, is that permanent staff that you've committed to?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, okay. Am I okay to keep going on this line of questioning?

CHAIR - Yes. We have a couple of other people lined up, but if you want to finish yours.

Mr WILLIE - The efficiency dividend of 0.75 per cent. You've ruled out vacancy control on front line staff so no teacher vacancy control.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. No impact on frontline staff.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. How are you going to achieve that dividend, because over the forward Estimates, you said 2.25 per cent cumulative dividend, and if I've looked at the figures

correctly, that's about \$127 million you will have to find in your department. How are you going to achieve that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, 75 cents in every \$100, the department is now working through how that will be achieved. And it will be well consulted throughout the department and we'll find those efficiencies, that's what we're committed to.

Mr WILLIE - So you don't know how you're going to find them at the moment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we're working through it. The Budget was released a couple of weeks ago, and we will be working through how we'll find those efficiencies, but that we're charged with finding those efficiencies and we will find them and we found efficiencies over past budgets and the reason that we are able to invest in more services is because we balance and manage our budgets well.

Mr WILLIE - When were you told about the efficiency dividend?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, through the Budget process. The Budget process is quite a lengthy process.

Mr WILLIE - So have you got a date that you were told about the efficiency dividend so you could prepare for when the budget was announced and start to get your own department in order to deliver on the Treasurer's commitment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I haven't got a particular date but it's, you know, we all - the budget process is a process that cabinet are involved with so.

Mr WILLIE - Did you know well in advance that the budget announcement that there would be a 0.75 per cent efficiency dividend?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the budget is - it's a process, Mr Willie, that we go through as a Cabinet. I am not going to talk about Cabinet processes, but of course, I'm well aware of the task ahead of us in terms of the efficiency dividend. We've done a good job in managing our budget over the course of the last five years and we'll continue because we can - when we manage budgets, we're able to reinvest in essential services such as health education and public safety.

Mr WILLIE - \$127 million is a significant figure over the forward Estimates. I'd just like to understand a little more about how you're going to achieve that. You've ruled out vacancy control on front line staff, so teaching staff. How are you going to achieve that? What's going to be cut?

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I've said, we have a proven record of strong financial management, and you'd be aware that as a government we're faced with a significant number of challenges in terms of reduction in previously estimated GST, conveyance duty receipts and continued funding pressures in key service delivery areas. The Government has therefore included budget savings measures in the 2020 budget year and across the forward Estimates as we've been talking about. We have stated there will be a strong focus on minimising the impact on service delivery and looking to expenditure such as consultants, travel and advertising, together with targeted vacancy control, and natural employee attrition without affecting frontline

essential services. We will be reviewing returns from all government businesses, a review of the State Service will be undertaken to identify structural administrative and cultural improvements that will transform current structure services and practices to deliver a more efficient and effective public service. They're the areas that our department will be focusing on.

Mr WILLIE - So you'll be focused with your vacancy control on backline staff. Departmental staff?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're protecting the front line. We have a very good record in improving the frontline education with 220 more teachers, and we have, I believe, I stand corrected, around 231 more teacher assistants as well, and we are committed to providing on our election commitments in terms of further rollout of teachers.

Mr WILLIE - If you have vacancy control on departmental staff, are you going to be able to deliver all your infrastructure commitments on time? Those department staff are key to delivering infrastructure and if you're putting vacancy control in place, and let's face it, vacancy control can produce significant savings. There are about 3500 public servants who leave the State Service every year and if you can delay that by three or six months that's significant. That's going to have an impact on your commitments, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have a very clear focus. The department has a very clear strategic plan. For the first half of this year the department has looked at priorities within. A focus on school improvement, and of course, we will have a clear strategy for returning required savings as well. I recognise we have a job ahead of us in terms of infrastructure improvements around Tasmania, and that's a good challenge to have and we will deliver on our infrastructure commitments. We recognise there's a need in schools across Tasmania. We've increased the maintenance budget or the funding into maintenance of school infrastructure over the last four or five years. We've put enormous funding into capital developments, both renovations to schools, working on new schools, and so the team in facilities do a very good job. They are working very hard and have done for the last five years, given the work and the funding that they need to get out the door.

Mr WILLIE - So are you saying they will have to bear the brunt of the vacancy control?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is they work very hard. They'll continue to work very hard and they have a challenge ahead of them because of the funding that is going out the door and what we've committed to, including some \$180 million over the next four years.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - I don't want to crossover questions that people might have through the process but just in -

CHAIR - We need to spread it around.

Mr DEAN - Yes, you're right, but a couple on the follow up to Josh's question. Surely the department - and you're going to come back on notice with the head count and so on, but -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got that already.

Mr DEAN - The department must have an establishment number within the department of teachers right now. You must have your establishment number that you've currently got and will the 250 extra teachers sit on top of the current establishment numbers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm advised its March 2018 figures, the 250 teachers will stand on top of that. That's full-time equivalent, is my understanding.

Mr DEAN - Sorry, but the question is, at that time though were the total number of teachers that you had identified for the Education department, or was that less vacancies and so on? Was that the total amount?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The figure I provided to March 2018 was actual teachers full time equivalent, teachers in schools, and the head count incidentally for that, so FTE, the head count's 5184 as I'm advised.

Mr DEAN - It is just difficult getting the numbers from you. The Police department, for instance, has an establishment number. I'm not quite sure what it is now, 1100 and whatever it is. So their additional police will be on top of that establishment number of police. So is that the same for the Education department?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'd like Tim to talk through that.

CHAIR - Thank you. I think that's probably easier. So, we're comfortable with that, minister.

Mr BULLARD - So there are a number of factors which impact on the number of teachers that would make up an establishment. One of the main drivers is the number of students that we have in any particular school and also the attributes of the school in terms of its SES status, students with disabilities, EAL, Aboriginal students, et cetera. So, the other factor is that schools receive a staffing allocation but they also receive a school's resourcing package and schools choose to buy additional teachers with that resourcing package, because they're in charge of how they structure the staff in their school. Because of that, and also, too, Mr Dean, we have a seasonal workforce as you know, so in summer, we have a lot fewer staff and once schools have ramped up, we have a lot more. And that's why we've chosen the 31 March date as the date that we actually count the FTE that we have. And we've chosen that date so that we're not coming to Estimates every year and saying we're going to have to wait until 30 June. For a number of years, we have reported on that 30 March date, so we take that as our FTE.

Mr DEAN - So the resourcing strategy then - a school is able to employ extra teachers?

Mr BULLARD - That's right.

Mr DEAN - And do they have to pick up all of the costs for that? The superannuation and everything else that goes with that? Are they required to pick up all of those costs from their resourcing package? The school? Forever and a day whilst the extra teacher is within that school?

Mr BULLARD - That's right. That's why they get the resourcing package, Mr Dean.

So, we accept that there is a base level of staffing that goes to a school, but we also accept that principals and school leaders are best placed to make decisions about the actual staff that they need. So, it wouldn't work if we allocated staff to schools and said that's your allocation. Schools know their school communities best and they know their students best. So, every day they're making decisions about how to staff their classrooms and how to resource their structures to ensure the best outcomes for learners.

Mr DEAN - Just one further question and then I'll drop it: 250 extra teachers - can the university push that many teachers through? Over what period is this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's over six years; 197 over four. The exact figure, Chair, is 627 applications we received for the first 69 successful applications. We started progressing - it was probably about around 18 months ago now - a round table to look at the challenge, which it is a challenge, in terms of ensuring that we get the highest quality teachers as well as the numbers of teachers we're committed to. Around that table has been sitting - we've met reasonably recently - the University of Tasmania, the Peter Underwood Centre of Educational Attainment, the Australian Education Union, the Teachers Registration Board, and the Tasmanian Principals Association. I think that's most of them.

They sat around the table working on that challenge and to ensure everyone is focused and the department - which, of course, is the Department of Education - and the university are working together on the supply of quality graduates to ensure that commitment is realised. It's a good constructive process. We signed a quality teacher agreement at Bowen Road Primary School 18 months ago. It's very positive. So that strategy is in place and the working group has been meeting reasonably regularly in ensuring that we realise our commitment but also teacher quality is a very important part of that as well.

CHAIR - Minister, do you put a focus on the actual subject areas that are in demand?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a workforce development initiative for subject areas. I might get Tim or Jenny to talk about that, and to the Maths and Science stream.

Mr BULLARD - Yes, we're currently doing a workforce audit so that we can understand the skills and teaching areas of our staff. We want to become a lot more effective at how we project our future skills needs so that we can send a really strong signal back to the university about the type of graduate that we need. We've also worked constructively with the uni around courses for teachers in service to upskill, especially around maths and science. So, there's an opportunity for teachers who may not have trained as maths teachers but are teaching maths to go back and get an additional qualification in their specialty area.

CHAIR - We still have an enormous number of teachers who are teaching out of their area of perhaps their field of expertise or what they've been - their focus when they were - when they graduated.

Mr BULLARD - One of the things though, that we do find, is that teachers who have maybe not trained in a specialty area but taught for a number of years and have really good professional learning, are competent in those areas, so that's the thing that we've really got to concentrate on in terms of the workforce development initiatives. It's not good enough just to

say 15 years ago, what was your specialty. We actually need to look at the expertise and the experience that you've had since you commenced.

Mr WILLIE - If I may, Chair?

CHAIR - Thank you. On that? And then I'm going down the other end of the table.

Mr WILLIE - The last two estimates I've read through the *Hansard* - there was a review into specialist teaching. Has that been completed now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, that's still underway.

Mr WILLIE - It's still underway?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - So, that's a long time. What's taking so long?

Mr ROCKLIFF - While that information is being gathered up -

CHAIR - Gathered?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got some information of the round table. And specific outputs, initiatives prompted by the round table advice include a declaration of purpose that states the shared commitment to quality teaching. The More Teachers/Quality Teaching Action Plan with 10 action areas focused on building a talented education workforce to deliver outstanding teaching and learning outcomes. A national recruitment campaign supported by the round table was announced in September last year and this recruitment drive, as I've said, resulted in over 600 applications and the employment of 69 permanent teachers, some of whom are relocating to Tasmania and planning for -

CHAIR - I hope they're not doing fly in, fly outs.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That would be hard.

CHAIR - That's a positive.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and good initiatives in 2019 of course. A teacher intern program and provide mentoring to early career teachers and promotion of the teaching profession more generally, as well.

CHAIR - Thank you. And the answer to -

Mr BULLARD - So just back on the specialisation, I just wanted to make sure that I was thinking of the right thing. So, the first thing I should say is that the issue of specialisation and understanding data is a national issue and there's actually a national piece of work going on as well through the education counsel and the senior officials about how we gather data on the workforce of Australia. This is probably more pertinent to other states where there's mobility across borders. But we've got a great interest in it. The specialisation is coming back to Ms Rattray's discussion that we had. It is around making sure that we can get good quality data

around specialisation that isn't as blunt as what did you study at university. So we've actually commissioned a system which is going to allow people to input not only their specialty that they trained in, but also the experience that they've had to date. So that we can actually see who's teaching where. But that's taken some time because of the workforce and the complexity of getting that done.

Mr WILLIE - Right. So, it wouldn't be that hard a task, would it? Only 4345 teachers to survey.

CHAIR - So that's 4000-whatever emails.

Mr WILLIE - And then you have whole applications and then years of experience in the subject matter that they're teaching?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. It's involved.

Mr BULLARD - It's an involved process to get it right. It is one of those things where the quality of the data that we put in will influence the quality of the data that we get out and the other thing is, too, we need to set up a sustainable solution that isn't just a one-off go off and audit everyone. We actually need to build it into our capability system to ensure that we - at all times - can be making the best decisions about where to place staff.

Mr WILLIE - So when is that work expected to be finished?

Mr BULLARD - The work has been commissioned next year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - So 2020.

Mr WILLIE - And next year, the front of the year or the back half of the year?

Mr BULLARD - Estimates next year.

Mr WILLIE - We could be getting the same answer next year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's an important piece of work. I know a few years ago when we launched the Workforce Development Program, we had an imbalance of physical education teachers, the old PE teachers, as I refer them to. We needed to encourage more teaching and science, maths or STEMM subjects. As a result of that, it was quite a successful program I believe. I'm advised, in terms of being able to reasonably quickly but professionally upskill teachers into those specialist areas of need. I hasten to add probably there still is a shortage of maths and science teachers, I'm advised.

CHAIR - All right. We'll move on.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, could you please advise me how the government is going to continue to prioritise literacy and numeracy in schools?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Literacy is a particular focus. I was at Invermay Primary School on Friday last week, launching the literacy action plan. Literacy and numeracy is identified as one of the four goals to support all learners to succeed in learning, life and work in the 2018-21 department strategic plan. We continue to build teacher capacity and support students' increased achievement in literacy and numeracy through a number of literacy and numeracy initiatives. A 2018 Grattan Institute report notes that after adjusting for levels of a disadvantage, Tasmanian schools on average are doing well in NAPLAN.

A literacy framework has been developed to guide all departments' efforts towards achieving a goal for all learners to develop the schools and confidence to succeed in literacy over the next four years. The release of the literacy framework on 31 May presented a new approach to improving literacy, building on past successes and providing starting points for change. This framework will provide the necessary professional guidance to schools to implement the effective practice to drive the school improvements. Of course, we have our key aspirational target of 100 per cent functional literacy or literate community and there's been a lot of discussion over a number of years where Tasmania's at in its functional literacy and it's around 50 per cent. Our target's 100 per cent and that's where it should be.

We're committed to just under \$10 million to invest in access to a literacy coach for all schools. This expanded model promotes equity and broadens the sphere of impacts across all schools and colleges. Targeted professional learning and at the shoulder, support for teachers and their students is provided by coaches and supported by six lead coaches. Lead coaches are key to implementing the literacy framework by providing oversight and guidance to support existing literacy initiatives such as Learning in Families Together program. That's the kindergarten to Grade 2 initiative which involves the parental engagement as well, which was launched around 2016. And the 2019 LIFT program has placed greater emphasis of oral language in supporting literacy and numeracy outcomes. And in 2019, literacy coaches and the middle years literacy project coordinators will be working together to improve teaching and learning of literacy across all schools. I commend all those involved in producing the Department of Education Literacy Action Plan for action. This was launched in Invermay Primary School last week on 31 May. A lot of work has gone into this. This was consulted with over a hundred stakeholders across industry, education, the department, teachers, very broad. It was great to have Rosie Martin there as well at the launch and Rosie has of course raised a lot of awareness around literacy in our community and of course supports our hundred per cent aspirational target of a functional literate community. I table that, Chair, for your interest.

CHAIR - Thank you. Provide it to the secretary. We're mindful that we need to get into 1.1. Are there any actual questions of the overview that the minister presented in his brief overview?

Mr WILLIE - If I can ask just one on what he's just said. Minister, there's no doubt that a number of the documents that the department is producing are very good documents, if implemented. My question to you is, I mean this was just a quick 10-minute exercise to get on the website and print out the glossy documents.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You must have a very fast printer.

Mr WILLIE - My question is, what support has been given to staff in classrooms around these documents? We have a resource in the department producing the documents, they're out

consulting the stakeholders, but how is it actually changing practice in classrooms and what support is being given to teachers on a literacy action plan, on a numeracy action plan, on a principal wellbeing plan?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've mentioned literacy coaches. A couple of budgets ago we actually addressed an inequity in the leadership positions in primary schools as well, in terms of that additional investment. That was probably a 2016 budget, from memory, in terms of that imbalance. So, they had more leadership in our primary schools. Would you like to - yes, if you'd like.

Mr BULLARD - So just in terms of why, because that's obviously a question that people might be asking, we have a clear strategic plan which is evidence based and it's guiding absolutely everything that we do and to implement that plan, we need to bring that down to an action plan or implementation level and then we need to actually roll that out on the ground. So, each of the plans that you have in front of you does have support for schools and school leavers to change practice, which is going to make a difference for young people. Otherwise there's no use producing them.

The principal wellbeing action plan, for example, in this budget was 10 additional full-time employees to support principals to lead schools for school improvement. You have the literacy coaches for the literacy action plan. Around the child and student wellbeing plan, we obviously have student support teams that are in schools every day, psyches and social workers and speech pathologists are looking after our young people. There is a plan behind each of those about how we roll them out. They aren't just documents that sit on the shelf. They bring alignment within the department of understanding about what evidence-based practice looks like and they guide our work every day.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know why you've asked the question and it's an essential question -

Mr WILLIE - Well, as a former teacher, I've experienced this.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I'm sure.

Mr WILLIE - The department produces a glossy document, there's not a lot of support around it and it doesn't change a lot.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're a teacher. I'm a farmer. I wouldn't pretend to know any more than you about what goes on in a school, Mr Willie. But that's why we've been very committed though to providing more support to our schools in terms of more support staff, speech pathologists, school psychologists, social workers, our nurses, all these key supports do have in my view a very positive impact on the school environment and works to take pressure off teachers in terms of that in class environment. I am particularly proud of our school nurse program and I think we have increased the number of support staff by around 63 FTE over the course of the last five years. I'm sure individual teachers in schools would value increased investment, but it's certainly heading in the right area and with the trauma-related resource coming online next year, that around \$7 million, as I said, and indeed, the new disability funding model should all be about more resource in our classrooms. That will allow a greater focus for a teacher to do the job that they're trained to do.

Mr WILLIE - That's a good point. More resource in the classroom. Intergovernmental funding has been used for these action plans. Is that correct rather than going through the school gate?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You mean like the Department of Education funding more broadly rather than the school resource package?

Mr WILLIE - I mean as in the quality schools funding, or if you want to call it the nickname, the Gonski funding, and it's in 3.0 version now. Some of that funding's being used to resource these action plans?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the needs-based?

Mr WILLIE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the additional funding, the \$340 million over 10 years, that's going through the school gate.

Mr WILLIE - All of it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's the focus of trauma and disability. Yes, that's the bilateral agreement which was signed in around November last year which has good growth funding over the next 10 years. But the needs-based funding model of Gonski more broadly, Gonski 2, is being applied to schools in that needs-based way.

Mr WILLIE - So it's not being skived off for departmental staff and resource to produce these?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wouldn't have thought so, no.

CHAIR - Okay, and in the interest of, for *Hansard*, I have continued about nine reports that the member brought to the table, just so we have some idea when we read back over the *Hansard*. Now, moving to Ms Armitage.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, was in the next line-up.

CHAIR - All right. Mr Willie, if you don't mind, I'll invite Ms Armitage.

Mr WILLIE - Sure.

CHAIR - So you wish to ask a question in 1.1. We have left the overview, thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay, thank you. Mine is with regard to early entry for gifted children, and I'm sure the deputy executive is well aware of this and I have had a lot of involvement with this with one particular constituent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You had correspondence with me on this, haven't you? Is that right?

Ms ARMITAGE - I have corresponded with Jenny. I'm not sure whether I've corresponded with you as well, minister, or not.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have spoken to you personally about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that's right. Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, probably not in writing. That's in the past but this is general now. This isn't about anyone in particular. So, are you able to tell me how many children, or how many applications there were for early entry for gifted children in 2019?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, data for early entry commencing school in the year shown. Number approved in 2015 was three; 2016 was three; 2017 was seven; 2018 was five; and 2019 is eight.

Ms ARMITAGE - How many applications were there? Minister, I'm aware that there were a lot more applications than those approved, and it's very difficult to have it approved.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And people wanting to start earlier, you say, at school? I understand the irony of your question.

Ms ARMITAGE - There's no irony at all.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it is because -

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm talking about children starting -

Mr ROCKLIFF - We had a big debate in this state which a lot of -

Ms ARMITAGE - With respect, minister -

Mr ROCKLIFF - organisations, including the Labor Party and the Australian Educators Union fought against -

Ms ARMITAGE - With respect, minister, that's not what I'm asking.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know what you're asking, Rosemary. I disagree with you.

Ms ARMITAGE - All right, let me explain. What I'm asking is, many of the schools allow children to go to kindergarten, they might be four, and they let them start, whether it be a private school or a public school, and then they get to prep and of course the requirement of a certain age. We do have gifted children, we know, and I've had long discussions or a lot of correspondence with the deputy secretary over this, but many teachers say that gifted students lag significantly behind other states in Tasmania and a lot of the changes you've made to the Education Act, I believe, is to try to help students.

Now, the issue that I have had, and I have spoken to lots of parents, I did have one particular case that came up, as you're well aware of, which eventually, after a long protracted time, was satisfactorily resolved with the parents and the child involved, but what I'm trying to find out is how many applications were there, because I've heard from a lot of parents, the

procedure to go through, the stress on the child, the IQ that you list - can you tell me also the IQ that the child has to have to be classed as gifted? So, the IQ and -

Ms BURGESS - They have to be within the top 2 per cent on an approved test and it's usually the WPPSI which I'm not 100 per cent sure of what that means but it's Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence test.

Ms ARMITAGE - There is an IQ number, though, isn't there? So, if you could tell me the IQ number because I know there is one.

Ms BURGESS - It's on or around the 98 percentile, but obviously it's more complex than that because there are a number of sub-tests and some of those sub-tests are more indicative of possible success of a student entering the formal education system.

Ms ARMITAGE - Can you give me the number that applied in those years, please, or the number that were passed?

Ms BURGESS - We'd have to take that on notice.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you, madam secretary, you have a question on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, is that the question on notice on terms of the applications?

CHAIR - And you will receive that in writing, thank you. Is there any other follow up question on that?

Ms ARMITAGE - I have quite a few questions on this, but if you want to go on to Josh and I will list my questions.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. There will be some additional questions that will follow on to the one in relation to gifted students if that's all right, thank you, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure. Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - There are quite a few.

CHAIR - Thank you, and before I go to Mr Willie, I'm going to go to Ms Siejka. First question. Thank you.

Ms SIEJKA - Just a question about the Northern Support School. I want to know how much money has been allocated and/or spent on the Northern Support School to create deficiencies in the original build, and whether more storage space has been added to take over bays in the hallways that are no longer used for storage of student equipment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I visited the Northern Support School in the last year. I might request one of our infrastructure team to provide an update on the Northern Support School, unless I can provide any information to you. I know it's been a significant investment which is good. So, the capital project for the Northern Support School provided for the refurbishment of the Ravenswood site allowing for the Newstead Heights site to be vacated and eventually sold. The consolidation of Northern Support School operations on to one site has brought

considerable benefits to students and staff. The principals advise that the students are enjoying the refurbished facilities.

There have been some concerns raised about the facilities and the Department of Education continues to consult with key stakeholders to ensure that concerns were addressed wherever possible. Key disability specialists, including the department of Education and Northern Support School staff, St Giles' key staff, members of the premier's disability advisory council have been involved, and contributed to the project. The buildings comply with and in many cases exceed the minimum building act and disability requirements. A number of issues were identified regarding safe pedestrian and vehicle movements around the site. These issues have now been rectified through the provision of additional parking.

The original budget for the project that was set in 2015 was \$4.6 million. This has been increased to \$10.2 million to meet the additional requirements identified as the project progressed, and the department has made further funding available from uncommitted asset sales to complete the additional works and advise since the relocation of the school. These works are now largely complete and the final works being completed I'm advised in April this year.

Ms SIEJKA - In regards to the storage space being added - this stakeholder raised the storage space concerns, that they take over bays in the hallways are no longer used for storage of student equipment. So, is more storage space being added? That was the particular concern?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is that there is more storage space being -

Mr WILLIAMS - That's my understanding that the usage that arose -

CHAIR - Hansard won't pick that up, so could we invite -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I invite Todd Williams, Director of Facility Services.

CHAIR - Todd, thank you. So, we can get the answer on *Hansard*.

Mr WILLIAMS - Department of Education, correction.

CHAIR - Thank you. And that little microphone is for a very good reason.

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you. I generally speak pretty loudly. My understanding is we've worked very closely with the schools and the school community over the last 12 months, and all the issues that have been raised, have been resolved, including the storage issue.

Ms SIEJKA - Okay, thank you.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. Ms Siejka, any other question there, before I move on? I'm allowing a couple of questions.

Ms SIEJKA - Okay. Why are students with disability being asked to pay for personal care equipment through the NDIS packages when it's always previously been provided by TasEquip? Is the Government trying to cost shift their responsibility to support students with disabilities in schools? What will happen in relation to equipment with a child with a disability

who is not an NDIS participant but is NDIS eligible and the students' families unwilling to apply to have their child enrolled as an NDIS participant? Essentially, these kids may end up in limbo because TasEquip won't supply personal care equipment to those who are NDIS eligible, even if they're not participants. I do -

CHAIR - That is a lengthy question.

Ms SIEJKA - Yes, I understand too that that crosses over with disability but for the Southern Support School that is a concern.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We recently visited the Southern Support School with the Secretary of Education. I invite Lynne McDougall, the Director of Inclusion and Diversity Services, to see if we can provide a Department of Education answer to your question. Although I don't know if we can over the whole lot.

Ms McDOUGALL - Thank you. In relation to your question around equipment for students with disability, at the moment there is a transitional phase and so some students' equipment is provided through the TasEquip scheme that is run by Communities TAS and for some students where their package, their NDIS package is now in place. Their equipment is provided through that scheme. Where a piece of equipment needs to be duplicated for both home and school, there are duplicate pieces of equipment in some instances being provided. But they are being looked at on individual cases.

Ms SIEJKA - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Dean and then I will go to Mr Willie.

Mr DEAN - That virtually answers the question I had and therefore updating the committee on the implementation of the new disability needs-based funding model.

CHAIR - Just stay with us Lynne. You might be needed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You might want to talk a bit further about this, of course. There's \$8 million in this budget, it goes up to \$11 million over the course of the next couple of years. The model will see special education funds aligned to the educational adjustments that schools make to teaching and learning programs for students with disability commencing in 2020. I've mentioned the funding before. This is on top of the \$93.3 million already being invested in 2019 for students with special needs, and clearly the biggest investment in disability education that we've seen which I'm very proud of our team for. This level of investment is effectively an additional amount above the Australian government's SRS loading for students with disability and more importantly, combined with the new education adjustment approach, I'm confident we'll see a significant difference that can be made.

This investment is possible due to the state's contribution under the National School Reform Bilateral Agreement which was about the student and the actual adjustments made for their teaching and learning programs. It is not about funding a student based on a label attached to a student's disability that suggests a deficit. This initiative will continue to build on improved access, participation and engagement for students with disability in inclusive school communities. The projections within the new model show that in 2020 approximately a further

2000 students will access disability funding, taking the number of students accessing special needs education funding to around 4500 students in total.

In addition, within the new model, it is projected we will employ additional support teachers working in our schools. We had that discussion before, alongside staff and students in making educational adjustments to meet student needs. The model is underpinned by seven key principles that relate to equity, accountability, promotion of inclusive practice, transparency and simplicity, integrity, transitional fairness and financial sustainability, and the model builds on the work that schools have undertaken since 2013 within the national consistent collection of data on school students with disability with one further step added. A Tasmanian educational adjustment descriptor tool has been developed by the department to provide greater definition of adjustment for students as the substantial and extensive levels of adjustment. The implementation of the model also sees five full-time equivalent disability education adjustment moderators, working with every school in the state to implement the model for 2020 and to ensure the principles of equity and fairness are applied to all students.

This has had extensive consultation and of course, a communication plan on the model that's been undertaken, including documents, face-to-face forums, online forums, website information, Skype sessions have been held to introduce and consult on the model. In addition there were 26 sessions for key stakeholders, parents, community members between April and June 2019. Other jurisdictions are looking at Tasmania's national leading model and seeing if they can progress work in their own area. The person to my right, Lynne McDougall, has done a fantastic job with respect to this, and the program rolling out and no one in Tasmania knows any more about it than Lynne. If you would like to ask a question.

Mr DEAN - That covers, it. Josh might have had a question in this area as well.

Mr WILLIE - I've got quite a few.

CHAIR - Ms Siejka also has a question in regard to that, so while we have Lynne at the table, let's get the disability area finished, thank you. It is an important area.

Mr WILLIE - My first question, minister. It was published that there was \$34 million of extra money going into this funding model. Is all of that new money? There was \$15 million in last year's budget for ministerial task force work. Has it been re-profiled in the \$34 million?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. It's all new money. I'm advised it's all money from the financial planning.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. So, what happened to that other budgeted amount.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The task force funding? I am advised that \$3 million of the task force money is ongoing, and is on top of -

Mr WILLIE - What about the \$15 million that was in last year's budget.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All right. In terms of the \$15 million we'll take that on notice, Mr Willie. Your exact question is?

Mr WILLIE - I'm trying to drill down into whether the \$34 million has been money that was allocated in previous years and been called something different or some of the \$15 million of it.

CHAIR - We can always come back to that question. Mr Willie, put an asterisk against that one, and if we don't get an answer -

Mr BULLARD - My advice is that the \$8 million ongoing is new money, when it goes up to \$11 million, that's \$3 million from the task force.

Mr WILLIE - What about the 15 million that was in last year's budget? So that's including the three, I think, from memory.

Mr BULLARD - I don't know that this is going to add up to \$15 million, so we might still need to take it on notice. My advice is that the taskforce had allocated to it \$3 million a year.

Mr WILLIE - Yes.

Mr BULLARD - That money is a base, so that's not repurposed. There's \$3 million sitting in their taskforce money that's there.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, it goes up to \$11 million.

Mr BULLARD - On top of that, to election commitments there was an additional \$3 million provided to the taskforce in 2022-23 and 2023-24. That money makes up the difference between the \$8 million and the \$11 million in the out years for the initiative that the minister's just spoken to and the base \$8 million is bilateral funds.

Mr WILLIE - All right. Bilateral. How was the new model costed? It's my understanding that schools are still being audited up until August. I'm interested in how you've got to the figures. It's obviously bilateral money being accounted for, but how has the model been costed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Through the consultation phase. Lynne, would you like to?

Ms McDOUGALL - Yes, the model has been costed at this stage on the projections from the 2018 NCCD data set, the National Consistent Collection of Data on school students with disability data set. At the moment, as you say, all schools are being visited. With a moderation to look at having that 2019 data set which will be used then to model if the funding is required this year. Those figures don't really change a lot in terms of the NCCD percentages here in Tasmania.

Mr WILLIE - There's obviously new categories in the new model. What's the funding allocation for each category?

Ms McDOUGALL - There hasn't been one defined as yet.

Mr WILLIE - It hasn't been defined as yet, but we've ended up with a costing.

Ms McDOUGALL - In terms of [inaudible] bands. It's like, at the moment we're actually working through the extensive and substantial categories, to look at the levels of adjustment and how many in each. At the moment, the data set is extensive more broadly, which is broken down to three levels and substantially is broken down to two, so we need to do that data collection around that.

Mr WILLIE - So if the bands haven't been determined, is that just giving some flexibility to the department to retrofit the funding allocation for each band to fit the budget in there? Is that what's going on?

Mr BULLARD - The work is in progress as Ms McDougall said, but we have put in more money than the NCCD model. So we know that nationally, the work that's been done has provided an allocation and we have funded above that because we do want more funding in the system. I just note if I may, minister, that the National Score Resourcing Board is coming down to look at how we are funding disability. They're very interested in the model that we move into, away from disability label to adjustments and they want to use the information that they can get from us to help them think about nationally whether the model for funding disability is right.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. The minister talked about some of the consultation that's happened around this being out with forums. Children who are currently on the SDR get a staffing allocation and \$25 000 through the school resources package. There is every potential that some of these children will end up with less of a resource around them. Have schools been over catering for those children's needs up until this point, or is the move away going to create winners and losers, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're funding students based on need for a particular reason. This is a nation leading investment and program and that is the fairest system based on need rather than, as the secretary put it, a label. Adjustments for learning, of course, means that all students should win with respect to this. It's a very strict criteria before and as you well know, that that meant that some students missed out and we don't want students with a need to miss out. We want to fund to that particular need. That can vary as you well know.

Mr WILLIE - I agree that the previous funding was a blunt instrument and there were children missing out. My question is, some children in the SDR, were they being overcatered for under the previous model, given that some of them may have some of the resource around them dropped back?

Mr ROCKLIFF - What you might find, and Ms McDougall might want to speak more to this through what she's found during the audit, but often or on occasions, schools can be fairly blunt in the adjustment that they provide to a young person. What this actually does is to fund an evidence-based plan for the actual adjustments that's needed, so a teaching assistant might not actually be the best thing for that child. There might be technology that can be purchased. There might be different ways of working in the classroom. All of these things are going to have a more meaningful impact. I don't know if any of you want to talk about that?

Ms McDOUGALL - I guess in terms of what we're seeing in our work with schools in moderating is that schools are looking more broadly at the type of adjustments that they are going to be making, aligned to the teaching and learning practices and good pedagogies to give access to the curriculum on the same basis as other students. And as Tim said, in the past, that's

been pretty much an allocation, generally, equals TA hours. What was seen through the adjustment descriptor, too, where we've actually delineated the adjustments that teachers should be making against curriculum, access, dissipation, communication, safety and personal care is a broader range of adjustments. Some of which can be catered for through assisted technologies, through other teaching practices, through school wide programs where small group work can be a better way of engaging a student, rather than isolated with a teacher assisting, for example, on an individualised program.

So, imbedding it back into teaching and learning, moving away from funding a deficit to funding what a child needs to participate in an appropriate teaching and learning program. There will be adjustments around the type of support that is funded, but through the new model, there'll be both teacher support and dollar support to be able to make those adjustments for children.

Mr WILLIE - We certainly support the model of the Labor Party. I'm drilling down here because I know when it's implemented, if you don't do the work with some of the parents and students now, we'll end up with inquiries in our office because of the scenario or the perception that there will be winners and losers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is why there's been lengthy consultation to try to avoid what you're talking about to the best of our ability. It's extensive, it's very new and we want as smooth a transition as possible. I expect you know, there may well be some inquiries to your office, but we're trying to avoid - every child that deserves the resource of whatever that looks like in terms of their ability, they should be provided with it.

Mr WILLIE - Just a couple more questions, Chair? I'm after some data.

CHAIR - These are around disability? We do have to share the questioning.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. What's the current number of SDR funded students?

Ms McDOUGALL - 1063.54 FTE.

Mr WILLIE - What's the current number of 55 to 70?

Ms McDOUGALL - 1562.22 FTE.

Mr WILLIE - What's the projection under the new model? How many kids will be funded?

Ms McDOUGALL - Around 4500.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So an additional 2000 we expect as a result of the new model.

Mr WILLIE - Okay.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Siejka, any more in regard to disability?

Ms SIEJKA - No.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Mr Dean, you're good to go?

Mr DEAN - I want to go right into the new area.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Lynne.

Mr DEAN - I want to go into a new area, minister. I want to talk about the schools that really are in the lower socioeconomic group areas and if I can identify the northern suburbs for instance. What I want to know is a breakdown of the kids in primary schools who are not attending schools regularly. I want to know how many are on that list; how often are they not attending school. My information is that we have a number of kids in that area who are just not going to school. In one instance, I'm told one kid was never picked up at all and hadn't been to school for three years. So, I want to know how many and what the department is doing to ensure that these kids are going to school. I'd like to know at primary school, high school and college, years 11 and 12.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. So, the attendance rate in 2018 for students in prep to year 10 was around 89.7 per cent.

Mr DEAN - Can we break that down for the northern suburbs? Can those figures be broken down?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not here, Mr Dean, no. We haven't got them here.

Mr DEAN - Can we take that on notice then?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can take that on notice.

Mr DEAN - Thank you. But if I can have those figures.

CHAIR - Thank you. Continue, minister.

Mr DEAN - Can we have -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Yes, northern suburbs of Launceston.

Mr DEAN - Yes. That's on notice, yes. But the question is a general question of the number of -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Sure. Increasing student attendance at school, of course, is a priority because regular attendance at school is a key factor in improving student attainment. Schools in partnership with parents are committed to improving student attendance through a range of strategies and curriculum support. Now, parents, carers and guardians have a legal obligation or parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure a child is enrolled in and attending school or is registered at home education. A key finding of the audit report recently noted that processes are in place to identify, monitor, report and analyse student attendance and focus on individual students. The report also found the department involves parents and others in improving student engagement, by providing information to encourage communication between parents, teachers and students. There's more work to be done, as you'd appreciate.

The department has taken the recommendations from the report and is using them to inform ongoing work, aligned to the goals of the strategic plan, and this includes further developing a system-wide approach to improving student engagement, continuing to strengthen system and schools' reporting systems for reviewing student attendance, including by year level, and setting targets towards school improvement in attendance and developing further support for schools to measure, monitor and improve student engagement.

I've some information in terms of attendance rates by year level which might inform the discussion. In kindergarten the attendance is 91.1 per cent; prep to year 6, 91.8 per cent; years 7 to 10, 85.2 per cent; prep to year 10, 89.7 per cent; and years 11 and 12, 78.4 per cent.

Mr DEAN - So what's happening to pick up those kids who aren't attending school? I'm told that the current Education Act - and when we debated it, I said it was a toothless tiger - just doesn't give the capacity or ability to really target these families and these kids. So, what is happening to those kids who are missing school? Do we have any kids in Tasmania who haven't gone to school at all for one, two and three years, as I have been told?

Mr ROCKLIFF - On that last question, I'll seek to have the information for you, potentially on notice. But the Education Act, in my view, is not a toothless tiger. In fact, the issue around this, even though we had a tiger with massive teeth, it wasn't working in terms of

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Mr DEAN - Now they're just not there at all, I'm told.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, non-attendance - previously a parent whose child was not attending school went down a path of prosecution, and that wasn't an effective model of reengaging the child into learning. We've discussed a lot of stuff, a lot of things today and right throughout the theme of that, I hope you can appreciate there's that issue around equity and also trying to reduce barriers to learning. Trauma is a barrier to learning and engagement education. Students with disability, sometimes how that model's funded can be a barrier to learning if the resources aren't effectively applied.

The Education Act had a significant change in terms of introducing compulsory conciliation conferences whereby again you didn't have the blunt instrument of prosecution, but rather you involved in what I'll call it a community around the table whereby the school, parents, guardian, the student - if appropriate - and other services potentially could assist in finding out the real story behind why a child is disengaged in learning and is not attending school. When you drill down on that, you can put in effective strategies, including wrap-around services, to ensure that student can become an attender at school. We understand - and you understand, Ivan, I know - and I've often spoken about this, that for some kids to actually get to school, even if it's half an hour late, is a cause for celebration, given what some students have to deal with.

Mr DEAN - Put up with.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have our Education Registrar, Katharine O'Donnell, here. I'm not sure if it's the right time to talk about it, but you've asked the question, so it may well be the time to bring in Katharine. In terms of the compulsory conciliation conferences and the non-attendance of students, we've had the number of referrals by type of school and, of course, this

goes across the Education Act, government and non-government schools. In 2017-18 the numbers of referrals in government schools was 48 and in non-government schools, 10: a total of 58. In 2018-19, government schools, 74; non-government schools, 10: a total of 84. That means 142 total referrals have been received in this type of process and it's a more effective way of, I believe, of looking at the real issues and the meaning behind why a child is a non-attender. We can then provide what I call wrap-around support, unless I'm corrected, to ensure the child is supported to reengage in school. I'm not sure if you can give more detail, Katharine, our Education Registrar, who's at the table.

Mr DEAN - I would ask the question on the accuracy of the figures because I'd like to know just what is necessary for a child attending school before they are recorded in this way. I am told the numbers in the northern suburbs, for instance, are high across a number of schools and that's come from a person from Anglicare who works in this area.

CHAIR - I think Katharine can add to that, minister, too, when you ask her.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's all right. I might just set the scene just in terms of student engagement, reengagement, prior to Katharine talking but –

CHAIR - Before you do, minister, I just want to let everyone know I have asked about the heating in this place. It's quite cool but they're working on it. I'm not sure - hopefully it'll be organised by morning tea. So, apologies for the coolness, and I don't think it's just what we're talking about either. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. So, student access, participation and engagement are one of the four goals of the Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Student engagement is directly linked to attendance, retention and educational attainment. We're investing \$4.7 million in this Budget to the re-engagement of students at government schools with \$1 million targeted towards colleges. You've noticed that is 78 per cent lower than the other areas. This is a continuation of the 2017-18 state Budget commitment that provided \$5 million over four years to implement a cohesive strategy for the engagement and re-engagement of students at government schools across the state. The strategy is aimed at building student engagement across the state through strategic development of in-school and outside-of-school re-engagement programs and targeted support. This year 20 extra positions have been created in offsite re-engagement programs that offer flexible learning experiences catering for students who have become disengaged from mainstream schooling.

That's a broad overview of what we're doing outside of the compulsory conciliation conferences in terms of a resource around re-engagement but Katharine would like to say a few words.

Ms O'DONNELL - Thanks, minister. My office receives referrals from schools. Schools are required to go through a process before they refer matters to me of attempting to resolve the issues where they can. All those schools are told that if there's an issue that they can see from the beginning can't be resolved by time, to refer it straight away so that we can try to resolve it with a conference.

The numbers of conferences that we've held reflect the figures that the minister has given in relation to non-attendance in that. We have held the greatest number of conferences for grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 which reflects the greatest number of non-attendance, and we have had a

really, I think a very good success rate. As the minister said, we view engagement as being getting that child back and that family back re-engaging with school. It doesn't necessarily mean full-time, but they're back in school, re-engaging, attending and building up that attendance. We see it fluctuates between about a 73 and 76 per cent re-engagement rate out of conferences.

We are finding that they are being successful. It is often taking one, two or three conferences to get there, but they are very much, as the minister said, a wrap-around process where we do get a number of people involved, and we have, I can confirm that in the last - so this year, last term of last year and so far this year, there are schools in the northern suburbs that we have had a lot of referrals from that we're working really closely with to work on them. They have a good take-up from those schools in trying to get in and resolve some of these really entrenched non-attendance issues.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have a break-down of some of the schools you were referring to and this is based on the EDI data, I'm advised. Now EDI program, you've been briefed on that at some point?

Mr DEAN - Yes, we have.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Very good program in terms of the information it provides. Invermay Primary School, 92 per cent; Brooks High School, 82 per cent; East Tamar Primary School, 91 per cent; Mowbray Primary School, 92 per cent; and Ravenswood Heights Primary School, 86 per cent.

CHAIR - Another question or move on?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was going to go to a different area if I could.

CHAIR - Okay. Let's get going.

Mr DEAN - A question that I'm often asked here is families, and how will the Government propose to support family engagement in schools? It's a big issue getting families and the parents involved with the school and students, so how does the department propose to do that and what are they doing in that area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a range of areas. First, we have had Launching into Learning for some time now.

CHAIR - Minister, your staff are excellent. You might let them know at the end of the day.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I let them know often. Launching into Learning - and I will be corrected if I'm not quite right - in terms of the program it has been in our schools since 2010 or so. That's very good and we support that. I have mentioned our Learning in Families Together which is a kindergarten to grade 2 initiative, and that also has parental engagement in that numeracy and literacy initiative, and that age group, so that involves families and engages. Our Working Together with three-year-olds initiative - we're rolling out next year in terms of free pre-school for three year olds. Your question is a very good one and it's one that

often comes up in forums and I'm asked questions about community engagement in education and family engagement in education.

We know that families are our most influential educators of our children. In June last year, I requested the department review how it engages families in policy development and decision-making at the school and at departmental levels to identify strengths and areas for improvement. I accepted the family engagement review report in April this year, and we have committed just over \$800 000 to be spent across the forward Estimates to implement the recommendations of the review. There is significant evidence that when families are engaged in the education of their children, attendance, retention, wellbeing and achievement all improve which is the reason for your question.

The family engagement review examined work under ways to involve and empower families in their child education. It also considered the best practice to engage families in education nationally and internationally, and the review found an abundance of diverse family engagement happening across our public education system. It made three recommendations for building on existing strengths and targeting specific areas for improvement. The first recommendation is to work collaboratively in developing a framework which sets out clear expectations and provides a coherent guidance on engaging with families at the department, school and Child and Family Centre levels. Of course, that's another fantastic resource which you have in your electorate which is a great initiative and we're happy to build upon that which we have done, CFCs I'm talking about.

Recommendation 2 is to expand and strengthen supports to build the capacity of families to engage with their child's education at department, school and CFC level. Recommendation 3 is to specifically embed family engagement as a critical element of the department's strategies and practices for school improvement. I've mentioned the resource we're providing with respect to those recommendations, and report. It says it will be available publicly. Is it available on the website yet? I received it in April, I know, but it is available to you, which is good reading.

CHAIR - Is it available?

Mr DEAN - A review report?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, the review.

CHAIR - Is it available? It will be tomorrow.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There you go. It will be tomorrow.

CHAIR - We won't be cynical about the timing, minister. We're bigger than that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that's fine. I received it in April. Yes. It's an important question.

CHAIR - Thank you. I'll move to Ms Armitage. We'll get to early learning in 1.3.

Ms ARMITAGE - I am having trouble with my iPad unfortunately but I will have my questions ready for early learning in 1.3. My questions are in regard to years 11 and 12 and

the roll-out of years 11 and 12 to high schools. I am interested in how many schools it's now been rolled out to and how many more are still to go?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think it's 43 at this present time that are engaged in year 11 and 12 provision. We made it very clear in 2014 when we came to Government that the year 11-12 extension wasn't going to be a one-size-fits-all approach where every school had to directly extend to use years 11 and 12. There are some good examples of direct extension though: Ulverstone Secondary College, Ulverstone High School, that's now renamed Ulverstone Secondary College as a direct extension model.

CHAIR - Has your policy changed on that, though, now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

CHAIR - It hasn't? No? So still not every school is expected to go -

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, every school is expected to offer year 11 and 12 provision, absolutely by 2022, yes. But the model that is rolled out can be different to suit the community, and that's always been consistent. For example, the teganna Collective, the high schools around Rosny College, for example, that's 11 and 12 provision where that collective of schools, high schools and Rosny take responsibility for ensuring students complete year 12. The Hellyer Collective was launched last week and that is the schools around Hellyer College, and they have a similar model to the Rosny Collective, but again it's a little different to suit the region, and it's everyone working collaboratively together to ensure that our students complete year 12.

Next year the Education Act requirements come in where a student has to stay at school until they complete year 12 or when they turn 18 years of age, or be engaged in vocational education and training at Certificate III level, or a full-time job. Now, the full-time job is 35 hours a week, as opposed to, correct me if I'm wrong, the Guaranteeing Futures Act had 25 hours a week, so that's increased. The act makes sure that people are learning or working or being productive members of our community, and the high school extension program is a very important part of that.

Ms ARMITAGE - As it's the Government's intention to roll out years 11 and 12 to high schools in cities such as Launceston, do you consider it will negatively impact colleges such as Launceston and Newstead? If you consider it will not, can you advise how it could possibly not impact them considering students in a built-up area like Launceston, if they're staying at their high school, then obviously numbers will have to be down at the colleges.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, not necessarily because the act when it changes will require all students to engage in education or training or full-time work. So, the school numbers will increase. Now, some of the success stories of the high school extension program include that it's enabled and encouraged our students who would not have gone on to a college to engage in year 11 and year 12, and that's a good thing.

Ms ARMITAGE - I agree. Can you give me the numbers, minister, for last year, the year before and this year for Newstead and Launceston, just so we can see whether the numbers have gone down? My understanding is that, particularly with Newstead, numbers have significantly gone down.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll provide an answer to this via a question on notice.

Mr DEAN - Newstead, 761 in 2016; in 2017, 644; in 2018, 561; and I'm told that this year it will be a further drop of 100, about 100.

Ms ARMITAGE - Now, that's significant drop; if it's not to do with the year 11 and 12, can you advise what you think the drop at Newstead College has occurred?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy for part of the Department of Education team to contribute here.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There could be a range of reasons, including that that the year 10 cohort may well just be fewer in number.

Ms ARMITAGE - Year after year, after year, after year. I think the member for Windermere pointed out, that in the past three or four years it's been going down by 100 each year.

Mr DEAN - By about 100 each year, the last three, four years. This year, I'm told, it's about 100 as well -

Ms ARMITAGE - You quoted Newstead College.

Mr DEAN - Yes, Newstead College.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, I don't have the figures for Launceston.

CHAIR - I think Launceston College has had an increase, is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it has. Look -

Ms ARMITAGE - If we could have the figures - I'm happy for you to take the question on notice, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to take all your questions on notice if that's required, Ms Armitage. It's important though to realise - this is never about not wanting provision in colleges and closing colleges and all those sorts of fears.

Ms ARMITAGE - That is a concern.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is, but I think we need to remember the culture of Tasmanians is kindergarten to year 10; we're trying to change that to year 12, and so -

Ms ARMITAGE - It couldn't be to stay to year 12 by encouraging them to go to college at Newstead or Launceston colleges, where they have to stay at the school they're at?

Mr ROCKLIFF - But certain individual students have barriers. Just bear with me for a second while I'll try to explain it another way. If there are no colleges and high schools just went to year 10 and we wanted to increase the year provision and the government said, 'Okay, we'll go to years 11 and 12 but we'll only do in eight sites around Tasmania' - all right - what would Smithton, or Scottsdale, or St Mary's say about that?

Ms ARMITAGE - St Mary's. They're obviously schools that actually need years 11 and 12 because they're not in a built-up area such as Hobart and Launceston. They don't have colleges available.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right.

Ms ARMITAGE - So I accept that. But my question really is: with regard to teachers as well, speciality teachers for year 11 and year 12, are students at the high schools going to be disadvantaged?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do we have that many speciality teachers for years 11 and 12 that we can actually cater for Newstead College, Launceston College, Hobart College, all the colleges around Tasmania as well? Are we going to be able to find enough speciality teachers? We're being told previously at Estimates year after year, that sometimes a teacher might be teaching maths and science who doesn't specialise in maths and science, but because there aren't any specialist maths and science teachers, teachers don't specialise in those areas - and this isn't even year 11 and year 12 - this is across the grades - are having to teach those areas.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

CHAIR - There's a lot of questions there, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A few questions but I'll work my way through those. I'll focus on Newstead and Launceston colleges.

Ms ARMITAGE - That's fine. The best interest of the child -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand the passion in colleges absolutely, and we are committed to keeping our colleges open, but we are particularly committed to providing and improving the learning outcomes for our kids. That should be the focus around the Rosny College and Hellyer collective model - that student focus, the student at the centre approach which the department talked about quite some time ago in terms of the student percenter. As a result of that direction, the retention rate is the highest on record - 72.2 per cent. The extension school approach demonstrates that we need to plan individualised learning pathways for our students rather than focus on the individual school. It's about the individual themselves, but the focus should always be on how the colleges and schools work together.

Now all colleges play a key role in improving retention, attainment and year 12 completion. They have almost 90 per cent of all senior secondary enrolments, so our colleges have 90 per cent almost of senior secondary enrolments. Northern urban second schools and colleges are planning to build a cohesive vision for their senior secondary offerings in the region with an emphasis on complementary provision. Both Newstead and Launceston

colleges provide a breadth of curriculum that supports the varied learning pathways of students. Enrolment patterns at school and colleges vary over time. Newstead College's enrolments have declined in the past three years, whereas Launceston College's enrolments have increased by 132.1 FTE students since 2015.

The two extension schools in the urban Launceston area, Prospect and Kings Meadows high schools have 17.2 FTE enrolments in 2019 for the high school extension. The student engagement initiative has developed specialised and targeted retention strategies that were devised by each of the eight colleges. The models are different. A student can go to years 11 and 12 at the college, and that's it; or they can go to a high school and that's it - or a combination of both. Now, at some point, it would have been about two-and-a-half years ago, an Ulverston high school student, prior to becoming Alverston second college, had a subject offering in Newstead College in Launceston, for example. So it's about everyone working together in that sense. Now, regarding specialist teachers -

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes. Well, year 11 and 12 teachers would have specialities as opposed to if they were teaching a higher grade, obviously they'd have more speciality if they are teaching curriculum at year 11 and 12.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

Mr BULLARD - In terms of speciality detention and expanding the range of subjects offered in the extension schools Virtual Learning Tasmania - a new online program that came out in term 1, [inaudible] which delivers high quality courses for years 11 and 12 in an online format - this year we launched high levels of synchronous learning and increased oversight consistency and support. That means you have a teacher in the extension school who is with the students and then you'll have out teaching coming out of the eSchool through Virtual Learning Tasmania. There have been 162 course enrolments in Virtual Learning Tasmania courses and it's providing a really broad range of subjects to students who are geographically isolated or who can't attend colleges because of their personal circumstances.

Ms ARMITAGE - So only for the ones geographically isolated and the ones that can't attend so that the other schools as well, such as -

Mr BULLARD - It's to every school, I suppose, is what we're seeing is that - yes, it is to every school. Available at every school. A range of subjects are being taught out of Virtual Learning Tasmania and there is a large take-up, I can see here, of those courses.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. So, do you consider, minister, that someone doing years 11 and 12 at a high school is going to have the same educational advantages and the same offerings with curriculum as a person going to - we'll use Launceston, for example, to Newstead College or to Launceston College, that they wouldn't be disadvantaged curriculum-wise and teacher-wise, online learning, not quite the same as having a teacher in the classroom.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, if you're talking about a particular subject, then no, they wouldn't be -

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, we are. We're talking about years 11 and 12.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But if you're talking one subject, for example, I don't see that would be a disadvantage at all and should not be. If we're talking about the breadth of curriculum, the colleges offer a breadth of curriculum and the high schools can - I mean, a student can learn across two or three sites or engage in years 11 and 12 provision across two or three sites if that's possible.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, they can, but you stated earlier, with respect, that one of the difficulties is that some students would have trouble leaving the school they're at. So, they're not going to want to work across two or three sites; they're going to stay at their school. I suppose I understand where you're coming from, and I don't have a problem with years 11 and 12 in areas that are disadvantaged that don't have a college, that it's difficult for students to go, I think that's great. It's really good. It's a good way that we're going. The area I have concern is that we're diluting the curriculum and the schools by allowing every high school, for example, within the Launceston area to take the feeder schools to the college, to have 11 and 12. My concern is that the students at those schools would not be getting the same advantages they would get going to a dedicated college such as Launceston or Newstead. I mean, obviously you don't agree with that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, no. Yes, so I mentioned 17.9 FTE or 18 students across Prospect and Kings Meadows before. Now I haven't spoken to each of the students individually, but it may well be that the great majority of those would not have engaged in education without that provision and would not have gone to colleges. There might have been some barriers to them in terms of how they feel about attending the college.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm just concerned they may not be getting the same advantage that they would have had at a college, but I thank you. I think -

Mr ROCKLIFF - But any provision on any site is an advantage. If we can keep engaging our kids longer in school and learning, that is an advantage to them. All the evidence and data I have seen says the longer a child or student can engage in school, the longer they'll live, the healthier and the happier they'll be.

Ms ARMITAGE - Provided the colleges can continue and we have sufficient teachers. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. A question on years 10 to 12 while we're here, and then I'm going back up the end of the table to Mr Willie.

Mr DEAN - So how, minister, will your department support more students to engage with the Australian School-based Apprenticeships for years 10 to 12? That's an important area, getting into apprenticeships.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I did touch on that very briefly on the overview.

Mr DEAN - You did. So, can you add to that or not?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Very briefly, yes, I can. We understand the importance and value of vocational learning and schools. You know, as I travel round the state, there's a lot more focus on feedback from industry in particular that we need to focus more on vocational education training and we need more tradies to build all the stuff we're building, which is, you know, a

good challenge to have in that sense. We're committing an additional \$1.48 million over four years to increase the utilisation of the Australian School-based Apprenticeships for year 10 to 12 students in Tasmanian government schools. School-based apprenticeships and traineeships are equipping our young people with broad skills and capabilities, enabling them to thrive in the complex educational and employment settings of a very fast changing global economy. School-based apprenticeships and traineeships support learners to succeed as connected, resilient, creative and curious thinkers through the completion of the nationally recognised VET qualifications and their TCE.

The program also requires students to undertake an approved nationally accredited qualification with a training contract, endorsed by Skills Tasmania. Schools-based apprenticeships and traineeships contribute points to the Tasmanian Certificate of Education and require students to undertake an approved nationally accredited qualification with a training contract endorsed by Skills Tasmania. Students attend school at least three to four days a week to work towards completing their Australian curriculum and TCE studies. In 2018 there was an 8.4 per cent increase in the number of Australian School-based Apprenticeships students in our government schools and we're developing a strategic direction to strengthen and grow this number across all types of industry, inclusive of micro, small and medium and large.

A communication strategy and engagement will target Tasmanian businesses and industry groups to expand those opportunities and to complement existing Australian School-based Apprenticeships staff; two additional staff will be appointed, a project officer focusing on inclusion and diversity, and a project officer working with the northern Tasmanian industries and schools. Work has already begun in the north-west, currently partnering with the advanced manufacturing businesses. A youth engagement approach is being developed to support young people complete year 12 and commence a career while being employed in the industry. These school-based apprenticeships are an important part of our Government's commitment to improve student attendance, retention, attainment and school to work transition that we spoke about before. Young people are able to remain in school, enabling them to learn and earn. In keeping with the aims of the years 9 to 12 project, school-based apprenticeships are about creating meaningful, engaging and authentic education experiences for Tasmanian students in years 10 to 12. Of course, this initiative supports the increased minimum leaving age requirements, as I've spoken about, which comes into force next year as the result of the Education Act 2016.

Mr DEAN - I think from what you said in response to Rosemary's question is that these school-based apprenticeships won't be available in all the high schools, but will be in the colleges and some of the high schools. That's the way it is, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Availability of school-based apprenticeships?

Mr DEAN - Is it in all schools?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It can be in all schools.

Ms ARMITAGE - If they take it up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is student-led.

Mr DEAN - Demand-led or student-led?

Mr ROCKLIFF - By students.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, I've some questions on years 11 to 12, but I have the budget from last year in front of me now with the disability funding, just quickly. If they can take it on notice.

CHAIR - You can take it on notice because we're going backwards otherwise.

Mr WILLIE - There was \$3 million in 2021-22 in addition to the \$12 million allocated in the 2017-18 Budget. Is that included in the \$34 million? It was in the previous budget, not last year's.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Kane Salter, Director of Finance and Business Services, will explain.

Mr SALTER - As you identified, in last year's budget there was \$15 million, including \$3 million in 2021-22. That \$3 million in 2021-22 hadn't been allocated to schools yet. It's still new money that's going in to the funding model.

Mr WILLIE - So they're separate, the \$34 million is in addition to that the \$3 million in 2012-22?

Mr SALTER - Of the \$15 million, \$12 million is ongoing. If we added that \$12 million to the \$34 million, it'd actually be \$46 million overall.

Mr WILLIE - Okay, thank you. That's the answer to my question. Just on the 11 and 12, just following on from the member for Launceston - I think the member for Launceston was trying to get a universal access and access of opportunity. I think that's the basis of her questions.

Ms ARMITAGE - Absolutely, yes.

Mr WILLIE - There is a real concern -

Ms ARMITAGE - Equal opportunity.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's what I'm trying to do. We're all for universal access.

Mr WILLIE - Well, there is a concern that some students may be in an extension school where they could be getting an ATAR in a college or something.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some of our students have got ATARs in our extension schools.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, but not all the extension schools offer that opportunity, do they?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Is that right - the ATAR provision?

Mr BULLARD - Just to reframe our thinking, in year 10 now, students from next year know they need to stay to year 12 and, as part of that, they need to put together an approved learning program with staff in year 10 and also with staff in the senior secondary area. They need a transition plan that sets out what their goals and aspirations are for the qualifications

they wish to receive in years 11 and 12. From that, we can work with students about how that's best provided. Where students don't feel confident to go to year 12 - to year 11 in college, for example - we might put together an approved learning program that suggests that they stay for year 11 in an extension school and then move in to a college in year 12. Likewise, for some students, that would be a very big step. So, the approved learning program is student-led. We see ourselves as needing to put together a package of learning that meets that program.

Mr WILLIE - So I was just summarising the member for Launceston there. The Education Act changes - you're saying they will produce the volume to keep the colleges sustainable. There's every chance that the Office of the Education Registrar will be increasingly busy chasing down some of these families who are not getting their young person to engage in the way that the act requires. There is a big question mark about that increase in volume and it's a cultural thing. I know that schools will be working with students now, telling them and working with their plans, but a big cultural change has to take place. We could change the law but at the end of the day, there may be more students to follow up for that office. That's more of a statement.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I agree with you on the cultural issue and you know the Education minister around 2008 saw the same statistics I saw in terms of retention and attainment and that's when the TAS Tomorrow path happened and -

CHAIR - We better not talk about the war.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'm not going to talk about it in an aggressive political sense. I'm just saying that Mr Willie and I agree on the cultural problem. It's been a problem for some time. We had the TAS Tomorrow, but I don't criticise the intent of TAS Tomorrow in terms of what it was trying to achieve - we've chosen to go another way in terms of the statistics I saw in terms of our 11 and 12 provision.

Mr WILLIE - With due respect, I was talking about the volume that's expected if the Education Act changes and the sustainability of the colleges, which is up to you to explain.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was talking about a cultural problem and it is a cultural problem. I believe the Education Act will assist us in creating that volume. Information I have seen suggests that we lose just under 1000 students of our year 10 cohort, and we don't know where they engage, but we'll be able to track these students more effectively now to ensure they are engaged in full-time work, vocational education and training, and year 11 and 12 provision. Of course when they turn 18, they're adults and they can leave. One of the reasons we changed the Education Act with the Youth Participation in Education and Training (Guaranteeing Futures) Act 2005 - people will correct me if I'm wrong - is that we said you can leave school at 17. I remember when that act went through Parliament.

CHAIR - I do, too.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The challenge we had in colleges was that students would leave year 10, say at Ulverstone High School, go to Don College, and when they turned 17 in August, they would go. That was the challenge we had in terms of completion rates to year 12. We shouldn't have that challenge - well, you've identified the cultural problem. Of course it's going to be a challenge, Mr Willie, but I think the purpose of your question was whether the Education Registrar enough resources to support the provision.

Mr WILLIE - There's that element to it, but also whether the volume will be enough to keep the colleges sustainable into the long term. Other members have highlighted Newstead and other colleges and their concerns there. There's two parts to the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, my view is that it will. When there's a cultural acceptance that you don't have to go to one place - and only in isolation - to engage in years 11 and 12, but potentially multiple sites and when the collective models happen around the state, and I've mentioned what's happening in Launceston and, of course, Hellier versus Rosny. It will then be about the students themselves. They will have individualised learning; we will be catering for and tailoring year 11 and 12 programs for individuals.

Mr WILLIE - Has Treasury expressed concern to the Education department at all about potential duplication under the current model? You've some direct extension high schools offering courses that, say, Don College just down the road is offering. Given the revenue write-down when you looking holistically at the budget, has Treasury expressed a concern there? There may be teaching and infrastructure duplication in close proximity within a community?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can't speak for Treasury, but -

Mr WILLIE - They haven't contacted you and expressed a concern with the budget in its current state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not to my knowledge, no. I stand to be corrected, but I can't recall any contact from Treasury in those terms. Treasury understand the policy; in fact, Treasury has been very supportive, I have to say, of our educational investment. A few years ago a principal came up to me at the Department of Education Awards following a presentation in the morning and the 'What's your profession of the day? The Big Day Out? Together We Inspire Day', where I spoke and a Treasury representative spoke. We were on the same page in terms of Tasmania's future linked to the importance of education. The principal came up to me and said, 'Wow, I've never experienced that before, where Treasury is actually saying how important investment in education is to increase our productivity and those sorts of statistics.'

Mr WILLIE - There's investment, but then there's also using the resource efficiently to get the best outcomes and that's the point I'm making.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand the point you're making. The point I would make in reverse though is why shouldn't a resource be applied to give an individual the best opportunity of furthering their education? The Education Act, essentially, in its objectives, says that every single child has the fundamental right of a good education irrespective of background or circumstance, and that's what drives the government - that equity that every student does have that fundamental right.

Mr WILLIE - If the resource is being used in an inefficient way, that provides inequities, doesn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I'd disagree with that. If you can demonstrate there's an inefficient provision of resource in the year 11 and 12 extension program, let me know.

Mr WILLIE - Well, I'm aware of some infrastructure upgrades where there's potentially a college just down the road with very similar infrastructure, so that's a resource that's gone into that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'm not sure where. Of course, schools have benefited from infrastructure improvements as a result of the 11 and 12 extension. That's a good thing, if you go out to New Norfolk High School, which -

Mr WILLIE - I expect we will at some stage.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I encourage you to visit those schools. That's a new area that's been provided for year 11 and 12 students. It's a different culture. They're older students and they have their own area in which to socialise and learn as well. I think that's a good thing. I think it'd be critical of us if we just said, 'Okay, here's your 11 and 12 provision. Here's a few resources for subjects and staff' and we put the kids in an environment that wasn't conducive to learning.

Mr WILLIE - That's not what I'm saying at all.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I think it would be critical if that were the case, but I don't know - I don't believe there's any wasted resource going into the years 11 and 12 provision. If you've examples of inefficiencies you know about, let me know, but I think it's money very well spent.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have a very quick question. With regard to the colleges - I will stick to the area I know best in Launceston and with Launceston colleges - we've noted the member for Windermere had the figures for the downward trend of students at Newstead. At what figure do alarm bells start to ring with regard about the viability of a college with numbers and teachers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'm sure the member for Windermere's figures are accurate.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, they came from you, so I think they are.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I remember writing a question without notice, but -

Ms ARMITAGE - Did you want to just recap for the minister?

Mr DEAN - In 2016, it was 761; in 2017, it was 644; in 2018, it was 561; and this year I'm told there's been another drop. I was told by people in the college it was probably going to be another 100 but they didn't give me the exact figures for 2019.

Ms ARMITAGE - So at what stage do you consider a college with the teachers they have is no longer viable? Do you look at doing something similar with the primary schools in that? For example, I know East Launceston school and a lot of the schools are full, so is there something with colleges that if you live in a certain area, you must go to Newstead or you must go to Launceston? I don't believe that's the case at the moment, but would you be looking at something along those lines?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Ms ARMITAGE - If Launceston's increasing and Newstead's going down, what are you going to do to resolve that issue?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Colleges are safe and of course -

Ms ARMITAGE - If Newstead continues to decline, would it continue to be safe? Safe as in you won't look at reducing teachers or classes or curriculum?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Colleges are safe and, of course, the department will work with colleges individually and collectively. I've met with college principals twice, last November and early this year as well. Claremont - again, and I will meet with them again in November this year.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, do you have a plan or a reason why the numbers are decreasing? As mentioned by the member for Windermere, probably by around about 100 each year - do you have a reason for that? Or do you have some way of resolving that and a plan to actually bring the numbers back up?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will work with all colleges to support their students -

Ms ARMITAGE - I accept that, but do you have a plan for Newstead at this stage? Are you concerned, minister, that the numbers have been decreasing at Newstead over the last few years? Has that been a concern to you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is that numbers have increased at Launceston.

Ms ARMITAGE - I accept that, but I'm asking about Newstead, with respect.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's fine. I want to ensure all colleges remain viable. That is my objective, and I believe that they are. At the table with me now is the Deputy Secretary of Learning, Trudy Pearce. Now, I have some figures here -

CHAIR - Thanks, Trudy.

Ms PEARCE - I can advise we're working collectively with Newstead and the principals at Launceston College and the associated high schools in the Launceston area to think about how we can collaboratively work together to ensure our education provision is complementary in the region. We met with that group last week around their planning to ensure that this quality program is being offered; currently we can assure you that is the case at Newstead. There is not a critical number where we would not be a quality program, so it's being delivered to the students who are enrolled and in the quarters they require.

Ms ARMITAGE - Of course the other concern with Launceston is we know schools have too many students and they get overcrowded. Is there a critical number as well for too many students? I mean, could we take on notice what the number at Launceston College is or was last year and this year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can tell you now.

Ms ARMITAGE - That would be good. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The figures in front of me are: in 2014, Launceston College had 1387.1 student enrolments - that's full-time equivalent - it now is at 1502.6 in terms of 2019. Over that time there's been a decrease in 2015, an increase in 2016 and an increase again in 2017, so the difference - and decrease in 2018, but the 2018-19 figures show an increase of 22.2 FTE as an example -

Ms ARMITAGE - Is there a saturation point, though? What would the number be? Obviously, you've a certain number – every school I remember when I was at school, and that was a long time ago, but there was a certain level of class numbers. So, with Launceston College, should there actually be a number they can't take beyond. Do you have a saturation point?

Mr BULLARD - It would depend on the physical site. If you see schools on the mainland they can have 3500 students so in terms of ensuring that schools are resourced, there are structures you can put in place in very big schools to deal with that, and the constraint on Launceston College would just be whether the infrastructure would allow more students to go, but I haven't had a report that that's -

Ms ARMITAGE - So there's not a figure that you have?

Mr BULLARD - There's not a cap.

Ms ARMITAGE - When the comparing the 1502 with the 561 from 2017 at Newstead, there seems to be a large discrepancy between the two colleges. I'd assume that apart from probably theatre, even though they both offer the theatre - I think Launceston possibly is well known for its arts - I wouldn't have thought there'd be that many other differences between the two colleges to account for the huge discrepancy in numbers when they're only probably 2 or 3 kilometres apart

Ms PEARCE - That's where the group of principals are working together to see whether there will be certain courses that would be better delivered through colleges, through high school and so that there's not as, as Mr Willie mentioned, duplication but they're working collaboratively also, on whether they can deliver virtual learning courses through Newstead well, because that is face-to-face, it's not an online, it's face-to-face.

Ms ARMITAGE - Which is always better than online.

Ms PEARCE - Yes, that's right.

Mr DEAN - It's a good college. It's a good location.

CHAIR - We're getting onto just comments and we need question. I am mindful that we're not going to get out of 1.1 if we don't move along. So, one more for 1.1, Mr Willie.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got some further information on early entry applications.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. Because I do have some more questions when we get to Early Learning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For the gifted?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So these are the applications: 2014, 21; 2015, 11; 2016, 23; 2017, 14; 2018, 12; and an additional four in 2018, so it is actually 12

Ms ARMITAGE - I note the IQ figure is 130.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So I mean, your point was applications versus approve.

Ms ARMITAGE - It was.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Those approved as well. So, in 2015, I'm advised -

Ms ARMITAGE - I think we've already got the approved.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You've got those?

Ms ARMITAGE - We've got the approved numbers, but they're the applications.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got the advice here, so I'll state it: in 2015, 11 applications, three approved; 2016, 23 applications, three approved; 2017, 14 applications, seven approved; 2018, 12 applications, five approved.

Ms ARMITAGE - I won't ask any further questions in this section. I'll ask them in Early Learning. Thank you.

Mr WILLIE - To do with the national partnership agreement, out of the 196 schools, how many will reach the school resourcing standard over the life of the agreement?

Mr BULLARD - Seventy-five per cent of government schools.

Mr WILLIE - In Tasmania?

Mr BULLARD - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - Seventy-five per cent?

Mr BULLARD - All of them.

Mr WILLIE - All of them will reach the school resource standard over the length of the agreement?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's correct.

Mr WILLIE - Does it alarm you, minister, that the funding growth for Tasmanian schools, government schools in comparison to Catholic and independent sectors, is vastly different? You've a 19.3 per cent increase over the 10 years for government schools; Catholic schools, 75 per cent in federal funds; independent, 73.2 per cent increase in funds over the life of the agreement. Do you think there's an inequity in the 80:20 split from the federal

government for independent and Catholic schools and the 20:80 split in state schools. The capacity of the federal government to fund schools is far greater than the state's, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's - the federal government funds 80 per cent notionally of non-government.

Mr WILLIE - Private and -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Catholic schools, and 20 per cent state, and it's reverse in terms of our commitment. So, the funding arrangements for non-government schools are determined in accordance with the Australian Government's Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes national reform bilateral agreement package with the states. The Australian Government remains the majority funder of non-government schools. Under this funding agreement, the state is required to fund up to 20 per cent of school resource standard for non-government schools. State funding to Tasmania's non-government schools is slightly above 20 per cent and therefore the bilateral agreement provides for transition from the current level to the legislative requirement of 20 per cent of the SRS by 2023. I stand to be corrected, but we're funding based on an agreement struck in 2013 prior to prior to our government. Is that correct? So, we're holding true to the agreement struck before we became the government.

State funding for non-governmental schools would continue to grow in real terms, albeit at a slower rate than the state funding to Tasmanian government schools. This is fair, particularly in light of increased funding to non-government schools over the relevant period. Total 2019-20 grants to the non-government sector is estimated to be \$37.8 million, an increase of 17.6 or 4.98 per cent over the 2018-19 allocation of \$354.2 million. Kindergarten is not included within the Quality Schools package funding methodology and the state is committed to non-government schools, to continue to fund kindergarten separately, an allocation to separately identify it in funding advice provided to the schools.

So, we're funding as per the agreement in 2013 in terms of that deal struck by previous governments and we're ensuring we are bringing it back to that 20 per cent over the next number of years.

Mr WILLIE - Are you concerned? Will you be lobbying your federal colleagues to inject more money into public schools, given that they, after significant lobbying from the non-government school sector, decided to restore \$4.6 billion?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will always argue for more funding for the government system. I will do that at a state level and a national level as well, and I've been consistent in that. I've argued consistently in terms of needs-based funding as well. I recognise that the Gonski model was the model put in by a previous government not of my political persuasion but I was steadfast in my view that the Gonski model is right. In actual fact the Gonski model, Gonski 2, is fairer than the first model and the reason we have the issue we now have is that former prime minister Julia Gillard promised that no school would be worse off right around Australia and that presented some inequity in terms of the funding for non-government and government schools. My view is that Gonski 2, when the then minister Mr Birmingham, former prime minister Mr Turnbull and David Gonski were there together in terms of that announcement, is a fairer funding model when that agreement was signed in being truly needs based in that sense.

Mr WILLIE - Acknowledging the huge discrepancies in federal funding growth to government schools versus non-government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the original agreement struck in 2013 was the original agreement struck by the state government and federal government at that particular time.

Mr BULLARD - I think your question, the original Gonski agreement or the original model that underpinned that agreement had hidden inequities in it that favoured the Catholic system in particular and certainly the initial model in Gonski 2 put to us removed those inequities. But as you have said, there is now a pot of money that sits off to one side for independent and Catholic schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But I will always argue for more funding for government schools.

Mr WILLIE - Well, over the life of the agreement we're going to see some real inequities between the government and non-government sector.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Aren't we redressing the balance though? It's funded.

Mr BULLARD - The model itself doesn't generate the inequities if there were to be an argument -

Mr WILLIE - No, I'm not talking about the model, I'm talking about the funding that's committed.

Mr BULLARD - If there was to be an argument about the inequity, it would sit in the additional funding for independent and Catholic schools; the fact they can draw on, although I don't know that there's a sense of how that's to be allocated as yet.

CHAIR - Thank you. The question I have before we leave this is around external recruitment agencies and consultants and advertising. Can we have some figures on what's been spent in those areas by the department? I don't mind if this question is taken on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Let's take that on notice then.

Mr DEAN - I've got to be very quick here. It's the normal question I ask, but first of all in the review of the school fees, I'd like to know where that review on outstanding fees is at and what's happening in regard to that. I'd also like to know about the bullying position within schools - the number of bullying complaints made, the number of assaults by students on students, assaults on teachers and stress leave for teachers. I'd like to go down that path, the one we normally do in relation to those details.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you happy to put those questions on notice?

Mr DEAN - Yes, I'm happy to put them on notice but -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The last part of the question?

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the school fees review, I can provide an answer for you there.

Mr DEAN - Do you have a list of the outstanding fees currently owed to the Education department as well and what's happening in that regard?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

CHAIR - The reason we're asking them this way is that otherwise we don't get an opportunity to get them on the public record. It's important.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of school levies and charges review, extensive consultation for the school levies and charges review took place in terms 3 and 4 in 2018, in line with a commitment we gave. Feedback was received from students, principals, school business managers, school social workers and families. Further consultation will occur in 2019, including further consultation with families. Feedback from the consultation will inform key policy changes arising out of the review. So we're working through that, Mr Dean.

Mr DEAN - So the fee structure's still not set; it's not been reviewed: is that what we're saying?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It hasn't changed.

Mr DEAN - Hasn't changed; it's as it was.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr DEAN - But it will be concluded in 2019 this year, so we could see changes?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Well the principle of the review is that -

All students should be able to choose their subjects based on their needs, interests and aspirations for work and life rather than the cost of the course and regardless of location

The review is also looking at ways to lower the cost of education for families.

Mr DEAN - The other part of that question is about the outstanding debt to the Education department in school fees. Is there an outstanding debt? If there is, what's happening in that regard?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We'll have to take that on notice.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. That's one for Kane possibly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So the process for taking questions on notice -

CHAIR - Is that our secretary will write to you with all the questions put forward in a formal manner.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good, okay, yes.

CHAIR - There's a time frame to receive our answers.

Mr DEAN - That's an important thing, the time frame to really discuss it.

CHAIR - That's a really important thing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm always on time.

CHAIR - We always have an opportunity to talk again in the House regarding that.

The Committee suspended from 11.19 a.m. to 11.35 a.m.

CHAIR - Welcome back, everyone. I've just negotiated with the minister that we actually provide scrutiny to Skills Development and TasTAFE after lunch, which will be 2 o'clock. So that will give us a bit more time to finish off the Education section that we're in now. I thank the minister for agreeing to that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's my pleasure, Chair. This is a very important portfolio investment and the scrutiny is clearly important; we've had some focus on years 11 and 12 today, which is —

Ms ARMITAGE - I have one last question on that, minister, since you've just mentioned it. It is in regard to the number of teachers employed at Newstead College last year, the year before and this year, and whether there's been a decrease in teachers with the decrease in numbers of students.

CHAIR - I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll get that information for you, but it's important - I mean, this is a policy this Government is very proud of.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm sorry, I'm not talking about your policy, I'm just asking teacher numbers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I understand that. The opportunities it presents our students across the state are so much more than were there five years ago and this policy, in my view, will never be rolled back. We are committed.

Ms ARMITAGE - With respect, minister, I'm not asking about the policy; I'm simply reflecting on the number of students now at Newstead College, regardless of the reason, and asking the number of teachers, whether that's decreased as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can take that on notice, absolutely. I want to make the point that this is a policy that is working, the data points to the fact in terms of TCE attainment —

Ms ARMITAGE - With respect, I'm not asking about the policy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I'm giving more broad comments on the policy because we had that year 11 and 12 focus. I'm happy to provide all the information in terms of colleges, but it's an important policy that everyone is committed to, whether you're in a college or a high school.

Ms ARMITAGE - I agree, that's why I'm asking you about the number of teachers at Newstead College. I agree 11 and 12 is important, but I don't need to hear the policy again, with respect.

CHAIR - Thank you. The minister will take that on notice.

Mr DEAN - In relation to the absences and so on I raised, I meant to ask a question about the Auditor-General's Report No. 8 of 2018-19.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr DEAN - The Auditor-General made a number of recommendations relating to the position the Government, the Education department, should adopt in respect of absences and so on. So, and I can put it on notice, my question -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have discussed that and referred to the Auditor-General's report in a previous answer.

Mr DEAN - Yes, but I want to know if they've been actioned; what's been actioned; and what hasn't been actioned; and what did we get from it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr DEAN - I'm happy to put that on notice. .

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

CHAIR - Otherwise our reputation will be the same as another area of the parliament which never gets out of the overview.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know Ms Burgess can speak briefly to that because it's her area of responsibility.

Ms BURGESS - So in response to the Auditor-General's report, we have established an oversight group to ensure we can strategically and methodically address all those actions outlined in that report. This group has met and developed a specific action plan, and it's a whole-of-agency approach, which is important to understand. It's not just about the data, but it's around the way we are working to support the students to access and engage in learning. We've already addressed recommendation (1) which was a dashboard that breaks down year 7 to 10 data so that schools are able to see that by year level, by term, by gender and by ICSEA. We're going through and we're now testing through that learning services to see how effectively that is. I don't know if you want to me to go through each action to let you know where we're at with those.

Mr DEAN - Madam Chair needs to move on. I'm happy to put that on notice in writing to you because 2, 3, 4, and 5 are important recommendations in relation to the questions I was asking.

Ms BURGESS - So you'd like some detail on what actions 2, 3, 4 and 5?

Mr DEAN - Absolutely, 4 and 5 in particular, yes.

1.2 School Support Services

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Moving now to 1.2, which is School Support Services, I know we've probably wandered a little bit into this area, but Mr Dean, your first question, thank you.

Mr DEAN - You've covered this to some degree, so I'll not too much into it. Does the state Government use any additional data collection, apart from NAPLAN to review the educational abilities of our students across the state? If so, how is this done? To me, so you know, using NAPLAN is not a great model. I have problems with NAPLAN as a number of other people do. Are there any other ways to look at the abilities of students right across the spectrum?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of benchmarking exercise?

Mr DEAN - Yes, benchmarking processes. We tend to put every student into the one basket now and say that they're okay or whatever. We don't have the passes, fails and those things that we used to have.

Ms BURGESS - There are a couple of things there. We have developed and are continuing to develop what we call aspire which is a way that we can holistically view a number of pieces of information at a school level around how a school's performance is tracking. In that mix we do use NAPLAN data, but we also use Australian curriculum data. So that's for the school itself and attendance data and all those sorts of things, that allow us to them have a look at how our schools are performing and what sorts of supports they need. At an individual student level, you would be aware that we collect a range of data on student performance, some of that is against the Australian curriculum. We have the NAPLAN data. A high number of our schools use the progressive achievement tests, that is offered through ACER.

In our early years of schooling which we understand, of course, is really critical to ensure that we target our teaching and learning to the needs of students, we collect the kindergarten development check. We have the Australian educational developmental census. We have PIPS, which is the prep-school test which tests twice through the year. So, there are a range of measures. We are continuing to work through what assessment might look like into the future. You might be aware that through the national reform agreement there was some specific work to be undertaken around formative assessment tools. So that is having a tool that teachers will be able to use that will be able to indicate where the student is at at a point in time and support them to further understand the next steps in that student's learning, and how to support that from a teaching and learning point of view. We will be transitioning to a formative assessment tool and approach to make sure that we maximise our understanding.

Mr DEAN - Thank you. Minister, through that whole process, and I'm not saying we should be publicly identified, but are you able to identify how one school is working in relation to students' capacities and abilities in relation to another school? Can you look at the schools that are performing better, say for instance in primary school, how one school is performing against another school with the educational standards being met by students?

Mr BULLARD - We certainly look at like schools and how they're performing against one another, and we're also very interested in looking at growth. So as a system that services a large number of students and communities with very different attributes, the real measure of success is whether or not a school is growing each of its students over the course of a year.

Mr DEAN - Where a school may not be to the level of another school, primary school with students' capacities and ability, what actions are being taken, if any?

Ms BURGESS - Over the last few years and more specifically over last year, we are implementing a new, what we call, external school review approach. It's not just purely looking at the data, but it's using the national school improvement tool to send a small group of people in there to ask particular inquiry questions around where the school is at in their journey and what supports they might need going forward. So, that is the approach we would use, rather than just looking purely at the date. We'll go in, work with the teachers, talk to the community, talk to the students about their learning, and from there, formulate next steps in a plan to support those schools to be on that journey to growth.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that.

CHAIR - Yes, another question.

Mr DEAN - This is a question provided to me by someone within the industry.

MS ARMITAGE - Get your information everywhere, wherever you can, minister.

Mr DEAN - Cross-section regulatory function review, taking on board cross-sectoral feedback, the government is committed to a review which would consider the most appropriate and efficient governance and funding structure for administering the functions of these entities to ensure fully transparent cross-sectoral advice is provided to the minister. So is this a favourite quote. So, can you explain that further?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. So, the Office of Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification, the Teacher's Registration Board Tasmania, and the Office of Education Registrar, provide critical regulatory oversight and support services to the government, independent and Catholic educational sectors, given these services are provided for the benefit of all sectors, both government and non-government. It is an historical anomaly that they are funded and, in some respects, receive operational guidance through the Department of Education and these entities are independent to any of the sectors they regulate.

As minister for Education the community needs to be confident that I receive independent cross-sectoral advice and we need to strengthen the public's perception of our statutory entities ability to operate at arm's length from the Department of Education. Following consistent feedback from all education sectors, this Government is committed to a review to determine an efficient and effective sustainable governance structure for those statutory entities. Over a

number of years now, each of those entities has been experiencing financial pressures through an increase in demand for their services. In response to this demand increase and a reluctance to see these independent bodies compromised in their ability to discharge their functions, additional funding has been provided by the Department of Education but this is a government expense.

In 2016, in implementing the Education Act we transitioned the regulatory oversight of non-government schools and home education out of the department and we established the Office of Education Registrar. The establishment of the registrar has been well received and the registrar works closely with home educators to make home education a strong and valued part of the broader education system. The registrar also has now put in place a robust system for administering the non-government schools registration process. However, while the functions provided by the registrar are now delivered at arm's length from the department, a funding dependency still exists and the review, in considering a more appropriate governance structure for those statutory entities, is the next logical step in transitioning the cross-sector regulatory functions to an approach that is independent of the Department of Education. The review will commence in July. The department will work collaboratively with the independent and Catholic education sectors on the approach to the review and the preliminary consultation with key stakeholders will start. In undertaking this review and providing additional funding, this Government is ensuring that Tasmania has the right model to support the Education minister of the day and future ministers for education with a best practice governance structure for a central education regulatory oversight. That's where it's at.

Mr DEAN - One further question?

CHAIR - Yes, one further question.

Mr DEAN - Thank you. How are the school improvement leads determined and allocated by learning services? Is it based on reporting or do the state school principals meet? How is it done? How do learning services administer that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's probably a few ways. We get feedback from the principals themselves - I'll invite Trudy Pearce to the table.

Ms PEARCE - Through you, minister. I believe you're referring to school improvement leaders.

Mr DEAN - School improvement needs, but yes, that's it.

Ms PEARCE - The school needs would be assessed through learning services, it would be determined through working through school improvement leaders and our student support leaders who regularly visit schools and are able to determine need in relation to supporting students and whether it's the additional needs through the respectful school support team, whether it's access to autism support consultants, assistance with working their improvement plan, literacy personnel, working with curriculum, so they provide a front door approach to other resources all across the department.

Mr DEAN - So that's in relation to the students, right, the assessment of students and is that an annual thing that's done on each school annually, because I guess students -

Ms PEARCE - It's done more that the allocations of staff to support students would be annually. But then there's a more dynamic approach in relation to access to people who can consult or individually support leaders at a certain time.

Mr DEAN - Okay.

CHAIR - Supplementary to that, minister, how are we going recruiting the appropriate personnel when it comes to speech pathologists and psychologists for our schools? How is that actually working at the moment? It's always been a struggle in the more remote and rural areas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I don't believe we have any major challenges unless I'm corrected with the recruitment of our school nurses. But in terms of speech pathologists -

CHAIR - I know that's something that's been an issue in some of the schools that I have the privilege to represent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've spoken about the additional resource and 14.8 full time equivalent professional support staff positions were allocated in the 2017-18 budget. That comprised of 5.8 FTE speech and language pathologists. At 2.8 FTE for special schools and 3 FTE for additional speech and language pathology support in schools. This includes a reduction in a number of schools with an on-call service and increased flexibility to deliver professional learning in mainstream and special schools. Four FTE social workers and 2 FTE for critical instant response and 2 FTE for 11/12 extension programs, 4 FTE school psychologists, 2 FTE for critical instant response and 2 FTE for 11/12 programs, 1 FTE psychologist position allocated to the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service.

CHAIR - So they're all positions that have been filled and they are working on the ground.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms PEARCE - From time to time there will be a vacancy, whether it's through sickness leave and so there have been times when we might have been under quota, but currently all the positions are filled. That is a bit dependent on staff circumstances, but they are currently filled and we work through asking part time staff to increase their load to try to fill need when it does occur and we are unable to recruit.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just on that, for the number of professional support staff funded by the department, is 211 FTE which includes 32.7 school health nurses, and this is – we're employing record numbers of professional support staff to assist students with participation and engagement. Early learning, well-being, to support schools and managing responding to critical incidents as well and it remains a clear priority as some of the reasons we've discussed this morning.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Armitage?

Ms ARMITAGE - With regard to support - and I noticed advertised recently, you have many positions for literacy coaches at a variety of schools across the state. I see there are fixed term and part time. Can you explain to me - obviously the salary is for - it would be a full time

- \$102 689, a lot of them are for smaller schools. Would they be sharing the resources across the schools? I have one here for Natone's School? Orford Primary School?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Every school will have access to a literacy coach.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, that's what I'm asking. Will they be at one school or are they sharing resources a day each, or how does it work?

Ms PEARCE - Each school has an allocation, so the resource is inherent in their staffing. The resource might be 0.4 or 0.5 and then that teacher is still at that school for the rest of the time.

Ms ARMITAGE - You might have the same teacher then applying for the literacy coach at South Arm and they might do two days there and then three days at Orford. I noticed they're separate positions all listed at fixed term, part-time, \$102 689. I appreciate that would be an annual salary adjusted to the part-time. I'm wondering how it actually works – because they're all listed as separate positions to each of these schools, some larger, some smaller so they would apply for one position or once – or both schools – and then divide that up? Is that how it would work?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The allocation of literacy coaches is based on a formula developed and agreed to by the principal advisory group. This strategy is inclusive to all students and staff. There's evidence that coaching improves teacher practice and student learning, literacy coaches will continue to build capability, to deliver a skilled and ready workforce and this initiative is strategic, systemic and aligned and it builds consistency of practices state-wide for teaching and learning.

The expanded model promotes equity from one where only some benefit to one where all have access to a coach and it broadens the sphere of impact across all schools and colleges through targeted professional learning and at the shoulder, support for teachers and their students, my understanding is the feedback's been positive from principals and of course their literacy coaches are key to implementing our literacy action implementation for that as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - It will be ongoing, so it is permanent as -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ongoing resource.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Willie?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, back to the speech pathologist and school psychologist and school nurses. I was just after the ratio of speech pathologist FTE to student ratio? If I could have that and also for psychologists and also for school nurses.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For nurses?

CHAIR - On notice?

Mr WILLIE - Take that on notice?

CHAIR - Thank you. Okay. If there aren't any more questions in regard to 1.2?

Mr DEAN - I had one if I could. But I'm not quite sure if it comes up in this area. I will ask and you can put me on it.

CHAIR - The minister or somebody will let you know.

Mr DEAN - What teacher assessments are undertaken within the department? How are their qualities and abilities assessed? What's the process where teachers are developed, assessed and how they are performing, et cetera?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So the Professional Learning Institute - in terms of professional development in school are you talking about?

Mr DEAN - I'm talking about the assessments of teachers themselves. What assessment is being done of teachers and their capacities and abilities and the productivity and so on?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So based on continuous improvement in terms of their -

Mr DEAN - Yes, continuous and schools, where they have been able to function at the required -

Mr BULLARD - The first thing is that when you come in to work for the department, you're not a fully registered teacher and you need to achieve full registration, which is a process which isn't the responsibility of the department. It's the Teacher Registration Board that actually assesses you against the competencies and capabilities. So somewhere within your first years of service we would like to see you supported to put your portfolio of evidence into the Teacher Registration Board. That is a very robust assessment around your capability to be a fully registered teacher. Obviously like any government department there are members of staff that underperform in schools and some of those are teachers. Through the Principal Wellbeing Action Plan, we've allocated specialists to work in learning services to support principals to manage underperforming members of staff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have a few numbers here in terms of the professional learning institute which contributes to achieving the Department of Education's goal of access participation engaging by offering every employer the opportunity to participate and engage in professional learning. Now, in the 2018-19 reporting year, the PLI had 7408 enrolments in professional learning programs. All professional learning provided by the PLI is quality assured against evidence-based adult learning principles. The professional learning offered through the PLI strongly reflects the Department of Education's values of aspiration and growth and the PLI's mission is to be a leader and integral partner in the development of highly effective and continually improving the Department of Education workforce. Since 2015, we have worked in strong partnership with the University of Tasmania, the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, to support over 200 teachers to upskill in the developing our workforce strategy which we spoke about briefly this morning. So, there is ongoing work and good uptake in terms of teachers wanting to up skill and -

Mr DEAN - Have any of the services of teachers been withdrawn through the registration board whether unable to -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Teachers Registration Board Tasmania?

Mr DEAN - Yes. Have any teachers ever been dismissed or withdrawn from the department -

Mr ROCKLIFF - As a result of not performing?

Mr DEAN - Not, I guess, not performing - not reaching the levels of standards required by the Education department?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll have to take that on notice but someone might - no, I'm getting shakes of heads. None.

Mr BULLARD - Not that we're aware of, but there are two processes in play. One would be our how we manage underperformance and we're not aware of anyone who's had their employment terminated on the basis of that process. There is occasion where the Teachers Registration Board Tasmania may choose to either suspend or cancel the registration of a teacher in which case that teacher can no longer teach in a school, and on occasion that has ended in termination of the employment for those individuals.

Mr DEAN - Have any teachers been terminated for any other reasons? Have any teachers been terminated, services of teachers been terminated within the Education department in the previous 12 months?

Mr BULLARD - The previous 12 months? I take that on - for any purpose? Is that there? You can see my brain going because I'm trying to think. Teachers have definitely been suspended. I'm not sure we -

Mr DEAN - Numbers?

Mr BULLARD - I'm not sure we have terminated any.

Mr DEAN - Have you had numbers on suspensions?

CHAIR - One suspension.

Mr BULLARD - There's one suspension for a teacher.

Mr DEAN - And the reason?

Mr BULLARD - The reason for that suspension was suspension of teacher registration.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. I can wait, Chair, until statutory officers or can follow on because it is related.

CHAIR - No, I'd rather you wait because Mr Armstrong has the lead.

Mr WILLIE - It's on the Teachers Registration Board.

1.3 Early Learning

Ms ARMITAGE - Just continuing on my questions in regard to gifted children. Can you advise me to start with of the number of education officer roles dedicated to gifted education statewide? How many are there now? I believe there were five previously. Are there more or are there fewer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will seek some advice to that question.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's 5.5, I'm assuming full-time equivalent in terms of the gifted, focusing on gifted students.

CHAIR - This is early education?

Ms ARMITAGE - Early education, yes, to gifted children going into education prep, kinder, kinder to prep.

CHAIR - So that would be holistically for the gifted?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, for the gifted.

CHAIR - But not just for the early learners.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, no.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Across the whole department.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, that's for the gifted. As you're aware, minister, and obviously Jenny is aware, that we had an issue with a child last year that protracted for five months and caused huge amount of trauma to the child and to the family, and it was hard to see how it was in the best interests of the child. I accept that the committee is bound by the minister with instruction that a child's IQ must be 130 and over, and that on some occasions a child just below this can be assessed under special circumstances. So do you believe, minister, that's appropriate when there are many intelligent people who might necessarily not be socially adept or mature, so do you believe that having to have, in most instances, an IQ of 130, and the figures you have given me yourself say that in Tasmania last year we had five, there would be more than five gifted children, do you think that the criteria for a gifted child that the committee is bound by should be looked at?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will be guided by the advice that I receive from the department. I am not an expert in this field, but -

Ms ARMITAGE - Or I guess I could ask whether you believe that perhaps people that know those children best should have some involvement with the committee such as the parents and the people that are teaching them at the time who don't - aren't allowed to have any involvement with the committee or give any advice to the committee?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, so our policy, in terms of access to earlier education, our policy remains the same. Parliament, through large discussions, decided not to lower the voluntary starting age which perhaps would have been of benefit to your constituent, but the policy hasn't changed and I'm willing to receive advice as to whether it should change in terms of the policy around how gifted children are assessed, but I'll wait for that advice if indeed it is necessary to change.

Ms BURGESS - Through you, minister, also. It is also on parental application, so the child needs to be three and a half by 1 January in the year they wish to access kindergarten, which, of course, is not compulsory, but it's also when the parents assess whether they want their child to be able to access early learning through a kindergarten situation. Not all parents would choose for that to occur.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think I was talking about prep, as you're probably aware that I was looking at, with apologies. You know, the gifted child as opposed to the child entering kinder.

Ms BURGESS - The normal entry process would be through kindergarten and we have very few applications that come to seek early entry then into prep. The normal approach is early entry into kindergarten.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think you would accept that many private schools - it might affect the private schools more than the state schools - will take a child into kindergarten, who might be three to four days, and I don't know this is happening, outside the age for prep so they're doing kindergarten, maybe three or four days earlier than they should have gone, so they have taken them to kindergarten. Then of course the next year the act states they can't go into prep because they don't meet the age requirement unless they are classed as a gifted child.

Now, that was the difficulty I was helping a constituent with last year. The little girl had gone to kindergarten. Her parents didn't consider she was gifted, but she was obviously very ready to learn, and had done one year of kindergarten for three days, being three days outside the cut-off, and of course the gifted criteria, and I came across quite a few parents, once this parent came up with it she had quite a group together, that had children who they thought they should have gone on, but were made to stay back because they couldn't, even with a psychologist, come up with an IQ of over 130. They were very smart, I guess, whether you would call them gifted or not, but obviously should have gone on, and what I was told is that parents and schools have lost the ability.

Now, whether that - I guess they had the ability before when there wasn't that guideline, that parents and schools have lost the ability to make the best choice for a child's future and education, and I was further advised that because of the ministerial advice to do with the IQ of 130, that neither the parents, and in the case that happened last year, neither the parents nor the school, both who felt the child, who knew the child best, should go on, it took four or five months, and the trauma to that family and that child in that situation. So, in those circumstances perhaps the deputy secretary through you, minister, might want to advise on how she believes, or whether she believes it could be improved or whether this is the best case that you've actually got at the moment going with the IQ of 130.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We could talk about the process, as it is, now. If there is feedback to suggest that that process can be improved, and where I'm advised on that, then I would be open to that, but at the moment the policy remains the same. If there is compelling evidence to say

it would change, of course we would look at that. I'm not sure if Ms Burgess can provide any -

CHAIR - I'm mindful that we're spending a lot of time on one issue here and I know it's important but we've a lot of other areas to cover.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'll just quickly look at two quick ones, and the minister can take them on notice if he cares to. Education doesn't change, and in a senate inquiry back in 2001 one of the findings was that failing to attend to the special needs of gifted children is most detrimental to underprivileged children because they are least likely to have other supports outside the school. What is the government looking at for gifted children who might be in an underprivileged circumstance. Obviously, their parents aren't going to come forward. Do teachers identify gifted children?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, they would identify them. Look, I'm not going to make policy on the run today, as you'd appreciate. You may be interested in attending the - is it a national conference for gifted this year, in October or September or something? In September. So, you may well be interested to attend that. I'll be attending in some way, shape or form, and I'd be interested to hear some of the discussion and/or the results of the discussion they have in the national conference here in Hobart. It's in Hobart, isn't it, I think? So that may well be a good opportunity to further our knowledge about this policy.

Ms ARMITAGE - One very last question because the Chair's looking at me and I'm sitting next to her, it's very difficult here. One other concern raised with me was that if you wished to appeal the decision of the committee - and this may not be correct; the deputy secretary will be able to tell me if it is right - the appeal goes to the chair of the committee who made the decision. Do you believe an appeal should be independently assessed as going back to the very committee that made the decision, and is probably unlikely to change its opinion?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. So, we can probably find some context here -

Ms BURGESS - Excuse me, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms BURGESS - I think in the past it has gone to the chair of the committee but now -

Ms ARMITAGE - It's independent.

Ms BURGESS - - Those people can go to the Office of the Education Registrar.

Ms ARMITAGE - No. Thank you.

CHAIR - New process in place. Thank you, honourable member. Mr Willie, early education. Thank you.

Mr WILLIE - Early years, yes, sorry. Child and family centres. What's the operational cost of a child and family centre per annum?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can find that information for you. I don't need to tell you how great they are though, do I?

Mr WILLIE - No, no. I think I'd be one of the strongest advocates in parliament for child and family centres, probably alongside with yourself now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. They are wonderful and I know we've increased the resource in the last few years. I recently visited Chigwell and I opened the Book Locker in a partnership of Libraries Tasmania.

Mr WILLIE - Seen that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You've seen that. Excellent. East Devonport, child care centre recently. So, the total recurrent funding for the 12 child and family centres remained consistent at \$5.4 million. Each CFC receives the following allocations per annum: the equivalent of FTE education officer, base grade - \$1.27 million was provided for these positions to support the education, health and wellbeing of children from birth to five years in each CFC; 0.4 of this role is determined by the community need. That gives the centre the flexibility to assess what their community wants, where the resource is best applied in terms of the community needs; 0.2 FTE speech and language pathologist to support language development in young children by working alongside parents and CFC staff. There's \$5200 for data collection, yes, on average \$450 000 for each centre.

Mr WILLIE - Which child and family centre out of the six committed is going to be established first?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The process going on now.

Mr DEAN - Northern suburbs? Launceston?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Lot of hands going up in terms of which community would like it first.

CHAIR - We all want one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Northern suburbs, Launceston. Most needy. I've mentioned the areas early on this morning. I'll let you know where the process we're at, Mr Willie. So, the new centres will be built in Sorell and Kingborough.

Mr WILLIE - Is this the order that they'll be built in?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. It's not alphabetical order either. Sorell, Kingborough, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Ulverstone and Waratah-Wynyard communities.

Mr WILLIE - So do you have any understanding of the order of the rollout?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll try to provide the information for you. The new centres will provide greater access for families to early year services and support in their local community.

CHAIR - I think members all understand what they will do, minister. We really want to get down to the nuts and bolts of who's next cab off the rank.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I'm setting the scene. Chair, they will be co-located on school sites. Funding of \$15.5 million over four years; \$21 million over six years has been provided to commence construction of six new child and family learning centres, co-located on school sites in the communities of Sorell, Kingborough, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Ulverstone and Waratah-Wynyard. Sorell, Waratah-Wynyard and East Tamar will be the first three centres to be built with four being operational -

Mr DEAN - Well done, minister. Well done.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you happy with that?

Mr DEAN - Yes. Very happy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - East Tamar, of course.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With four being operational by 2024. A number of factors were considered when determining the school sites, including site capacity, community readiness and high numbers of births for children. I'm pleased to announce that the school sites are Sorell School, Table Cape Primary School and East Tamar Primary School and \$500 000 has been allocated in the 2019-20 year to commence the construction process. Current funding of \$3.4 million over the forward Estimates and five and a half over the six years has been allocated for 12 near early years staff. This includes four teachers, six child and family learning centre leaders and two support staff. An allocation of \$100 000 in 2019-20 for staffing has been provided to commence planning. The new centres will provide a critical service to their communities, bringing learning, play, social, child health and services all together. Building on the learnings from our 12 CFCs, these new centres will include an onsite early childhood education and care facility. The type of early childhood education and care facility service provider will depend on the need in each community and will value add to existing services. Each community will be involved in the design and development of the new centres, with extensive community engagement and coproduction through local enabling groups.

These six communities were selected on a number of factors, including relatively high numbers of children aged birth to four, the number of vulnerable children reported in 2018 Australian Early Development Census, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics Disadvantage Measures. The centres will promote greater collaboration across government agencies and community-based services and these centres will help us to deliver on the vision of Tasmania's strategy for children, pregnancy to eight years, 2018-21. So, Sorell School, Table Cape Primary School and East Tamar Primary School.

Mr WILLIE - Will the West Ulverstone CFC be co-located with a school? It's my understanding there's a new childcare centre in the community and -

Mr ROCKLIFF - We'll work through those particular community aspects. I've announced the first three and when they will be, but this is all about working with communities and working with our early childhood care centres.

CHAIR - Moving on.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. Well, I've got heaps more in other areas.

CHAIR - I can imagine that list but we need to share it around. Thank you. We've got to get done by 1 o'clock. So, Mr Dean, burning question?

Mr DEAN - Yes. The budget, minister, providing for three-year-olds who are challenged and vulnerable.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Vulnerable three-year-olds?

Mr DEAN - To enter into free preschooling.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Preschool? Yes.

Mr DEAN - So I have a number of questions around that. I doubt you'll have the answers. Are there were sufficient facilities for that to occur? I'm looking at the northern suburbs of - Launceston's a good example - I'm looking at Ravenswood and the Rocherlea areas: will there be the facilities there to manage that? How can we be assured we're going to get the most vulnerable and challenged kids? I always ask that question. What will the assessment be? What's the criteria for the assessment of those children to get a free education at three years of age?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's a number of key areas of criteria for the last question in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, healthcare card and there's another one too -

Mr DEAN - Employment status of parent; income?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that's part of it, the healthcare card. Child safety. That's the broad assessment criteria.

Mr DEAN - How are we going to be sure we're picking them all up, and we'd obviously think the Education department would at this stage have an idea of how many they would be getting from, say, the northern suburbs. So, Ravenswood, let's take Ravenswood, which sits out on its own and the Waverley area: how many from those areas would be coming into this free schooling?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are engaging in a pilot program now across, I think, 11. How many sites?

Ms BURGESS - Across five sites.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Across five sites.

Ms BURGESS - Up with that 11.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Eleven providers. When I was at the child and family centre in East Devonport recently I saw some of the facilities that were -

Mr DEAN - I support this too.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. No.

Mr DEAN - I strongly support it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I'm not saying I'm not supporting it. I am providing information for you, so the assessment or the pilot is informing our - because we committed to bringing this in in 2020 and the pilot is informing us in terms of how we can - it will be an evaluation exercise. It will be ongoing and how we can roll the program out in a way that is smooth. In terms of making sure that we have all the families that we're targeting through this initiative involved, that would, well, cross-agency support would be important here as well.

Mr BURGESS - Through you, minister, the pilot is showing us is that it's not just about, as you indicated, there being a service provision, it's about how we support families and community members to come in, so it's actually the wrap-around supports that will be the success or not of this program. We're taking our time to work out how we ensure those wrap-around supports, non-government services and other agencies are coming in to work together to ensure we are bringing those most vulnerable families through the door.

Mr DEAN - Is that going to entail parental involvement because the child and family centres, the parents have to be there with the children. In this position we're in here with a free education for three-year-olds; because that's going to be the case, I can't see it being really successful because some parents for a number of reasons don't want to be involved.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's a lot of learnings through the child and family centre experience in terms of family engagement. Of course we spoke about family engagement before, but the wrap-around support is what Ms Burgess just mentioned has three components built in: the capacity of early childhood educators to work in partnership with families, building family capacity to understand their risks and resilience and helping the families understand the roles they play in supporting their child to grow and thrive, and building community capacity by helping others understand the best way to support families facing disadvantage and providing them with referrals. Okay, so there's five sites currently with 10 providers, I stated 11 previously, but 10 providers, early childhood providers.

The feedback so far, and I'm sure there's a lot to work through, has been positive about the impact that working with three-year-olds is having on families' lives. For example, a grandmother says this opportunity for her grandson has been life-changing and her grandson is very excited to go, has made lots of new friends. A father who wanted his daughter to go to the local early learning centre but couldn't afford it is now seeing his daughter thrive as a result of being able to access the working with three-year-old opportunity which was the intent through our entire discussion, through the Education Act 2016, of engaging families earlier in education, quality and needs-based inclusive environments as well, which is really important, and it seems to be working.

Mr DEAN - It's a great program, particularly when I look at my area.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of facilities, though, which was another part of your question. I saw an example of East Devonport which was nearly finished, I think, or close to being finished but with it all being assessed, in terms of audited - is that right?

Ms BURGESS - The Drew Street building?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms BURGESS - So initially -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, more generally though the facilities to make sure that a contemporary -

Ms BURGESS - The facilities have to comply with the national quality standard.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms BURGESS - That's exactly right where there isn't -

Mr DEAN - I did ask that question on the facilities, whether there's sufficient in the, say, northern suburbs for these three-year-olds to come into that area and were they coming to the existing child centres. Is that what's anticipated or will there be within this -

Ms BURGESS - So where there are existing education and care facilities, we can work it like that, but it can be on a site-by-site, case-by-case basis.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The intent to work with the early childhood sector to, I guess, improve the partnership and to create a more eclectic and collaborative responsibility for that early learning provision.

CHAIR - I think the aim is not to reinvent the wheel, so moving on, minister, 1.4, statutory officers. Thank you.

1.3 Statutory Officers

Mr ROCKLIFF - In the 2019 pilot of the working with three-year-old program is running successfully with 90 per cent of the 55 available places currently being filled.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Minister, as I understand this output provides for the operation of Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification Teachers Registration Board, and the Office of the Education Register. The budget amount provided for 2018-19 was \$4 828 000 to rise to \$7 607 000 in 2019-20. That's an increase of almost \$2.8 million, or 57 per cent. The explanation given for the increase is for legislation to demand pressures pending the outcomes of the cross-sector regulatory functionary unit to be undertaken. Can you help me understand what the legislation and demand pressures are that cost \$2.8 million? What are the issues which have led to the cross-sector regulatory function review and who will undertake that review?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We spoke about that briefly a little while ago in terms of that review, and when it comes to a task, for example, the Office of Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification ensures that all students are supported to access and participate in their assessments in senior secondary studies by providing eligible students with special provisions which are the access arrangements and reasonable adjustments provided for students

undertaking their external assessment. A range of special provisions are available based on identified student need. Students can apply for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments if they have refugee status or a formally diagnosed condition, impairment, disability or mental health condition.

The types of supports available to students in Tasmania are consistent with the provisions available across all Australian jurisdictions. TASC is currently assessing arrangements in place in Tasmania and other jurisdictions ensuring that new models adopted will provide support for students through contemporary and best practice administration. I'm pleased to note that positive changes have already been made to ease the administration and burden on all those involved. From 2019 students with an ongoing diagnosed condition who have previously been granted special provision do not need to go through the full application process again unless their circumstances and requirements have changed. This initiative simplifies the process and enables teachers and support staff to focus on supporting students in the classroom. The process has been further refined following the rollout of the new TASC reporting, assessment and certification system, tracks in April 2019. This enables greater visibility of the status of the application and overall a more streamlined approach. The Australian Education Union and teachers have expressed enthusiasm for these new processes and I look forward to further improvements as the special provisions continue and that's TASC's role indeed in ensuring all senior secondary students have fair and equitable opportunities to succeed.

CHAIR - Does that mean they get their right results as well and they won't have to be withdrawn and reissued?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's right. There are some learnings from last year. As I said before, this regulatory review will commence in July 2019 and the department will work collaboratively with the independent and Catholic education sectors on the approach to the review, and the consultation with stakeholders will start soon, and when it comes to the additional cost pressures.

Mr BULLARD - Mr Armstrong, you're interested in where the additional costs pressures on each of the entities and they are specific to those entities. In terms of TASC, the costs pressures are to do with an increase in enrolments in senior secondary education which requires additional assessments and moderation and accreditation of courses. In terms of the Teacher Registration Board, some of the revenue from that Board comes from teachers. They have to pay an annual registration fee, but not all of the functions that the Board undertakes relate to teacher registration, so there's additional costs, particularly to do with the accreditation by the TRB of initial teacher education courses, so they have to accredit UTAS courses, and also around code of conduct and disciplinary matters. And in terms of the Office of Education registrar, there is a costs pressure around assessment of home education programs.

CHAIR - I have a question in regard to TASC and the ICT competency. I'm aware of a situation where that ICT test doesn't cover all subjects. You can get a tick for doing a particular subject and if you're doing something like English and maths, your tick isn't automatically provided. Is there any intention to change the year that ICT requirement is put in place or is undertaken? I believe it is done in year 12 and it would be suggested that if you fail it and then you can't re-sit it for three months, it's almost fairly close to when you're going to be sitting exams. So, I guess, extra stress on a student.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I invite Katrina Beams from TASC.

Ms BEAMS - If I can just explain the ICT standard. The adult, everyday standard is one of the five standards that underpin the TCE. And there's opportunities for students to achieve that standard through the successful completion of their courses that they undertake in years 11 and 12 where that standard has been imbedded, but we recognise that not all students might undertake those courses so we provide the safety net test, and that's available to students in year 11, at the end of year 11 because it's usually clear by the end of year 11 what courses they've selected for the following year and whether those courses have the standard embedded in it. So, they can sit the safety net test at the end of year 11 and then we give them another two opportunities through year 12 as well. So, through their course of year 11 and 12, they have three opportunities to sit that test.

CHAIR - Is it up to the actual school to decide when students undertake that test to get their ICT compliance?

Ms BEAMS - We have three dates that we identify and students can participate in those online tests. We moved the ICT test online a couple of years ago and they can sit that at the key dates that we identify at their school.

CHAIR - My question is, why would you need a three-month gap between when you sit a test and fail before you can sit another test?

Ms BEAMS - That's a standard practice in many instances with testing because we need to make sure that there's opportunities for the students to approach it with fresh eyes again, rather than just be re-tested the following week and then the following week again. So it's best practice around ensuring that there's a break, so you're genuinely testing from a fresh point of view their ability to achieve that every day standard.

CHAIR - Is this the most efficient model going around?

Ms BEAM - There's different models across Australia, so across all of the authorities, senior secondary authorities. Some, like us, have those standards that are in their senior secondary certificates embedded within courses, and other jurisdictions have an approach where they test all of students, test students to meet those standards. So, we all have ultimately the same standards within our senior secondary certificates, but there's two nationally, there's two different approaches.

CHAIR - There's no review on the approach at this point in time?

Ms BEAMS - Not at this point in time, but what we are doing is our literacy and numeracy assessments which are currently paper based, we're looking at making them available in an online environment as well for students. Ultimately, if we can have all our three safety net tests online, it will hopefully give us greater capacity around having those tests more readily available.

CHAIR - Is there any capacity to have all those tests completed by year 11?

Ms BEAMS - The intention in Tasmania, as I was saying, is for students to meet those standards through their course election, because that gives them that opportunity for deep learning over the course of the year, and that's the current preferred practice for Tasmania.

CHAIR - My final question is, is there consideration of a review of what subjects are included in the process?

Ms BEAMS - I think that the 9 to 12 project itself gives some opportunity for us to look at courses in senior secondary and their future over the next few years. So that's an opportunity to be considered.

CHAIR - Thank you. I will follow that up at a later time. I think there needs to be some changes. Thank you, Mr Willie. Teachers' registration.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. Or TASC. Yes, I'll go to that. I just need to correct something I said earlier. I was quoting funding for government schools and non-government schools. It's actually 3.9 per cent for government, 4.3 for Catholic, 4.4 for independent, notwithstanding that \$4.6 billion extra funding allocation for that sector. So I quoted some figures reading across that weren't correct, so I am happy to be corrected there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's all right. I reinforce that record amounts of funding is going to public education from this Government. We're very proud of it but that's for your question.

Mr WILLIE - Just on TASC chair, minister, do you have confidence in the new student database program that TASC is going to roll out?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, would you like to talk about it?

Mr WILLIE - I'm just asking you about your confidence in it, given some of the issues that have happened in the past.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The launch of TASC's reporting assessment and certificate system or TRACS as it is known, I spoke briefly about this before. In April this year, signals the modernisation of senior secondary student assessment, certification and reporting in Tasmania. It is a significant investment of around \$2 million. I'm pleased to note that the feedback from schools and providers has been very positive. Throughout Australia there is a move towards streamlining the management of student data, and information that is essential for the delivery of senior secondary education in the 21st century. TASC is currently the only Australian jurisdiction rolling out a completely new system for managing a senior secondary assessment and certification. TRACS is a best practice system which provides security of student information and data, enhances quality assurance and ensures communications between schools and TASC are efficient. TRACS streamlines the management of school and student data and the effective management of assessment results and reporting of student achievement.

Through TRACS, teachers and schools have the tools to see student information in real time so they can provide valuable advice and guidance as they move through their senior secondary schooling. Teachers can see what achievements students can have included in their Tasmanian qualification certificate and how they are tracking towards their TCE. They can see other data that helps them to guide student choices and for staff, TRACS have streamlined the management of inquiries information from schools and TRACS also ensures TASC can continue to provide premium qualifications and support Tasmania senior secondary students to achieve their potential. I'm pleased that the rollout of this new IT system has so far been

without staff or technological issues and I praise all the efforts of all those who've ensured that it's early success and again, nation leading in that sense.

Mr WILLIE - Is there any need to manually capture any data with TRACS or is it all programmatically uploaded from other data bases?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the operational questions -

Ms BEAMS - Much of the data that's in TRACS is automated data feeds, particularly from the government system. It is wonderful that we've been able to get direct feeds from the department's government warehouse. For the non-government scores, when they provide their internal ratings to us previously, they've had to fill out a lot of tatslotto sheets which are, you know, paper sheets that we send out and they colour them in and send them back to us and then we scan them. So, they'll be able to actually manually enter their internals through a portal which they're very excited about because that will save them significant amount of time for the non-government sector. Part of the TAS starting the Department of Education have responsibilities for and there's a component of the work that's undertaken towards the end of the year that does require some manual entry outside of the system and then is loaded back into the system.

Mr WILLIE - What checks and balances are in process for that manual capture then?

Ms BEAMS - The Department of Education through Education performance and review undertake that work first. I'm not sure if the team would like to talk at all about the processes they have in place, but -

CHAIR - We have Mr Shane Frost? Shane's position is?

Mr FROST - Director of Education, Performance and Review.

CHAIR - Welcome, Shane.

Mr FROST - So you wanted to know about the checks and balances?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, given there may be some manual capture that's required.

Mr FROST - Yes, so we are working on running two processes. One is using the TRACS system but also to have a manual backup of that data, so we can manipulate that data if we need to. Yes, so I guess -

Mr WILLIE - The last issue with TASC was potentially manual data entry and human error, was that correct?

Mr FROST - Yes, it wasn't actually an issue with TASC per se. The Department of Education manual entry, as I understand, it - that wasn't TASC.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. Back to TRACS.

CHAIR - They took all the blame by the way.

Mr WILLIE - Well, they didn't release the report, so they didn't really take the blame.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The report is on the website.

Mr WILLIE - It's been released now, has it? Okay. TRACS, back to that. What's plan B if it fails? You'd agree the integrity of the TCE is incredibly important. We've had a number of issues and if this database fails it really is compounding the issues and the integrity, I guess, of the TCE really comes into question. What's the plan B if it fails?

Ms BEAMS - The new system TRACS is far more robust and well-built than the previous system that's been used. So having TRACS itself puts us in a far better position than we've been at previously. But there are teams of people who are going through parallel processes ahead of time and testing all of those processes within the new system. So there are teams of people who are testing every day and we'll be going through a process where we use all of last year's data and put that through the system to make sure that it generates everything in the way that we anticipate. We work very closely with education performance and review and have a very strong partnership with them and we're working together on all of that. The department has just recently made available a great testing data set for us to be working with between now and the end of the year so we'll continue to test that.

Mr WILLIE - Okay, so the testing's ongoing. Minister, have any concerns been expressed why the testing's been taking place?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The feedback's been positive in terms of my information in terms of key stakeholders. You might have some concerns, Mr Willie and some people -

Mr WILLIE - No, just it sounds like it's an ongoing thing.

Ms BEAMS - Yes. We've had no concerns at all, so we've released the first part of the functionality of the system. We released that in the second week of April and we were really pleased with the release of that. I've had overwhelmingly positive feedback from schools. All of the functionality that we are needing as the year progresses is that which has been tested. Every day, I think we have a team of between four and six people who are testing every day at the moment to make sure that it is secure, robust and that we have confidence in it.

Mr WILLIE - And you've got every confidence, too, minister?

2.1 Information Services and Community Learning

CHAIR - Thank you. Moving on now to 2.1 Information Services and Community Learning, we're going to get this wrapped up by 1 o'clock. Really quick, okay. Thank you, minister.

Ms ARMITAGE - So 2.1 Information Services and Community Learning, the budget outlines the following regarding adult community learning. Investment in 2019-20 supports the department's goal of access participation and engagement through the continuation of additional resources to lower east Tasmania which are being used strategically to focus not only on the purchase of contemporary library resources, in a wider range of formats, but also the changing needs of the community. Minister, to the ends of achieving this particular goal,

what criteria are being used to benchmark the additional resources being allocated to Libraries Tasmania and how is output being measured?

CHAIR - We welcome Liz Jack. Director of Libraries.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Liz Jack, the Executive Director of Libraries Tasmania.

Ms JACK - That's correct. We have put in place some measures and it was particularly around the money for the new resources, so whenever we assess or we have an idea about what we might want to use that funding for, we have a series of criteria that go right from whether it's something that relates to the Tasmanian Libraries Archives Act or whether it's something that makes a positive difference to our members and clients, whether it makes work of our staff easier and whether it's being asked for by our clients. There are a range of those and they're actually done on a percentage basis so it's quite complicated.

Ms ARMITAGE - So how are you measuring the output?

Ms JACK - And then the outputs are measured by a number of KPIs and we're trying to be much more focused on the engagement of our clients so it's not just the number of people that borrow an item, it's whether they think they've been able to find it easily, whether they think they have positively improved in terms of their digital literacy skills, for instance, what their experiencing as opposed to us measuring numbers through the door or people borrowing the items. And that's a national trend that's being done across all through Australian Library and Information Associations.

Ms ARMITAGE - One last quick question as I notice we're short on time, what exactly is the strategic focus on the purchase of contemporary library resources and how do you think the needs of the community are changing and how does the department determine which gets the greatest priority?

Ms JACK - Can you start that again, there are a few questions that.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay. What exactly is the strategic focus of the purchase of contemporary library resources?

Ms JACK - The strategic focus on everything we're doing is greater engagement of our clients. To do that we need to have the right people and the right skills to engage them and one of the big focuses or priorities this year is around digital inclusion and digital skills. To build the skills of our clients coming through the door, for instance, we have to start with building the skills of our own staff. A lot of our resources have been focused around the digital, whether that is through online resources like ebooks, e-music, e-magazines, but it's also around the work we do with our clients to build their own skills in using their iPhones, their iPads and computers. Some of the resources have been those technological resources, computers, iPads et cetera, or even through our makerspaces, which I think I spoke about last year as well, where we get kids in to help them to understand the way they can do their coding, build robots and work in a technological environment that complements what's happening in the schools.

Ms ARMITAGE - I guess you've almost answered the second question, which was how community needs are changing. How does the department determine which area gets the greatest priority?

Ms JACK - Good question. The needs of the community are continually changing. We're finding that particularly depends what part of the community you're talking about. We have focused very much over the past few years on literacy and numeracy for members of the community who don't have the same levels of literacy and numeracy. We've had to expand that to digital literacy as well because you just can't function in the world today if you can only do basic reading - if you can't actually go on to a computer and use Google to search for something that you're looking for, whether it's medical information or geographical information.

Ms ARMITAGE - Check the Google.

Ms JACK - You can't use those skills as effectively. The needs at that end of the spectrum are changing, but also at the other end, people are busy. People are still looking to learn and adult learning is a space that we operate in, but they don't want to sit down in a formal course that's going to tie them up for two or three hours every Wednesday afternoon, for instance. They want quick, on-the-run solutions - people are using YouTube even to fix or replace a tyre or do simple tasks.

Ms ARMITAGE - Find a manual for your keypad.

Ms JACK - We're all looking for different ways to solve our problems and learn in a faster moving environment. So they're the types of things we consider as well as the feedback and information we get from our clients ourselves.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we're talking about the digital access platform, but the traditional book is still great and we -

Ms ARMITAGE - We still have lots.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We spoke before about the Chigwell Child and Family Centre and the book locker there. It's just fantastic that you or the child themselves can go and punch in the book that they want, it comes - or they order it first. It comes out of the locker and then they read it with their family and bring it back in and it's right next to the entranceway of the child and family centre. So that even very traditional way of reading - and great way of reading a book to a child - is being made more accessible by the choice at the child and family centre at Chigwell, which is great.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, minister.

Mr DEAN - With all of borrowings occurring within the services, minister, what's are the losses? Are there any losses to the library in relation to those borrowings of books and whatever? Do you say it would be -?

Ms JACK - Fines.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the fact we're no longer fining people?

Mr DEAN - No, no. The losses to the library of books not being returned.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Actual books.

Mr DEAN - Actual loss, actual loss.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Physical loss of books.

Mr DEAN - Yes, physical loss of books and any other borrowings. I'm not quite sure what other borrowings can be made now from the library. So is it an issue or is it just -

Ms JACK - If you want actual figures of amounts lost or debts written off, I can take that on notice. I don't have the figure off the top of my head.

Mr DEAN - Yes, and debt loss, I'd like the debt loss and so on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got some figures that might assist you, but let's keep them -

Ms JACK - Just in terms of losses, we're continually what we call 'weeding' our collection, regardless of that. So once books reach a certain age or they're no longer a contemporary resource that's got up to date information, we take them from our shelves and remove them. The losses could be quite broad, if you want to go that extensively, but we actually look at debts. Now, our written down debts are changing dramatically because we are no longer charging fines for late returns. It's only for books that are lost or severely damaged. Then what we're doing is making it a fair and equitable charge to the person who comes in and tells us they've lost the book. If you borrow a book that's been on the shelf for a number of years, it's old, it's getting close to its use by date, we would not then charge you the same cost. It would be fair replacement value. We also have to factor in on the other side, though - the amount of time and money we spend in chasing those. While I can talk about written off debts, chasing those debts, there's a cost to Libraries Tasmania, staff time. We used to go through a debt collector, so there were added costs that wouldn't have shown. So, I can give you the written off debts but you have to factor in that there is a -

Ms ARMITAGE - When did you stop issuing the fines? The member had one recently, you see.

Ms JACK - Yes, it was about six months ago.

Ms ARMITAGE - Maybe.

CHAIR - Ms Howlett, and then we're going to archives.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, I understand that Libraries Tasmania has removed the overdue fees. If you could update the committee on that, it would be great.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've some information that might be useful for the member in terms of it's a major step in improving library services and making them more attractive to the public. The public saw Libraries Tasmania change its fee model in December last year. This included removing charges for overdue items and simplifying the overdue loans process for both members and staff. Now, with these changes, the number of members who owe money

to Libraries Tasmania has decreased from 24 916 at the start of November 2018, to 4780 at the end of March 2019. The money is still owed is for lost books, which still incur a replacement fee based on their age and condition.

In the new model, if a member fails to return items over an extended period, they eventually lose their borrowing privileges. However, their borrowing rights are immediately reinstated once these items have been returned, which is simpler and fairer, of course, than expecting the funds and to pay money. The new model, combined with other changes at Libraries Tasmania, including last year's name change and additional government funding for contemporary library resources, has seen a spike in library memberships which overall has been in decline over the last decade. For example, between 1 November 2018 and 1 March 2019, there has been an increase of 8215 members. That's a lot, isn't it?

CHAIR - This is at the expense of archives, what you're reading out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This compares to a decrease of 935 members for the same period in the previous year. So that's a really great result. Every library across Tasmania has experienced an increase, with Hobart and Launceston each adding over a thousand new members and these increases have been across all age groups, with the greatest number of new members - that's 1800 members being aged between 30 and 39 years. So that's really good. Well done, Ms Jack and your team.

Ms ARMITAGE - A follow on from the same issue really quickly, it's just that it's almost like you indicate the increase in numbers is because of the lack of fines. I'm assuming this - no.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's probably a combination of -

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, I just would have to question that not giving fines would improve library services because -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I said the new model combined with other changes at Libraries Tasmania, last year's name changes, additional government funding for contemporary library resources.

Ms ARMITAGE - Sorry, I understand that, but as a library borrower, if I knew I wasn't going to get fined if I didn't get my books back in three weeks, I might keep them for four weeks or five weeks. You would have to think that would be detrimental to the library services, that people now don't have that - to me it's like, 'Okay, I know I have to get it back by Monday', otherwise you don't like to even look like you're not getting back on time because of the fine. It's not detrimental to the service that people now don't have to worry about getting them back on time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The incentive is if you want to keep borrowing, you have to return the books. That's a good incentive.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, you do.

Ms JACK - And if could add to that, minister. For many people, those fines are quite difficult to pay. They're not in a financial circumstance where they find it easy to pay. We've

had many comments from members now who feel that they can come back because there's no sense that they're being penalised, they don't feel embarrassed because they have books out that they can't return because they can't pay the fine. Members can borrow 15 items at a time, if you've got all of those out for quite a significant period and you owe money, it's quite a disincentive.

We've had quite a number of comments and written feedback from members to say that they now feel much happier to come back, and if they're a day or two late, they're not embarrassed, they will come back and return the book because they want to borrow more. While we're not fining, we will say 'If you're continually not bringing the books back, your lending privileges are ceased'. So, there is a disincentive but it's a different one. This was part of a large quite an extensive strategy, as the minister pointed out, that we included quite a significant promotion about what the libraries do. On radio, television -

Ms ARMITAGE - I must admit I didn't know I wouldn't get a fine until today.

Ms JACK - But the reduction in fees and fines we are not about to stop charging book groups for borrowing books. We've had the promotion, as I said, the name change which people were asking us for, it wasn't something that we came up with. All of that combined was what we believe has made a difference because there has been a significant turnaround in our membership numbers.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - Can I put complaints and inappropriate use on notice?

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you. Complaints and inappropriate use – and I would like to say I had cause to contact the Archives Office recently and their service was exceptional. That's all, we get that today. I will suspend and we'll be back at two for skills. Thank you.

The committee suspended from 1.02 p.m. to 2.02 p.m.

CHAIR - Thank you, everyone, and thank you very much, minister, for coming back after lunch. We'll head straight into Skills. I believe we have a brief overview?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do, chair. I welcome to the table Angela Conway, General Manager of Skills Tasmania; and Stuart Hollingsworth, Director of Policy and Programs, Workforce Development Systems in Skills.

The Government continues to invest in the knowledge and skills of our current and future workforce by the commitment of over \$100 million in 2019-20 in training and workforce development. We do this because vocational education underpins the productivity of our economy and provides a pathway into meaningful employment for young Tasmanians and those looking to give themselves every opportunity to participate in their community. We are investing in training and industries where we know the demand for a skilled Tasmanian workforce is including in the health, community and social service sectors, and tourism, hospitality, and building and construction, which effectively counts for 40 per cent of our training investment in 2018.

We know that an apprenticeship or traineeship is one of the most meaningful ways for young people to earn while they learn and for employers to develop their own workforce. This is why we're committed to growing the number of apprentices and trainees by 40 per cent by 2025. We know this is ambitious, but it is too important not to aim high.

We know that around the nation, there has been a five-year decline in apprentice and trainee numbers, and we have not been immune from this trend. We know that changes to federal subsidies removed in 2012 had a big impact on traineeship numbers in particular. However, Tasmania continues to outperform every other state and territory in apprenticeship and traineeship outcomes. In the 12 months to September 2018, trades and apprenticeship commencements in Tasmania grew by 11.1 per cent while growing at only 3.1 per cent nationally. We also continue to have the highest completion rates in Australia at 58.1 per cent, almost 5.5 per cent higher than the national average. In skills Tasmania punches above its weight. This was validated when at the National World Skills Competition in 2018, Tasmania won the best performing region, winning six gold medals, a silver and two bronze. Our gold medal-winning cabinet-maker Joshua Boon from Ulverstone has been selected as a member of the Australia's Skillaroos team, competing at the international competition - World Skills 2019 in Russia in August. This is a credit to our apprentices and trainees, but also to our fantastic trainers with 15 of the 17 young people in the Tasmanian team trained at TasTAFE.

To continue our success and help us to achieve our goals, we know we have to do things a little differently and we have to invest now for the future, having successfully completed our \$5 million pilot assisting small businesses to take on apprentices or trainees, which saw Tasmanian small business take on over 1600 new apprentices and trainees. We injected a further \$7.5 million last year to continue the program. Since the second phase of the program commenced in May 2018, more than 500 more apprentices and trainees have been employed in small businesses in the building and construction, tourism, hospitality and manufacturing industries.

Now we have also extended, until the 30 June 2021, the payroll tax rebate for employers taking on apprentices, trainees, and youth employees in those industry sectors. These initiatives are in addition to the government subsidies for the cost of training apprentices and trainees, and the Apprentice and Trainee Training Fund, which amounted to over \$8 million in the last calendar year.

This is in addition to the significant funding provided to TasTAFE that subsidise training for apprentices and trainees. We're also providing some \$2.2 million in travel and accommodation allowances in the current financial year to assist apprentices and trainees who need to travel to attend on-the-job training either within Tasmania or interstate. We know that some Tasmanians, face barriers to participating in the labour market and require a little more support. This is a key focus under my ministerial priorities for workforce development and training from 2018 to 2021.

Our Training and Work Pathways Program funded 43 projects that were in operation 2018, including an investment of a further \$2 million and 18 new initiatives announced in April 2019. This includes \$111 000 for the Thyne House employment training and mental health program in Launceston, which will provide support and opportunities for young tenants to markedly improve their employment prospects, thus sending them on a very different life

trajectory. They've also provided \$150 000 to the Neighbourhood House Network to work with staff and volunteers in the local communities to help them foster work-ready skills and how to negotiate training to the best advantage of their communities. We also have continued to support Beacon with over \$1 million over four years and Whiteline with \$600 000 over three years to help young persons at risk of disengagement from education, training or employment.

I'm also pleased to announce that we will be releasing a draft adult learning strategy after consultation with our communities later in June. I am committed to ensuring that Government is coordinating our efforts to address adult learning challenges and opportunities.

I've cut back my opening statement a bit, but even so I've barely scraped the surface on the great work our vocational education and training sector is doing in this state to help people in businesses grow. We've established partnerships with 14 industry and community partners where we can engage in robust and meaningful discussions about where the Government should invest in skills and workforce development. I met with this group annually as a collective and at our 2018 forum they universally acknowledged the importance of the sector and that we should be doing all we can to ensure the power of vocation and educational training in changing lives is understood.

I'm committed to continuing to ensure we are investing in and supporting a system of VET that is nation-leading and meeting the needs of industry and learners. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. I invite Ms Siejka to begin the questions.

Ms SIEJKA - Just to start with, can you provide an update on the implementation of the internal audit following the integrity commission report?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can. We're in Skills at the moment -

Ms SIEJKA - Can we combine these combine those two. Do we want to leave that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - TasTAFE will -

Ms SIEJKA - I haven't really got any specific skills questions.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - TasTAFE will come to the table shortly.

Ms SIEJKA - Okay. I'll leave that for them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And I can have that question answered.

Ms SIEJKA - Well, mine are not really - I have cert 2 questions. They're all very TasTAFE.

CHAIR - Right. Mr Dean?

Mr DEAN - Yes. Meeting the needs of the industry, minister - and this is also a question for TAFE quite obviously - you're looking at the skills we have lost. The National Trust is a

body I talk with regularly and it is strange to me that they are currently having to source tradespeople from the mainland to work in the area of heritage works. They've done quite a lot of that -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Have they any choice?

Mr DEAN - Nearly all of their people had to come from the mainland because there were no skills in this state or very few skills. So, what are you doing to get people trained in this area of skill sets? I know you can't force people, due respect, minister, but what are they doing to get people into, say, an area of working in heritage works as tradespeople? My next question later will be to TAFE and what it has done.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. We can follow up in terms of TAFE's role soon, but the Tasmanian construction -

Mr DEAN - What did you get from the industry when you've spoken to industry about where the shortages are?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The construction training board has done a research paper on this very subject.

Mr HOLLINGSWORTH - I don't have the specifics here at that moment, but the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board has been looking into heritage skills, and there's a report on its website that we can provide later.

Mr DEAN - And we'll engage with the National Trust if that's - and I would ask that you do that, your office engage with the National Trust because it's they who are coming to me. I can read from a document they've given me if you wanted me to, to say that there's a terrible shortage in this area, and the need to source staff from the mainland.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So the building and construction, there's a lot of activity in the training area there more generally. There will be specific skills, I'm sure, and as an extension of those, I will call them foundation skills, probably not the right word for it, in terms of being able to, you know, continue to grow the skills in that particular area, but if you would like - if National Trust would like to engage with Skill Tasmania or myself on this matter -

Mr DEAN - I will ask National Trust to do that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And the training board to see how that review has gone and I welcome that opportunity. Because it's a very important part of our state's economy in terms of our built heritage.

Mr DEAN - Certainly. Thank you.

CHAIR - Any other question, Mr Dean?

Mr DEAN - No, that's it. That's it.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms Siejka.

Ms SIEJKA - They fall across TasTAFE and Skills, so it's a bit tricky. I'm not quite sure where to ask them. Just some concerns around a reduction in Certificate II programs across the state. I want to confirm whether or not there are 120 people on the waiting list for Construction Certificate II course in Hobart, and there's a range of other programs that people have raised concerns about -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Is that more TAFE, more specific?

Ms SIEJKA - It could be more TAFE.

CHAIR - Is that TAFE? Okay.

Ms SIEJKA - But it's all overseen by Skills, so. There's a whole, yes, a whole range of Cert II certificates that people have raised.

Ms CONWAY - There will be more than TasTAFE. There are other registered training organisations that provide training into that area. I suspect it's probably a TasTAFE predominant issue. It's probably worth noting, we do know across the sector at the moment, not just in Tasmania, but we are often experiencing difficulties with getting qualified trainers in certain areas, particularly at the moment given construction is - you know, you can make a lot of money working in your sector, and it is causing some challenges, not just in Tasmania, but everywhere, the eastern seaboard state issue, yes.

CHAIR - We will come back to those questions, Ms Siejka. Ms Howlett.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, I'm just a little bit curious. How are we performing as a state in regard to apprentices and trainees in in comparison to every other state across Australia?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Completions in terms of completion rates are good compared to nationally. We are around 58 per cent. Nationally I think it's around 53, so we're about 5.5 per cent better in terms of completion. But our policy settings and commitment to jobs, health, communities, education, infrastructure are helping Tasmania to grow its economy. The policy settings for the apprentice and trainee numbers appears to be working despite a seven-year decline in apprentice and trainee activity across all Australia. Tasmania continues to perform better than the Australian average across most key indicators.

We do have some good apprenticeship and traineeship statistics to report on. In Tasmania the total number of commencements increased by 0.9 per cent, or 4850 new commencements in the 12 months to December 2018. Nationally total commencements have decreased by 1.6 per cent over the same period, so we're bucking the trend, if I can put it that way. Compared to the previous year, trade and commencements in Tasmania over 12 months to September 2018 have increased by 11.1 per cent to 1985 new trade commencements. Nationally commencements increased by only 3.1 per cent over the same period.

Across the five years, trades commencements to September 2018 were 9.6 per cent higher in Tasmania, while nationally they were 11 per cent lower. As at 30 September 2018, the number of apprentices and trainees in training in Tasmania were 7.1 per cent higher than 12 months earlier. Nationally, those in training was 0.6 per cent lower over the same period. At 30 September 2018, the number of trade apprentices in training in Tasmania, 4430 were 7.3 per cent higher than a year earlier, while the number in training, or number in training for all

Australia was 1 per cent higher. Over the last five years the number of trade apprentices in training was up 11.3 per cent in Tasmania, while all Australia was 9.4 per cent lower. It's important to reiterate that there has been a long-term national decline in apprenticeships and trainee numbers, and we have not been immune to that in Tasmania.

It is widely recognised that the decision back in 2012 to change incentive payments did see an immediate and dramatic effect on student numbers. At the same time, other factors have compounded the downward trend. These include the relevance of apprenticeship model and a move towards shorter, more precise training such as skillsets. It is also important to note that the downward trend is mainly seen in the non-trade areas. However, in Tasmania our policy settings are helping us to achieve above the national average with a particular strength in trade apprenticeships, and building on these key strengths continues to be a high priority, and the Tasmanian Government has implemented a number of specific initiatives which supported continued growth in the number of apprentices and trainees.

I have mentioned some of those in the opening statement so I don't want to repeat that at all, but we have seen a positive change to the Tasmanian economy. We recognise the large infrastructure program to fulfil, and so skills development is extremely important. We have a particular aspirational target, or target of 40 per cent of new apprenticeships and traineeships by 2022, and we seem to be bucking the national trend in the sense which is positive. There are always challenges, but it's positive, heading in the right direction.

CHAIR - Minister, there's a significant increase in the budget for skills development in this financial year, and in the notes, it talks about new funding for a skilled workforce to meet an industry demand initiative. I was pretty sure we talked about that last year and what industry was actually looking for, particularly in the agriculture sector and the aquaculture sector. Has that not already been done, that analysis of what skills are needed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Part of this is in the TasTAFE area as well.

CHAIR - But the actual money is being given to Skills Development. The actual allocation of funding has been given to Skills.

Ms CONWAY - Yes, the money for TasTAFE comes through the Skills Development Output, so all funding to TasTAFE comes through the state growth budget and it's provided then to TasTAFE. That particular omission you're referring to is a new budget commitment this financial year specifically to assist TasTAFE to increase its capacity to deliver in some very high-growth areas and building construction and in the health services area.

CHAIR - So again, my question is, I am certain that last year we discussed this around what skills in the workforce in Tasmania were needed. Now you're telling me that TasTAFE is going to do another initiative program? Is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it's for the additional capacity.

Ms CONWAY - It will allow TasTAFE to employ additional teachers to deliver more training in areas of very high demand.

CHAIR - All right, so it's an actual teaching allocation?

Ms CONWAY - It's actual training, support training.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The funding will allow TasTAFE to train more apprentices and students in growth industries, including construction, electrotechnology, plumbing, welding and nursing, and it will help meet the future skill needs of Tasmania's construction sector as well. New qualifications and programs will include a new foundation program for allied trades, and a new advanced welding qualification as well. Additional training places will also be created across existing TasTAFE courses, including pre-vocational welding, a Certificate II in electrotechnology, and Certificate II in automotive vocational preparation.

CHAIR - I'm just contemplating that, so please ask your question, Mr Dean.

Mr DEAN - Yes, in relation to new Australians, immigrants coming into this country and state: what is Skills Development doing in this area, minister, to provide for these people in this area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I particularly have many in my electorate, Vietnamese people in particular, so the Training and Work Pathways.

Ms CONWAY - I can provide some information on this. I've just got to lay my hands on it.

Mr DEAN - That's okay. If you want to take it on notice, I don't have a problem.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can come back to that.

Mr DEAN - Yes, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When we have the answer for you, but -

CHAIR - Can I go back to what's being relayed in regard to what Skills Development does? Is Skills just an area that almost just filters the money and heads off from State Growth into TasTAFE? Because TasTAFE, it says here, gets \$92.3 million in funding, and that will be provided as a grant to TasTAFE.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think that might include the capital -

CHAIR - So that doesn't leave a lot for Skills Development.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So -

Mr DEAN - Don't you think you need Skills Development?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We spend about \$100 million a year on Skills. TasTAFE receives around \$76 million, so close to 80 per cent, both -

CHAIR - It says here \$92.3 million.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right. I think the \$76 million includes the capital for training, the Centre of Excellence in Burnie and the Centre of Excellence in Clarence Trades and Water.

CHAIR - Right, okay. So then what relationship does Skills Development in this output area have with the trade training centres around the state, and how many are there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - How many trade training centres? We'll get that. I wouldn't like to get that number wrong, but it's around eight to 12. Yes, we'll find out exactly what the trade training centres -

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. What relationship does the Skills Development area have with those trade training centres?

Ms CONWAY - The trade training centres are located initially near the schools or in the schools. They are managed, I understand, by the schools themselves, and they're a facility available for use by both the schools and other organisations that might want to deliver training. There's a number around the state. TasTAFE could use them if they wanted to, but also private registered training organisations make use of them for particular delivery so they're set up for that - some of them have kitchens and school-based apprenticeships can use them, students in schools, so they are an asset that can be utilised.

CHAIR - So what relationship does Skills Development, this department have, with those training centres?

Ms CONWAY - We don't fund them, per se. They are assets of the Department of Education.

CHAIR - Right, but there's no relationship in regard to looking at what skills are being offered or what training is being offered?

Ms CONWAY - No, they're there to be used where there's demand in communities.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, what effort is the Government making to support a sustainable early childhood workforce?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. An important sector of our economy as well. I can provide that information for you: a professional, proficient and activated Tasmanian early years workforce ensures our children are able to thrive and flourish. It supports ongoing workforce participation and any sustained success and growth of Tasmanian communities and economy. Significant changes to education for care and childcare services were introduced in January 2012 and implementation of the National Quality Framework. Introduction resulted in a strong focus on the early childhood workforce skills and its education needs, and to assist with the workforce planning schools. Tasmania has worked closely with the Early Childhood Australia Tasmania Branch, and was provided \$140 000 to support its Building Sustainable Workforce Foundations Project.

This three-stage project will build on the early years and school-aged care sectors funded by the Department of Education. It will support the sector through a stage 1 process with

employer readiness and active research with the sector's current and emerging leaders, to improve workforce planning and training development in their sector. This will include a focus on school-based traineeships. Stage 2, reciprocal relationships with school communities, will work with the schools to apply and build this understanding of workforce planning and development. Stage 3, a pilot a career taster event, drawing on the first two stages, sectors leaders along with industry and school communities will have input into the design and delivery of the pilot event career taster. The project is complementary to the Learners First Strategy, with recruitment induction onboarding and retention core to workforce development approaches. I welcome the continued efforts to support this vital section of our workforce; I spoke briefly around early childhood - well, not briefly, but on early childhood more generally this morning, indeed, on the National Quality Framework as well.

CHAIR - A question about the roles and functions of Skills Development: it also talks about skills development and business growth, to me that implies that Skills Development goes out and engages with businesses to assess what's required. So how does that occur? Do you just touch base with peak bodies of businesses?

Mr HOLLINGSWORTH - We have formal relationships with industry and community partners with whom we meet to discuss issues. The minister referred to them in his opening statement, and we meet with them regularly. We also have a team in the north and north-west that engages with businesses and other industry bodies to talk through what skills are required. We help connect to TasTAFE, but also to other training providers to make sure there's a connection between our programs and what training is available in the state. We interact on a daily basis with businesses and industries about the current future workforce needs through that program. That's supported as well through our Workforce Development Grants Program which helps them undertake their own workforce planning, and that information helps inform our training sector.

CHAIR - Minister, if I owned a small business and I was looking to develop some skills with my employees, would I contact Skills Development or would I contact TAFE/TasTAFE? Where would I go?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It all depends on what sector. If you were in the seafood sector, you would probably contact Seafood Training Tasmania more directly, because it receives funding from Skills Tasmania. If you were in the building sector, it would be the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board - I always get the acronyms around the wrong way - but they are very good at workforce mapping and planning, and have a lot of engagement with their sector in terms of building and construction.

CHAIR - Wouldn't it be a lot easier to have a one stop shop? It seems to me like -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, effectively, yes.

CHAIR - we have Skills and TAFE and then we've these other industry organisations that are also looking at what's needed. It seems a bit disjointed. You probably don't agree with that, but just from listening to what you're saying, it -

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, well, there's one bucket of funding in terms of the \$100 million going towards schools. TasTAFE has a particular responsibility because it's a public training

provider, Vocational Education and Training, and that's really important. There are other private providers as well that were -

CHAIR - And they come to Skills Development and get their funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They would seek access to funds to provide some skill growth within their particular sector, and so Skills Tasmania would take them through that process. I don't know if you can be more specific than me.

Ms CONWAY - So we effectively have a training market, a small market, in Tasmania - we have some private providers and our public provider, and together they deliver the overall training needs for the sector. If you wanted to have a business, and you wanted to do some training and -

CHAIR - Like, I'm a tiler; I have a tiling business and I can't find a tiler.

Ms CONWAY - You would say, 'Well, who do I need, who does training in that space?', and you can find that information on a variety of sources. You could come to our information, our website and that would tell you who might be around, also on the national information, national database it is all kept about what training providers do, what, where, and then you could approach the training provider and say, 'I want training for my X number of employees', and they know what kind of funding subsidies are available generally, and they would know how to access our funding. We only fund people who are endorsed who met some quality bar standards, so that's our way of making sure we buy good training outcomes for the community.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. Do you have another one on skills?

Mr DEAN - It was in the minister's commencing talk on this. If 51 per cent, I think you said, are completing only -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Fifty-eight per cent. It's just over 58 per cent completions compared to the national average of around 52.7 or something like that.

Mr DEAN - My question comes from that. If we've got almost half dropping out, do we know why they're dropping out? The reasons for it? You know, it's only about half that commence and we have about half fulfilling only.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we do. More broadly, they're getting to ask this question in the TAFE as well -

CHAIR - Okay, is this a TAFE question?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'm happy -

Mr WILLIE - We do have some information addressed to us in the overlay from the minister.

Ms CONWAY - We know there is a range of reasons.

Mr WILLIE - Obviously some students start training and they realise it's not for them, that particular career, and they would choose to not engage any further, or come back to a course later. They are the questions I would ask: at what stage do they drop out.

Ms CONWAY - There's a survey. The national system does some regular surveying of VET student outcomes and so that's how we get that number that's derived from national surveying and we also are following up and doing some of our own surveying locally too so that we can build a picture of what's going on. We find there are a whole range of reasons why people don't complete. Often, it's to do with the actual person themselves that either their jobs changed or their training need has changed, their personal circumstances have changed which makes it difficult for them to complete. Most of the time it is to do with those circumstances.

We have very high satisfaction in training delivery in Tasmania. We are very lucky, so when students are surveyed we get very high levels of - I could provide the information if you would like me to, percentages of satisfaction with their training outcomes, and we also track how, whether people's employment has improved or they're satisfied that it's met their employment need. We also track very well on that in Tasmania. We have quite high level of student satisfaction. Those that complete are very happy, and those that don't, it's usually, it's less often to do with the actual quality of the training. It's more to do with, it doesn't meet their need. What we also find is, people sometimes start a qualification and they do part of it and then they realise that's all they need, or their employer needs them to do to perform their job better or - and so they might stop for that reason too, so.

Mr DEAN - And I can ask TAFE the fees, you know, if you've somebody completing only a part of it, do they still pay the full fee? Is that it?

Ms CONWAY - I think probably refer the fee one to TAFE.

Mr DEAN - To TAFE. Yes, I'll go to TAFE on that.

Ms CONWAY - That would be individual RTOs.

CHAIR - Last question in Skills, thank you, Ms Howlett.

Ms HOWLETT - This affects your electorate and mine, so minister, I'd just like to know how we're going to put in place the support the career pathways in agri businesses?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have specific to schools, I suppose, and indeed TasTAFE, and indeed the Department of Education, so we have developed an agricultural framework, a curriculum framework in our schools. We have a Centre of Excellence at Hagley. As for agriculture we have employees within the Department of Education that are focusing on growth of our agricultural industry. We have investment in school farms; in terms of the sector more broadly, and indeed, schools and the skills area, the agricultural forestry and fishing sector is the second-land contributor to the Tasmanian economy, so it needs a focus, and in 2018 there were 5586 agriculture forestry and fishing businesses in Tasmania. Of these, 1899 were employing businesses. These industries are undergoing significant technological change, as you'd appreciate, which has led to a change in the types of schools required at both the upper and lower school levels. This trend will impact traditional schools and will require a quick transformative response to maintain our industry stage.

In support of the new skills required, Skills Tasmania has worked closely with Rural Business Tasmania to support their agri business, career pathways cadetship program at a value of \$200 000 over three years. This project aims to create a link between the formal school packages and practical learning through apprenticeships or traineeships established with primary producers and agri business in Tasmania. RBT will collaborate with the representative organisations, agri-business operators and educational providers to deliver a pilot cadetship program that will guide and mentor young Tasmanians in the agri-business industry. The collaboration with education facilities will be critical to the success of this project. The development of the delivery of the project will result in a strong relationship between the agricultural and education sectors, and the development of resources and a mechanism for delivery.

The pilot program will deliver training through established training facilities that can address current school deficiencies, collaborate and investigate with My Education, school-based apprenticeships, TAFE and group training to facilitate the establishment of training contracts with young Tasmanians on the program; provide practical experience throughout your learning; provide a link between formal school pathway packages and practical placement; and importantly, funding delivered to farmers and farm managers will also provide an opportunity to work through their ongoing training needs, and at the same time provide RBT the opportunity to support employers through formal apprenticeship model, and this is a valuable project to help connect young entrants to a critical industry, and of course I wish RBT, Rural Business Tasmania, every success with their efforts.

There's also a good story to tell, too, with TasTAFE and the Centre of Excellence in Burnie and Freer Farm, funding of \$5 million worth of investment to support the industry and the development as well, really good partnerships being formed with Agritas in Smithton between TasTAFE and Agritas as an example. There's been a lot of consultation when we may come to this with TasTAFE with respect to Freer Farm and the Centre of Excellence there. Schools are playing a role. Skills Tasmania are playing a role. Other training organisations are playing a role. TAFE's playing a role, and everyone is communicating pretty effectively at this present time which is good.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - I know where you're going here.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I don't know.

CHAIR - Where are you going?

Mr ARMSTRONG - I travel to the west coast a lot, and there's a bit of optimism around there about Mount Lyell starting up again. How does the training and everything go for the minerals and and mining section? Is that on the west coast or is it -

Mr ROCKLIFF - So I travel the west coast regularly as well, and there is increasing optimism, I believe, in mining more generally. It would be fantastic, Mount Lyell can restart again, and of course all the work has been going on into that to, you know, by various parties. I know the mayor of the west coast would love Mount Lyell to start again. Then it comes to mining, the Minerals and Energy council and in particular, advanced manufacturing sector. In

2018 there were 1695 advanced manufacturing sector businesses employing up to 17 200 Tasmanians.

As such, the sector is significant to the training and workforce development system. Whereas some traditional manufacturing industries have suffered recent declines, growth in high value advanced manufacturing contributed to the greater importance of the sector as a whole and the Tasmanian economy. The training needs of the advanced manufacturing sector are vast. They are complex. They are reflective of a dynamic and constantly evolving environment and has changed a lot particularly in recent years.

We have recently supported the Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council for the \$200 000 workforce development grant to develop and deliver a career awareness program to help address their sector's training challenges. The intention of this pilot program will be to promote employment and training opportunities in fabrication and will broadly advance the manufacturing industry. Transportable state of the art simulated and augmented welding simulators are the cornerstone of the program which will be delivered to staff and students across Tasmanian schools statewide. The use of the simulators in this context is a new initiative, industry driven and reflects skills required in the current and future advancement manufacturing industry in Tasmania.

Furthermore, the pilot has the intention of developing a framework which will maximise the practical usage of these simulators to assist in meeting industry demand through career awareness and promotion, along with providing a flexible tailored training program using modern technology for Tasmanian employers. This project will compliment current work being undertaken in the education sector, particularly through the Department of Education's package of learning pilot. Team Evtec and Department of Education, of course, are key stakeholders in the steering committees of the respective projects, meaning information and intelligence sharing is to be at the forefront of ensuring that their work reflects the educational training and workforce development needs of the advancement of manufacturing sector. We want the government to be strongly connected in the industry in delivering a workforce development that they need to grow.

CHAIR - I'm moving on now to TasTAFE. You probably need a change at the table, do we?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank Stuart and Angela very much. I invite to the table the CEO of TasTAFE, Jenny Dodd and the CFO Scott Adams.

Mr ADAMS - A very short statement.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's all right. So as the largest registered training organisation in the state and TasTAFE continues its commitment to deliver a quality vocational, education and training to over 23,000 Tasmanians a year. The last 12 months have been a time of quantum change of TasTAFE, as an organisation its faced challenges, we all know that, and I am delighted to report to members of the committee that it has responded to these challenges in a commendable manner. TasTAFE's top propriety over the past year has been stabilisation. As an organisation they accepted all recommendations made in the WLF internal audit and have successfully implemented over 95 per cent of them. The TasTAFE Board accepted the final report in December 2018 and now see the audit as substantively complete, noting the

significant work that has been undertaken to not only successfully implement new policies, procedures and processes, but to have them embedded across the organisation as a whole.

In the last year the focus at TasTAFE has been placed squarely back on the students and their learning experience and outcomes. Under Ms Dodd's leadership, TasTAFE's commitment to continuous improvement was clearly evidenced as they responded to the renewal audit by the National VET regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, ASQA during March. Such a detailed audit involves extensive preparation. I acknowledge the outstanding effort from all staff throughout this process. At an exit briefing on 15 March, the ASQA auditors noted the professionalism and level of commitment shown by TasTAFE staff. They also noted the active student support that was clearly in place. As is common, in an audit process, it was expected that areas of improvement would be identified. TasTAFE staff have worked diligently with the auditors over recent months to provide additional information where requested and to rectify individuals' areas of non-compliance within specific training products. A final submission has now been made to ASQA and we are awaiting their findings. Tasmania is experiencing its strongest economic performance in a decade and this is translating into a significant skills demand, particularly in traditional trades.

Overall, TasTAFE's apprenticeship numbers have increased by almost 500 this year from 4045 in 2018, to 4536 in 2019 with the biggest increase being in construction. The state Government has recently committed an additional \$2.9 million for TasTAFE to help address skill shortages across some of Tasmania's key industries and to support the training of more apprentices and students in key growth areas such as construction, electro-technology, plumbing and welding. With such significant demand occurring in industry, TasTAFE acknowledges the challenges associated with the recruitment of qualified and experienced teaching staff. Work is currently underway to identify strategies to address this issue.

Students' successes continue to shine brightly at TasTAFE. I will leave you with three particular examples that I believe sum up the outstanding teaching and learning that TasTAFE is delivering. Engineering student, Bronte Richardson, was named the 2018 school-based apprentice of the year at the Tasmanian training awards. Leah Scottney, a Diploma of Nursing student, was celebrated as the 2018 Aboriginal Student of the Year at the Tasmanian training awards, and TasTAFE-trained cabinetmaker in 2017 World Schools gold medallist, Joshua Boon, has recently been selected to represent Australia in the competition in Russia during August. I thank Jenny, Scott and her entire team for the work that they've done.

CHAIR - Ms Siejka, I know you had some questions.

Ms SIEJKA - On the internal audit, is that 95 per cent of the recommendations had been picked up, is that correct? That's what you said -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Successfully implemented the recommendations of 95 per cent.

Ms SIEJKA - Yes. It was considered completed, is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's correct.

Ms SIEJKA - Yes, so 5 per cent – what particular areas were those recommendation that weren't done?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think we're going to agree with all the recommendations and implement all the recommendations.

Ms SIEJKA - So which particular area is it that remains?

Ms DODD - There is a particular part of the HR policies and procedures that we're still finishing off. So, we're largely finished. It's now business as usual really, and the big challenge going forward now is to ensure that they are fully embedded across the organisation. So there were 95 recommendations. We accepted them all. We have done pretty well. There's just a small bit in the human resource area that was a bit slow at the start of last year through lack of resourcing. We've now fixed that and we've now got that bit to finish. So, it has been a momentous piece of work in a relatively short period of time. The TasTAFE Board was satisfied that we had some largely completed the work.

Ms SIEJKA - Having that many recommendations to implement, how has the Board - there's also the staff and the students - performed in this. It is just not, I guess, at policy level. It's also enacting these recommendations. Has there seemed too much shift in the culture within the organisation at this stage, or is it too soon to tell or how would you put that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a good question and the combination of the WLF audit and the experience that the organisation has been through and the -

Ms SIEJKA - Their staffing is a big one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And the implementation of those recommendations. If you combine that with the ASQA audit as well, a combination of both those two audits effectively are positive in terms of change and indeed would have impacted on culture as well in everyone pulling together to make sure the organisation has a strong footing for the future and supports the needs of Tasmania and the growth in our school areas. You might want to expand on that, Jenny, you have an operational view over there.

Ms DODD - In terms of the WLF audits, it is fair to say there's been really significant internal change. The WLF audits address the whole corporate area, whereas the ASQA audits address the education areas and very much been an audited organisation for the last 13 to 14 months. In terms of WLF, there are very significant changes in the way we do procurement. Scott and I made an undertaking this time last year to bring down the number of our corporate credit cards significantly and we've done that. We're now down to just over 100 people holding a corporate credit card. The number of irregularities, if you like, that had been evident prior, are not there, and the absolute usage is different.

We have significant changes to our recruitment policies and procedures, and they are well embedded now across the organisation. We work with our middle management group in particular who have to oversight a lot of that to make sure it is well embedded within the organisation. So, in terms of an organisation that had a lens put on it, we had that lens. We responded. I think we have very much state of the art practices and procedures in all our corporate areas that the audit caused us to have to look at deeply and we responded to that. We did look deeply and we have improved practice.

Ms SIEJKA - Are you confident the staff are engaged in the process? Obviously there's a difference between having changes made to you and then being part of the process and being able to embrace them on an ongoing basis in order to have that really effective change.

Mr ROCKLIFF - From our discussions, I'm confident there's a good engagement process and for TasTAFE to succeed and fulfil its charter, if I can use those words. Yes, there has to be good engagement and engagement that encourages the staff through cultural change, to address audit areas and indeed, more generally the challenges that we've got more broadly, then I'm confident, having my discussions with the CEO, that that is happening as best as possible.

Ms DODD - Can I add as well? We've done an enormous amount of training. So, to embed that sort of change in the organisation especially with our middle management, which is where a lot of that cultural change was really needed. With our TasTAFE leadership group which is 100-odd at middle management now, they've all done ethics training. They've all done use of corporate credit cards. They've all done, where required, procurement training and so it goes on.

We've invested in both E-learning training and in face-to-face workshops and that's been rolled out right across the organisation, and at times, right across the state. As an organisation, we are actively engaging our people's hearts and minds in the conversation about 'this is the way it's done around here now, this is the way we expect people to behave', and we address where we see things not occurring that should be occurring. I feel confident that in the 16 months I've been here, we've seen a quantum change in the way people now understand what they need to do.

Much of it was based on perhaps lack of understanding and now there's a very strong culture of understanding about what is the right way to go about doing some of these things. We are a good model for others in many ways in the implementation of what we needed to do, but the outcome has been a very positive change for us as an organisation.

Mr WILLIE - Will the efficiency dividend apply to TAFE too, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've provided more funding for TasTAFE, some \$2.9 million and I commend TasTAFE for the work they've done since their re-establishment in 2013 officially where it inherited a \$2.5 million debt and it has been paid off.

Mr WILLIE - My question is about the efficiency dividend and when it will apply to TAFE, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Government deed funding, excluding centres of excellence and capacity building grants, will increase by more than 2.5 per cent over the forward Estimates. TasTAFE is cash positive and with an improving cash balance.

Mr WILLIE - My question is whether the dividend will apply to TasTAFE, 0.75 per cent efficiency dividend.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I was saying, the deed that TasTAFE will get will increase at more than 2.5 per cent per annum over the forward Estimate so not expected to, no.

Mr WILLIE - So no. Okay. Can you provide an update with what's happening with the Drysdale commitment at Claremont College?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's the \$2 million commitment as part of our \$3.5 million commitment to hospitality. Drysdale, \$1.5 million commitment, \$2.5 million commitment to Claremont that is in the planning stages now and consultation is happening. Additional election commitments, \$1.5 million for Providore Place in Devonport and \$2 million for Drysdale centre of excellence at Claremont. Drysdale and Launceston, is partnering with the tourism northern Tasmania, Tourism Tasmania and Department of State Growth to host the rebranded chef series in late 2019. That's not exactly right I want to answer your question more directly, but there is consultation around the centre of excellence at Claremont College, the funding is there.

We are committed to that and I'm expecting that work will be underway as soon as possible. The centre of excellence concept aims to grow demand for industry. Relevant tourism, hospitality and training programs in the northern suburbs of Hobart. This project led by Drysdale industry in Claremont College working group is, as I say, at the planning stage. Drysdale centre of excellence project officer jointly selected by Drysdale and Claremont College staff will be in place mid-June 2019 to progress this project.

Mr WILLIE - The Devonport one has been completed, hasn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has almost been completed in terms of its fitout as I understand it. It is well underway.

Mr WILLIE - Do you have an estimated time on when the Claremont College one will be completed rather than -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Do you have an estimated time frame?

Ms DODD - The planning for Claremont is well underway. The TICT is involved as is the school, and planning is happening as we speak, and we're working through what will be the best solution for the type of students who are in that northern suburbs region. Unlike Providore Place, which was an absolute build, and so there was some clear begin and end, Providore Place will be finished in about the end of July, yes, mid-July and will be ready for occupation those premises towards the end of July. Claremont's, the conceptual planning is still being developed. As the minister said, a project officer is in its final stages of recruitment, has been appointed, not quite started and their task is to move that project forward with a proper project plan in consultation with all the stakeholders. As you will appreciate, there are a number of players involved in making sure that we're doing what will meet the needs of all of those players is critical to the success of that north suburbs part of the Drysdale centre of excellence.

Mr WILLIE - There's a level of frustration within the community that it is taking so long, given the high youth unemployment in Hobart, in particular. The need for more skills in that area and seeing the Devonport one progress quickly and this one, sort of, still in the planning stages, is frustrating for the community, I've got that feedback from numerous sources.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I appreciate that. But it will come together reasonably quickly, that's my expectation. The commitment was made in 2018 and so the project officer, about to be appointed so it is a good initiative, it's committed and I look forward to it being delivered.

Mr WILLIE - Just one last question? The teacher agreement for TAFE. When is that to be renegotiated? Is that part of the ongoing government negotiations now?

Mr ADAMS - We are in negotiations around the TasTAFE teacher agreement at the moment, that's correct, yes. It expired in March this year.

Mr WILLIE - March this year. Okay, thank you.

CHAIR - I expect they're still getting paid even though the agreement expired.

Mr ADAMS - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Is TasTAFE aware of the drastic shortage of tradespeople in the area of heritage works? If they are, what have they done, what negotiations have they done, or what are they doing in that area to try to -

CHAIR - Didn't the minister invite you to get Heritage Tasmania to contact?

Mr DEAN - Yes, he did. I want to ask TAFE what they've done in this area.

Ms DODD - Happy to talk that through. We have been working with the National Trust and I think that was where your question all began.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Ms DODD - A divisional manager has been liaising with one of the members of the National Trust from Oaklands. It has been an ongoing conversation around their requirements around plastering, and what we're trying to do with the plastering component of our business is to make sure that it is viable. It is a high demand area with relatively inability to recruit into to delivering it. So, the qualification itself has been looked at very specifically to see how we can meet the needs of the heritage industry, whilst still having a viable program. It is an ongoing conversation. There are some examples around the type of plastering in terms of solid plastering that aren't required right across that qualification. So the actual requirements in the heritage area are specific and quite slim in terms of our needs to provide the qualified tradespeople to meet the broader needs of the plastering industry in Tasmania. It's an ongoing and alive conversation occurring between our people and the industry.

Mr DEAN - Because it's difficult to get people into that area. The Labor Party at one stage was saying they were going to offer free TAFE courses to the building and construction industry. Could we not, minister, offer some incentive to get people into this heritage area rather than bringing them across from the mainland?

Ms DODD - Can I just clarify my comment. Our comment is actually getting qualified tradespeople to deliver the training. So we have them and we are continuing to recruit them to those areas, but the actual competencies around heritage industry are quite specific when we need to be delivering more broadly. There's been quite a bit of conversation as to how we can make sure the product is meeting that need while recognising the demands of the broader building industry.

Mr DEAN - I was asked to ask a question here: where students drop out, fall out, what are the fees - what is the fee situation, minister? Are they required to pay a full fee or do they get their fee reimbursed?

Mr ADAMS - The TasTAFE refund policy; if students withdraw having completed less than 20 per cent of the course, they're entitled to an 80 per cent refund of the fees. That can go up to 100 per cent depending on the specific circumstances of the students who can submit a case as to why they can't continue.

Mr DEAN - After 20 per cent, there's no - they simply forgo the fees?

Mr ADAMS - If they've completed more than 20 per cent, of course. They can still put forward a submission for a fee but it's at TasTAFE discretion as to what would be refunded depending on their particular circumstances.

Mr DEAN - Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR - We've done very well to finish that in the time required and allocated, so thank you very much. Your new hat, minister, will be Minister for Infrastructure.

Mr ADAMS - Thank you very much. I look forward to that.

CHAIR - We'll have 30 minutes of that and then we'll have an afternoon tea break. Thanks very much, Jenny.

Ms DODD - Thank you.

The Committee suspended from 3.02 p.m. to 3.05 p.m.

DIVISION 11

(Department of Infrastructure)

Output Group 2

Infrastructure

2.1 Infrastructure Tasmania

CHAIR - You let us know, minister, when you're ready to kick off and you might like to introduce, formally, your team.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I introduce Gary Swain, the Deputy Secretary of Transport Services, and Alan Garcia, the Chief Executive Officer Infrastructure, Tasmania.

CHAIR - Welcome to you both.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, very much, Chair, and I'm very pleased with the Infrastructure budget this year. Some \$3.6 billion of infrastructure investment over the forward Estimates.

CHAIR - It's been called the infrastructure budget, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has. And of course, this follows the release about pipeline of works. Our 10-year pipeline that we announced last year of some \$13.9 billion worth of infrastructure investment across the next 10 years. Eight billion dollars of that is public infrastructure. This budget also contains \$1.6 billion of infrastructure for roads, rail and bridges as well, which is over the forward estimates this is also very pleasing. It's great to visit a number of these sites across Tasmania. A few weeks ago, I was at the Perth Links project which is a project of some \$92.3 million project, part of the Midland Highway Action Plan. The Midland Highway Action Plan is going well. We're not quite halfway yet. But we will have 62 per cent of works either completed or started construction by August this year.

It is fantastic to meet some of the people working and engaged on these projects. It is very fulfilling. The chap that I met at the Perth Links project weekend a few weekends ago is a local. He's in charge of a particular section of the Perth Links project and everyone would have seen that bounce out of the ground. He lives in Perth, which is fantastic. This is why we're employing people in infrastructure. We have an infrastructure budget. It employs people. It creates a necessary training environment as well, in terms of the need to train people and to fulfil the particular skill's needs requirements on a project such as this. That grows the economy.

There's enabling infrastructure, we call it, and so our infrastructure budget enables safer roads and more efficient freight groups and so as a couple of examples, which is why we are investing in key areas of infrastructure to keep and maintain the employment the growth in our economy. It is very satisfying. We look forward to a number of projects right across the state being rolled out over the course of the next four years as per our commitments or sooner. One of the projects is the Bridgewater bridge, some \$576 million is to be invested in there. We expect there'll be cars driving on the Bridgewater bridge in 2024 and that's a project which has been long in the making. Our plan and design work is underway as we speak. It is a project which has attracted a federal government commitment of around \$470 million and we're of course supporting that project as well.

It is an infrastructure budget, but it's important to remember that part of that infrastructure investment is key enabling infrastructure and it's not particularly in my area of responsibility but for example, irrigation. Irri-infrastructure, tranche 3, which is being committed to \$70 million from the state Government, \$100 billion from the federal government. Great to see the support of both parties at the last election. That enables the growth for our agriculture. With water comes opportunity and you know, that's part of why we invest in infrastructure to grow the economy as well. I've spoken enough in my opening statement at this present time so I'm happy to take questions.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Minister, can I have some understanding in regard to the Commonwealth grants and how they flow? Particularly for infrastructure, because it's been suggested that they don't all get quarantined in regard to the GST component. But irrigation grants under the water for the future scheme will have zero quarantining and they will count that. I need to understand why the other money which comes in for infrastructure doesn't; it gets treated differently?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The information I have is that it's under a partnership agreement which is GST exempt.

CHAIR - So irrigation is GST exempt. Is that right?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, so if we've got it under a National Partnership Agreement, it will deal with its GST status and the states will always try to negotiate as we do that it won't be considered for GST. As opposed to a specific amount that isn't covered under a partnership agreement or doesn't have a specific agreement to be GST exempt which then can be taken into account. This is really the Treasurer's area so it's not an area which I have expertise in, but I understand that when the GST is looked at, they look at whether those payments go to an individual state or to all states in considering the GST revenue.

CHAIR - So when a project is put forward for funding and funding is received and it's under a National Partnership Agreement for an infrastructure project, I expect that the Bridgewater bridge will be one of those, then how will that be dealt with under this process? Does that mean that we lose some GST funding later on?

Mr SWAIN - No. That would be under a partnership agreement as an amendment to a schedule, so it would be GST exempt. All the road projects typically are.

CHAIR - What projects aren't treated in that way then?

Mr GARCIA - It would be, as Gary said, where there's a National Partnership Agreement. They're generally speaking within that framework they will be negotiated as being GST free. An announcement is sometimes made, there might have - it might have been one in the past associated with some health funding at one time, that wasn't part of a partnership agreement and the consequence of that was, it was then taken account of in the Government's distribution around GST. Invariably where you've got program funding around things like roads, things like water, invariably, they are GST or exempt from the GST payments or other considerations are made. The odd one, an odd one may slip in every now and then and that does get accounted for in the GST.

CHAIR - That's not a lot of them because they're mostly partnership.

Mr GARCIA - It would be very rare in the road space and very rare in this portfolio.

CHAIR - Thank you for clearing that up. Much appreciated. Ms Howlett?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, can you give a more detailed update on the Government's 10-year infrastructure project pipeline and also the 30-year strategic plan?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The 30-year infrastructure strategy - I spoke briefly in my opening statement around the 10-year pipeline. It's the first time we've produced a pipeline of works in terms of both private - captured both the private and public funding. The requirements would be included in that pipeline of works and that document has a \$5 million threshold, so all those projects are above \$5 million.

This is, as you'd appreciate, a living document as well. It will be updated every year and with the release of the first pipeline in last year's budget, the Government is committed to update the pipeline annually. With a delivery of a 2019 state budget, the pipeline will now be updated and that work is underway. We recognise that planning for the future isn't just for the next election cycle and we need to take a longer-term approach to that. We want to create an environment in Tasmania where we can get broad agreement on where our infrastructure strategy should be at. That's why we, as a Government, charged Infrastructure Tasmania with developing infrastructure strategy for the next 30 years. That looks over the horizon, to understand what our needs will be like over the next 30 years. It builds on the 10-year infrastructure pipeline which has already allowed industry top review and implement workforce planning initiatives and business investment. The 30-year infrastructure strategy is a very substantial piece of work and not something that can be done overnight and nor as you'd appreciate, should it be rushed.

Significant engagement has already occurred and continues with agencies in developing the strategy and the pillars that underpin it. The impact of technology and how that will change the real services and implications that this will have on infrastructure timing are complex and detailed concepts. Autonomous vehicles springs to mind there in terms of how more autonomous vehicles, for example, in 30 years' time, will impact on our infrastructure. That is a good example from within the existing budget. Infrastructure Tasmania has enlisted external experts to assist in the broader development of the strategy and is using this knowledge to challenge and stimulate discussion and inputs to the strategy. I mention, when it comes to autonomous vehicles in terms of technological change, but signage, telecommunications and energy infrastructure - we need to be aware of what might be down the track in our thinking.

I'm pleased with the significant contributions being made right across Government to this very important document which will paint a picture of what Tasmania could look like in 30 years and propose pathways to getting there. I'm looking forward to receiving a draft in coming months. That's a large piece of work and I thank Mr Garcia for the work they've undertaken so far and indeed for the delivery of the first ever 10-year pipeline of works as well.

CHAIR - Thank you. In relation to the infrastructure, there's obviously been quite a bit of that going on, and in the future. How much do we spend on external consultants and project managers? How many of those projects have project managers from outside of our state? Is that something I can get an understanding of?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is. I'll invite Shane Gregory to the table, who is no stranger to any of you. Thank you, Shane.

CHAIR - Thank you. In regard to external consultants and project managers.

Mr GREGORY - So we've operated in an outsourced environment on a number of activities for over 20 years now and those things are construction and maintenance and design for all of our projects. All our projects, planning and design is done by external consultants and we're talking about engineering, consultancy firms and GHD, and so on. Typically, that part of the project counts, it's about 12 to 15 per cent of the value of a project so that's where we do most of our consulting work. We retain our own project managers and we -

CHAIR - Okay. We don't have any external project managers?

Mr GREGORY - We don't have any external project managers with us at the moment.

CHAIR - Wrong information I've had.

Mr GREGORY - We are going to the market for supplementary resources, but they would be where we're going to the market to find people we can bring into the organisation to deal with peaks in our work.

CHAIR - Right, so then I'm to understand that we have project managers but we don't have enough? We'll have to go externally for some others?

Mr GREGORY - That varies from time to time. From time to time, we do and we have in the past, brought someone in to deal with the specific project to get things moving and will continue to do that. No organisation would resource to the maximum possible workload. You always resource to a slightly lower level and have alternative ways of dealing with your peaks. That's normal business process.

CHAIR - Right. Even if there's the intention of having a huge infrastructure spend in the future, we wouldn't as a state, look at hiring some more people to fit that area?

Mr GREGORY - We have been recruiting and continue to recruit. In the last two years, we've put on 60 project managers. We're continuing to do that. It's a very competitive market at the moment. It's an incredible amount of work happening across Australia and up the Eastern Seaboard, so that's a competitive market to be in, but we have been recruiting. We've been quite successful. We've had a number of people come from interstate. We've had a project manager start with us in the last few months who's come from the United States. We are recruiting locally, nationally and we'll take international recruits as well. We will continue to do that.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. Mr Dean. We're on infrastructure. 2.1. Have I not been asking about infrastructure?

Mr DEAN - I'm just trying to get it right. You mentioned the works at Perth, the IMD bypass area there and so on. Hopefully that falls in this area.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Perth Links.

Mr DEAN - Has the next section of the changes to Illawarra Road been planned yet from where you are with the bypass through to Longford? Has that area been considered or planned as to what's going to happen there on Illawarra Road?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just a moment. I'll refer to Mr Gregory, who is the General Manager, State Roads.

CHAIR - I think the whole of the parliament knows that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's true. Yes. The progress that's being made, and of course more broadly the Midlands Highway, the Illawarra Road project received a commitment from the federal government as well at the election. I recognise that that's an important part of improving the network as well. More broadly, anyone who has driven on the highway recently

will notice the huge improvements that have been made on the sections that have been upgraded, especially the provision of a much wider and safer feeling highway. The regular protected overtaking opportunities on previously narrow single lane straights like Epping Forest, for example.

The remaining yet to be upgraded sections of the Midland Highway are being scoped for delivery as part of the second five-year agreement with the Australian government and within the 10-year action plan. Two of these at Spring Hill and Melton Mowbray to Lovely Banks will go to tender later this year.

Mr DEAN - My question is on the Illawarra Road.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I thought it was good to provide just a broad context.

Mr DEAN - It is, it is. I was going to ask you about the Midland Highway.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In that sense we have a commitment from the federal government and we have Shane. Would you like to talk about Illawarra Road?

Mr GREGORY - Yes, minister. At the moment we have a commitment coming out of the federal election. That would be the way that commission's being structured, that will come out of the Roads of Strategic Importance funding commitment which effectively the commitment through the election was an allocation of the Roads of Strategic Importance commitment to the state. We'll obviously need to work with our counterparts in Canberra to work out the profiling of those funds along with a range of other commitments and then we'd look to program in the planning work. The work hasn't started.

Mr DEAN - And the plans haven't been done. That's what I -

Mr GREGORY - No.

Mr DEAN - So you haven't got to that stage, yes.

CHAIR - All right. Thank you.

Mr DEAN - On the Bridgewater bridge you referred to, minister, I guess a decision has been made on the old bridge as it will become; will that be removed and the span remain because its heritage listed, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Heritage listed.

Mr DEAN - So what's the position with the old structure, when it becomes the old structure?

Mr GARCIA - In the past the commitment has been to retain it at least for the time being and in terms of the heritage nature of the span itself, it's only the welds on that span. So the span of itself, you needed to move it, you probably just need to have some preservation of the welds. But no decision has been taken that we move it at this time. The previous minister for infrastructure had made a commitment to retain it in place until such time as a decision was taken on whatever might be along the transit corridor. So at a point in time the question had

been asked by I think the Brighton mayor, still the Brighton mayor, as to what might occur in relation to light rail in the event that it was determined that it should follow through to Brighton. The current planning for the Bridgewater Bridge doesn't allow for a rail to be provided on it and so there was that provision there that in the event that light rail was to be contemplated going to Brighton that at least a consideration could be the current bridge.

Mr DEAN - Right, right.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. Mr Armstrong.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Thank you, Chair. Minister, just the Channel Highway diversion at Huonville and I think there was \$7.5 million or around about that figure allocated to it last year. No work's been done on it but I believe it's because the subdivision activity with the Huon Valley council and I think there's been \$200 000 I was told last week has been released for planning. Have you got any further update on that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can provide an update on that. Mr Gregory.

Mr GREGORY - The Huon Valley council is taking the lead on this project as part of their master planning for the town. At the moment what we've done is release some funds for them to create that master plan and traffic master plan and once they've worked through that and understood what they want to do with the Channel Highway diversion, then they'll come back and we'll look at processing that project or releasing new funds if they progress it or how the timing of it, if we progress it. At the moment it's with council to work through their master plan. They're thinking about their development strategy and they're going to do some transport modelling and traffic modelling so they understand what's going on. At the moment that's where it sits.

Mr ARMSTRONG - So is there a time frame on it because I mean this has been dragging on from before I was mayor down there. People are getting a bit frustrated with that section of road because it's really dangerous. A truck and a school bus can't pass because they'll hit the west coast mirrors. Is there a time frame that's being put on it, or do we have any idea how long it'll be?

Mr GREGORY - I don't have an exact idea. Council's now talking about a very different project to what we were talking about three or four years ago.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, I'm aware of that.

Mr GREGORY - So it's quite a different project heading round the eastern side of the town and coming back in to the northern side of the town. I would think they probably have maybe a couple of years' worth of work to work their way through their master planning and their rezoning. I think there's quite a bit of work for them to do.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I don't know whether there's any rezoning got to be done but yes, it's 12 months now since that money was allocated and people are getting a bit frustrated that it's dragging out because, as I said, it's a very dangerous section of road.

Mr SWAIN - I was just going to say, just the request to consider the broader plans of council did come from council through the department to the minister so we're really respecting council's desired approach.

CHAIR - Okay. Ms Howlett.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, in relation to the Hobart City Deal, what are the benefits for Greater Hobart?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We were very pleased that the Hobart City Deal has been struck. It brings considerable investment to the southern region of Tasmania, \$1.43 billion in fact. The Hobart City Deal was signed on 24 February this year, just over 12 months after a head of agreement was signed by the prime minister and the premier in January 2018. The Hobart City Deal represents a 10-year partnership between the federal and state governments and the Greater Hobart local councils to implement our shared vision to guide and encourage investment to leverage Hobart's natural amenity and to build on its position as a vibrant, liveable and connected global city.

One of the central components of the Hobart City Deal relates to investment in our transport system to enable a reliable, sustainable and cost-effective transport system, supporting active transport and improving the efficiency of private car travel. As a government we've made a significant investment of \$106 million toward a range of transport initiatives. The Australian government and councils have also committed significant expenditure. The federal government's including \$461 million for the Bridgewater bridge. The Tasmanian government significant investment of \$106 million includes \$750 000 to identify locations and commence planning for a new Hobart transit centre which is already committed to, could possibly be underground; \$7.5 million over four years for the development of a single integrated ticketing system; \$2 million to support a Derwent River ferry service; \$16 million for improvements to better manage the flow of traffic on Macquarie and Davey Streets; \$21 million to support the implementation of a southeast traffic solution program; \$35.5 million to progress a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet; and \$2 million grants program to support the Greater Hobart councils to create or extend cycling routes. It also includes specific funding for better transport options for the Kingborough region and I can go into more detail on that shortly.

In addition to the Tasmanian government's contributions, the Australian government has also committed \$25 million from the Urban Congestion Fund to support the delivery of a transport solution on the northern suburbs transit corridor; \$82.3 million to establish border services at the Hobart Airport, to the establishment of an Australian Federal Police presence at the Hobart Airport to coincide with the commencement of direct international flights; \$30 million to partner with community housing to deliver affordable housing; and \$450 million over the life of the deal in Antarctic infrastructure which is expected to result in new jobs being created in Hobart. We've mentioned the Bridgewater bridge and the like.

Very quickly in terms of the Kingborough through the Hobart City Deal, as part of the \$1.43 billion Hobart City Deal, we've allocated \$20.8 million in terms of the state government to help reduce congestion being experienced in the Kingborough region. This funding will complement existing commitments to improve bus priority and traffic flow on the Southern Outlet, Macquarie and Davey Streets. I recently met with the Kingborough mayor, Dean Winter, and senior Kingborough council officers to progress this commitment and to discuss

options for this investment. I thank Mayor Winter. We had a constructive and positive discussion about measures to combat congestion and we know that part of the congestion challenge is to increase the use of public transport. It must, as we all know, be an attractive and efficient option for commuters, which is very important, and we recognise the importance of that.

What's worth mentioning as well is in Kingborough, a contribution towards a redeveloped bus transit centre in central Kingston, a \$3.5 million project, planning for that which is underway, more park and ride facilities, including possibly at Kingston Park development and other facilities in strategic locations across Kingborough region; better frequency or increased bus services to make public transport a more reliable option; intelligent transport solutions, including smart bus transport hubs at key locations which could possibly provide better real time information for commuters. We're very pleased with the deal that was struck and it provides us with enormous opportunity when it comes to transport in the southern region.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. On the strength of that we'll break for an afternoon tea break and be back and ready to go by 3.45 p.m. Thank you very much, Lynne. We'll suspend. We'll move to 2.2 which is infrastructure strategy which I think we've probably wandered into a little bit already.

The committee suspended from 3.30 p.m. to 3.45 p.m.

2.2 Infrastructure Strategy

CHAIR Thank you, minister, and welcome back. This is the beginning of our last session today, Infrastructure Strategy.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme - TFES - is so important to Tasmanian businesses right across the state. Do you have an update on the plan?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we do, and I thank the member for the question. The equalisation scheme provided and administered by the Australian Government is very important to the continuing growth of Tasmanian business and our economy. It's important to note that the stated objective of the Tasmanian scheme is to partially offset the freight cost disadvantage associated with the Bass Strait crossing. It's not designed to fully compensate shippers for the cost of disadvantage, or to completely equalise Tasmanian shippers' freight costs with those of equivalent mainland firms.

Of course, it was first introduced in 1976 and has undergone several design changes. The design and funding of the scheme is at the complete discretion of the Australian Government and is administered by ministerial discretion. The extension of TFES to the shipment of goods via the mainland to markets not previously covered under the scheme was announced by the Australian Government as part of its response to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Tasmanian shipping and freight; of course, the Hodgman Liberal Government lobbied hard for that outcome.

Our Government welcomed the extension of the scheme for transshipped international export goods, which commenced in January 2016, and we argued strongly for the continuation

of the extended scheme when it was renewed in December 2017. The extension represents additional assistance to Tasmanian exporters estimated to be worth \$203 million over four years, and this was a big win for business in Tasmania delivered by federal and state Liberal governments. Tasmanian exporters shipping eligible goods via the mainland are able to claim assistance of \$700 per 20 foot equivalent unit. In recognition of greater shipping costs, the scheme also provided an additional 15 per cent for exporters shipping eligible goods from King Island and the Furneaux Group of islands. In total the Australian Government paid \$143.3 million to Tasmanian shippers under the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme in the financial year 2017-18.

In December last year the Australian Senate moved that an inquiry be conducted by the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee into the policy, regulatory taxation, administrative and funding priorities for Australian shipping, including TFES. The state Government made a submission to the inquiry highlighting the major benefits to the Tasmanian economy provided by TFES through addressing the transport disadvantage experienced by Tasmania, and affirms that the continued operation of the scheme is critical to Tasmania's economic growth.

All aspects of TFES are also scheduled to be reviewed by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics in 2019 in accordance with the current ministerial direction. Details of this review have not yet been made available, but Tasmanian businesses can be assured that the state Liberal government will be strongly reminding the Morrison federal Liberal government that continued operation of the scheme in its existing form is vitally important to Tasmania. Of course Infrastructure Tasmania or the department may like to provide the committee with some further details but, of course, I think I have covered that overall there.

CHAIR - I think you've covered that.

Mr DEAN - Yes, minister, I have a question in relation to the freight rail infrastructure in the Budget regarding that funding. The necessity for the weighbridge at Parattah would obviously come into that as well, and what's happening there as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, so ongoing investment in rail infrastructure is vital to maintain and improve the condition of our freight rail network. TasRail hauls around three and a half million tonnes of freight on an annual basis equating to more than 140 000 less heavy vehicle movements on our roads. I commend the team at TasRail. I visited their Launceston Workshop just very recently. As members may be aware, the first tranche of the Tasmanian Rail Revitalisation Program is now winding up; it is expected to be delivered in full on time and on budget. Since the \$119.6 million tranche began four years ago, there has been a reduction in mainline derailments, record freight volumes and improved safety statistics. Network improvements facilitated by this funding include replacement of sleepers, replacement of life-expired rail and bridge upgrades, along with formation and drainage works.

In 2019-20, the \$119.6 million tranche 2 will commence, with works carried out over the next four years. Co-funded with the Australian Government, tranche 2 will focus on upgrading priority sections of the state's freight rail network with all key freight rail corridors benefiting from this investment. As with tranche 1, it is expected that the majority of contracts will go to local companies, which in turn support local subcontractors and local suppliers of goods and services. TasRail expects to be able to utilise the existing local, civil construction industry that

has already been mobilised for tranche 1, ensuring that the required skills and capability are retained and the expensive process of demobilisation and remobilisation of equipment and personnel is avoided.

The Government has also committed to match the \$68 million in funding announced for tranche 3 by the Australian Government over 2020-21 and 2022-23. This funding will ensure that our rail network is safe and reliable, will help to improve workplace safety for TasRail safety and will improve security of rail transport for its customers. We have also committed \$16.3 million over 2019-20 in the forward Estimates for rail infrastructure for TasRail. This additional funding will allow TasRail to manage, maintain and operate the Tasmanian rail network on a sustainable basis and will provide essential annual maintenance of rolling stock, and finally.

Chair, the Budget also includes an equity contribution of \$575,000 to assist TasRail to fund infrastructure works at the Parattah rail siding, and these works are important to help facilitate keeping heavy trucks and additional volumes off our roads and on the rail network from the forestry sector.

Mr DEAN - Just on that point, what truck movement is that likely to remove from our roads, say, the infrastructure of Parattah weighbridge? Have you any details?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I probably haven't that information at hand, but I can put that on notice and request that TasRail provides that information, unless anyone's -

Mr GARCIA - It won't take a lot of the traffic out of the south. It will take a lot more out of the plantations -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Going north?

Mr GARCIA - Well, out of the north-east going north, so at present you've got log plantations which haven't been harvested because otherwise they would have previously gone to Triabunna. This is providing capacity for them to be brought over and taken to Parattah, so basically you're not taking a lot more traffic off the roads. You're actually creating a business from something that's been existing for a while in plantation.

Mr DEAN - That's my question. The product that will come in to be weighed on that bridge - and I take it we're talking about timber logs?

Mr GARCIA - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Where will that be coming from then to Parattah, to obviously be loaded on to rail. That's what we're talking about?

Mr GARCIA - Yes.

Mr DEAN - For conveyance to the north of the state, I'd say, at this stage. So where is the product going to come from?

Mr GARCIA - In large part from the south-east out to the east coast, and also likely the Derwent Valley as well.

Mr DEAN - I see. From there, they'll truck it to Parattah?

Mr GARCIA - Yes.

Mr DEAN - And then rail from there?

Mr GARCIA - But predominantly south-east, as I understand it.

Mr DEAN - All right. Are we able to calculate the number of heavy vehicles and heavy truck movements that have been taken off the Midland Highway since the rail started moving logs and timber from the south to the north? Surely there must be some figures available on that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I could probably find that. In my statement I did recall -

Mr DEAN - Is it a public -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The three and a half million tonnes of freight that TasRail hauls on an annual basis equates to about 140 000 less heavy vehicle movements on our roads annually, so you might be able to work out a figure from that, but I would need to -

Mr DEAN - I think that's sufficient. The public keeps asking the question: what's it doing to heavy truck movement on our roads. We've come up with those figures, so I think that's all I need out of that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. Thank you.

Mr DEAN - Thank you, minister.

CHAIR - Is the Government looking to explore other options in other rail corridors around the state for moving timber?

Mr DEAN - North-east?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's a question for TasRail. I'm happy to provide -

CHAIR - If the Government's providing the money for the weighbridge at Parattah, it's obviously supportive of the initiative, so is the Government supportive of any other initiatives that might be put forward?

Mr GARCIA - That's on the basis of an increase in volume of business on the current line, There isn't a proposition at the present time to go off the main freight trucks. There's no proposition to do that, because there's no demand on those other unused lines, as you would require an upgrade of infrastructure for the purposes of carrying freight. TasRail's been able to respond to industry demand with a proposition saying, 'We can provide you with a service to your port of call on our rail line, but we need some ancillary infrastructure'. It's actually ancillary to the current freight route or freight line. It's not additional funding on other freight lines, but there's currently no intention to do anything on any freight lines other than the main freight lines.

CHAIR - What about the residue from the southern forests? Are they considering putting that on the rail or is it still being trucked?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll have to take that question on notice, but Alan, have you -

Mr GARCIA - Yes, in large part they are going by rail to the north. I understand that in major part they're coming to Brighton and then being taken north by truck.

Mr DEAN - Just on that, that's the line from the south, from Brighton to George Town, obviously -

CHAIR - Via Parattah.

Mr DEAN - via Parattah, and then obviously from there to the north-west coast as well. Those are lines it's concentrated on for rail shipments?

Mr GARCIA - Yes. For forest product generally speaking you go to George Town. For general freight, you'll be going through to Burnie containerisation, so anything that would go out for Toll would go out through Burnie.

Mr DEAN - Right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That would be a good question also for the Minister for Resources.

CHAIR - Bit of a crossover, is there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of exact figures, there really is.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, could you update the committee on the Government's commitment to establishing a ferry service on the Derwent River?

CHAIR - We're not at ferries yet. Shipping and ferry - that's subsidies, all right. Go for it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - I noticed you made that announcement earlier, minister. You could have made that announcement in this committee today. We would have had a coup.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Very good. Obviously this is one of our key commitments. I've spoken about this previously in terms of the public ferry service between Bellerive and Hobart, and you know, our waterways in Hobart are fantastic assets, and, as one of our greatest assets, the waterways should be used as a public transport option. Such a service not only has the potential to reduce congestion by taking vehicles off our roads, but also to be an iconic attraction in its own right and an enabler of greater connectivity between the eastern and the western shores of the city. It's clear through community feedback and the expert report that is what people want to see and what will work most effectively is a comprehensive seven days-a-week Derwent ferry service that caters for weekday and weekend travel.

Metro's expert report into the ferry service indicates that beyond its capacity to reduce congestion, such a service would provide a broad range of benefits, including increasing the overall resilience of Hobart's transport system; encouraging greater uptake of active transport options, including walking and cycling; activating further urban development and residential infill, particularly on the eastern shore; and improving the visitor experience by linking attractions such as Blundstone Arena, Bellerive Quay, Franklin Wharf and the Hobart CBD.

The expert advice is that to have a real impact, the ferry service will need to be fast and operate on a high frequency with strong landside connections to other transport modes, including bus services, cycleways and walking paths. I would like to publically thank and acknowledge all the individuals and businesses that took part in the consultation process for the Derwent ferry options analysis and the valuable feedback and input that was provided, including through stakeholder forums and online surveys.

It has become clear through the consultation process that the type of service the committee expects, and which would work most effectively, is a comprehensive seven-days-a-week service that caters for both weekday and weekend travel. This is the type of service the premier committed to in his State of the State Address earlier this year, and for the type of service that this government will deliver. The next step in the process we've now established a project working group to develop a detailed Derwent ferry service project plan for the procurement and delivery of the service, and I'm advised that an approach to market is expected to occur later this year and planning for the provision of landside infrastructure will begin shortly, and of course, work is also being done to inform a budget submission 2020-21 budget and I cannot pre-empt the working group findings, of course, which will involve a lot of consultation with stakeholders. I look forward to delivering a service that Tasmanians support and of course, can be very proud of as well.

CHAIR - Fully funded before the next state election? That's what I heard on the radio.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, yes. Absolutely, we want to see the service up and running in this term of government, or be more informed in terms of the project cost for the next budget in 12 months' time in the 2020-21 budget.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Armstrong.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I'd just like to know what the planning, designing and costings and things that are going on with the Howden Road and Channel Highway intersection, where that's at and what's actually progressing there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Gregory.

CHAIR - Please come and join us.

Mr ARMSTRONG - And possibly while it's in the same area, a different highway but it's the Huon and Sandfly intersection. Is that completed or is it -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Huon and Sandfly intersection?

Mr ARMSTRONG - Huon Highway Sandfly Road intersection. Is there more work to be done there?

Mr GREGORY - Starting with the Howden Road intersection. We've currently got a study open to look at the Channel Highway between Kingston and Margate and that intersection's being looked at in the context of that whole piece of work. So that's a current piece of work. I think that will run through the remainder of this year.

Mr ARMSTRONG - That's involved with that section too.

Mr GREGORY - The whole section so we get consistency, and in terms of Huon/Sandfly our design work is getting into its latter stages and we'll be looking to tender later this year for some work at that intersection.

Mr ARMSTRONG - This is on the other side of the road, is it?

Mr GREGORY - Huon/Sandfly?

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, but Huon/Sandfly Road, they've already done slip lane there.

Mr GREGORY - The slip lane was done a number of years ago to deal with those specific issues and this will be a piece of work just to make the intersection safer under the current commitment.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Thank you.

Ms SIEJKA - A very quick question. The Mornington roundabout -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Did you get my letter?

Ms SIEJKA - I did, thank you very much. The review that's recently being conducted.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The safety review?

Ms SIEJKA - Yes. You just mentioned in your recent letter that a briefing would be made available to me once you'd had one. I wondered how soon that could be provided.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, as soon as possible, Ms Siejka. I know it is a project you are very keen on.

Ms SIEJKA - A lot of people are keen to know.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sure I can provide any more information in terms of your letter of 31 May, but we will organise a briefing for you as soon as practicable.

Ms SIEJKA - I appreciate your correspondence in the matter as well. It's been really helpful.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. Mr Dean, two final questions and then we are moving to 2.3.

Mr DEAN - I think it comes under this area. What's the position with the transfer of Bathurst and Wellington Streets from local government to the state? Has that occurred? Is that in place yet? It has been going on for many years. It's been going for many years. It was going on when I was the mayor for Launceston. That's how long ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has been going on a while.

Mr DEAN - And while we're on that subject, Prossers Road at Nunamara.

CHAIR - We might be getting to the stage where we're trying to cover every members' issues, individual issues sorted. Probably not the place.

Mr DEAN - I think the transfer of these roads is important.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a \$1.5 million commitment to complete a road swap deal with the City of Launceston and this was an election commitment of ours again. I know it has been going on for some time but we committed to it at the election. The road swap involved the Tasmanian government taking over the management of the Wellington Bathurst Street connector that runs between the Midland and East Tamar Highways and the sections of York and Brisbane Streets that run between West Tamar Highway and Bathurst Wellington Street. The road transfers also include the Prossers Road and part of the Lilydale Road moving into the state management and the John Lees Drive being taken over by the City of Launceston.

Negotiations have been underway for some months with the City of Launceston for transfer of road ownership and associated maintenance and management responsibilities. The process is more complex than the transfer of Macquarie and Davies Streets in Hobart as it includes the transfer of ownership of additional roads. The road swap will allow the government to take a holistic regional view of the transport of the requirements and will enable more effective management flows.

Now, recognising Chair, the benefits and challenges of growing economic activity in the development in and around Launceston, we're also, as a government working in partnership with The Greater Launceston Councils to develop a transport vision to provide guidance for decisions around transport policy and investment. The vision will provide guidance for a coordinated approach to transport planning and provision of transport infrastructure and services to meet the future needs of the Greater Launceston. It will comprise of key principles for the transport future of Greater Launceston, and importantly, an action plan for the prioritisation of projects and the project is being funded from the government's \$75 million commitment for a series of initiatives under the Launceston and Tamar Valley traffic provision. I hope that's provided some information for the member.

Mr DEAN - The question is, when will it likely be signed off because the Government has funding in this year's budget in relation to changes to the Charles Street bridge - I think, that's a part of your budget. So that bridge would fall within the confines currently of the City of Launceston Council.

Mr SWAIN - The grant deed is with council, so we've just got some comments from them. It's progressing well. The deed is with council.

Mr DEAN - So what is the position then with the funding to changes to the Charles Street bridge and it's in the current budget area? What's the position there then? Is it a widening of the Charles Street bridge, and that's being accepted by the state's funding at this stage by the City of Launceston, I take it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some project design work is being undertaken. Mr Gregory.

Mr GREGORY - The Charles Street bridge is actually a declared bridge under the Roads and Jetties Act so while it has technically a council owned road running on it, it is maintained and renewed by the state government.

Mr DEAN - By the state.

Mr GREGORY - So it's our bridge that we look after. We've been doing a lot of work with council around, not just the bridge, but how it interacts with the movements around Invermay and Inverness. A short-term piece of work we'll be doing in agreement with council, is to ban the right-turn movements which is currently causing the congestion. That ties in with some proposed works at Forster Street improving the right-turn there. There's a piece of work that we've been doing with council. There was an article in *The Examiner*, I think, today. That vision's going back to council for more consideration, that includes Forster Street and Gleadow Street as well and once that's all resolved we can implement those first few projects. The first projects will be Goderich and Forster Street and Goderich and Gleadow Street.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We'll move now to 2.3, land transport safety. Thank you, Ms Armitage.

2.3 Land transport safety -

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Chair. Minister, with regard to the delivery of road safety education and awareness for Tasmanians and visitors, some anecdotal and qualitative evidence suggests that Tasmanians support the introduction of certain markers to indicate drivers who are not local, and I'm sure you've heard this before, you know, some people say that they really should have a T for tourist, a V for visitor, particularly overseas tourists on our roads. Do you have a comment on whether the government is looking at something along those lines or would support something similar?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. We have no plans for such markers. We have launched late last year, I stand to be corrected, or earlier this year, last year, a motorcycle safety initiative, particularly targeted at, well, all motorcyclists, but particularly those that aren't experienced to Tasmanian road conditions in terms of the windy roads and all those sorts of things and that was an ongoing successful campaign.

Ms ARMITAGE - It was, so how did it work? If it targets the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Being evaluated, now that particular campaign will be evaluated now and I might just get Martin Crane, the general manager or Road User Service, up.

CHAIR - Welcome, Martin.

Mr ROCKLIFF - More broadly, I do hear from time to time some quite forthright feedback about tourists and their driving on our roads. It's not all fair either. It's important to note that contrary to what many people think, our crash statistics show that non-resident road users, including international tourists, make up only a very small percentage of those who are unfortunately involved in serious casualty crashes on Tasmanian roads. In fact, non-Tasmanian residents accounted for approximately 13 per cent of people killed or seriously injured to date in 2019, which is consistent with the five-year average.

Ms ARMITAGE - However, in 2015 an investigation by the Department of State Growth reported that road crashes are the most common cause of injury and death for international visitors in Australia.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. One of the 14 fatalities to date in 2019 has involved a non-Tasmanian resident but of course continued growth in visitor numbers to Tasmania means there are now more visiting drivers on our roads. Certainly, tourists are one group of drivers that may have a lower awareness of driving conditions and road rules in Tasmania, and that's why we have developed a number of programs to help them. The aim of the tourist road safety strategy is to communicate important road safety messages for visiting drivers, resulting in improved road safety for all road users and of course the strategy from the road safety levy, with \$750 000 allocated to deliver the initiatives.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is that compulsory for people to look at or is it simply something they actually go on, is it the Road Safety Advisory Council Towards Zero, visiting drivers, that people can go on and see the videos. But is it compulsory that they watch them before we're giving a Tasmanian licence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's difficult to make it compulsory. It's not compulsory, no. Its evidence based, practical approach that was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders. It focuses on educating drivers and addressing public perceptions also relating to visiting drivers. The strategy has been in place since 2015 and continues to target groups with a higher crash risk or low awareness of driving conditions and road rules in Tasmania.

Ms ARMITAGE - Can I ask you a question? Sorry, just keep you stopping you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that's all right.

Ms ARMITAGE - But it's just with regard to it. Do you have any evidence of how many hits the site has? How many people have actually gone on the site and watched the videos, the international tourists? Do we know how many people are looking at it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can take that on notice.

Ms ARMITAGE - It's important - I'm looking at the site here, International Tourists, Touring Motorcyclists, New to Tasmania. But it'd be good to know how many people look at it.

Mr SWAIN - If I could, minister, we're also targeting gateways, so you've come through on the TT-Line, there's the videos playing all the time, coming through the airports,

et cetera. The hire vehicle cars have paraphernalia that they display. I guess it's a multi-pronged approach to trying to target those -

Ms ARMITAGE - The left stickers in the hire cars, is that compulsory or optional for the hire cars? I notice that the Bobbie Bear, I assume that's mainly for Asian tourists - they particularly like Bobbie Bear - but the hire cars could have left-hand stickers saying drivers stick to the left in Australia. Is that a compulsory thing for hire cars in them?

Mr SWAIN - I think it's non-compulsory but we get a very high level of cooperation from the hire vehicle companies because it's really in their interests as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are providing actually very good support for our initiatives because between October 2015 and February 2019, over 800 000 pieces of collateral material, reinforcing important road safety messages were distributed through hire vehicles, the Tasmanian Tourism brochure exchange and partners and stakeholder networks and so they're playing their role in that sense as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - I know that some other states have signage on the roads with 'in Australia we drive on the left'. Have you considered that in Tasmania, apart from having the stickers in the cars that are optional? Have you considered it because often if you're an international driver and you're used to driving on the other side of the road, it would be very easy to find yourself on the wrong side. Have you considered doing what some states have done and actually having signage on the roadside?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm sure we would consider initiatives that were evidence based and worked.

Ms ARMITAGE - I know some states do it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Any further comment, Martin?

Mr CRANE - Some of the challenges with that would be with the diverse tourist market that we now have in Tasmania, which languages we put it in. Literacy in other languages is an issue for them as well which we found in the driver education space. If there was evidence to suggest we could do that, I think probably more targeted in the vehicle itself such as the Bobbie Bear does give a better hit rate in terms of that for different language visitors.

Ms ARMITAGE - You don't consider, minister, just from your comments about language, that if someone can't actually understand the written Australian word, that's a bit of a problem?

Mr CRANE - What I would say is that all the signage that we use on our roads, although it may be in English, are international symbols.

Ms ARMITAGE - The member for Huon mentioned last year, I was reading the simple thing of an arrow on the road every now and then showing which side you actually are driving is obviously something that's quite easy.

Going back to the motorcyclist, you mentioned motorcyclist training. I noticed in Queensland and Western Australia and possibly -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Motorcyclist campaign, safety campaign, yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Safety. Yes. But you didn't actually elaborate on what it was. Is it a TV campaign, a newspaper campaign?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a video that plays on the *Spirit of Tasmania*, and there is other accessible information.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is this for our local motorcyclists as well?

Mr ROCKLIFF - For our Tasmania-specific campaign and you would appreciate our motorcyclists -

Ms ARMITAGE - Motorcyclists were represented in accidents, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, they're vulnerable road users. As you would appreciate, there is little protecting the rider in the event of a crash. Motorcyclists continue to be significantly over represented in crash statistics in Tasmania. In 2018 motorcyclists made up almost 30 per cent of Tasmania's serious casualty crashes. These figures are broadly consistent with previous years. They continue to be a cause of concern, particularly given that motorcyclists comprise only four per cent of the vehicle fleet.

Ms ARMITAGE - What are we doing for our own drivers or riders apart from having videos on the TT-Line? What are we doing for our local riders to actually make them safer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This campaign is also accessible to our local riders as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - Where do they find it? Is it being sent out to them? Do they have to go and sit and watch something? Because as I said, I note in Queensland and WA, I'm not sure about other states, but you can't go out with an L plate and ride alone. You have to have someone ride with you either in a car or on a bike, because you can't go out by yourself in those states.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So you're now talking about the training?

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm talking about any training.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Training package.

Ms ARMITAGE - You're talking about safety factors for motorcyclists.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, so we've just - Martin might -

Mr CRANE - Yes, in Tasmania in 2017 we introduced a new motorcycle training and assessment program which recognised some of the failings of the previous system. We now have a two-day training course before people can go on the road solo by themselves and that includes a lot of education and information regarding how to ride a bike safely.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do they have to do a test?

Mr CRANE - Yes, they do.

Ms ARMITAGE - And pass a test?

Mr CRANE - At that two-day session there is a time when they go out on the road, before they go out on the road to have to be assessed to see whether they are safe to go out on the road first and some people actually decide that they need more training, particularly those people that haven't ridden a motorcycle before. They come back and have additional training before they go out on the road as part of getting their pre-learner. Then after they've done their pre-learner, they come back in for a check ride. This is a coaching session, which enables them to make sure that they've been practicing their riding and that they get checked in to see that they're progressing well and before they're issued a P, they have a one on one assessment for over an hour where a qualified assessor rides behind them and gives them instruction of where to go and they're assessed and if they're deemed to be - meet the standard, they're then issued a P.

Ms ARMITAGE - That's for their P. But you mentioned that some people decide they're not feeling comfortable, but do they have to actually pass something with the instructor being there?

Mr CRANE - In that in - yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - For them to decide that they're capable of going out?

Mr CRANE - In that two-day pre-learner course before they - and the on road component of that is on the second day in the afternoon and they have to go around the - around the on road, off road circle -

Ms ARMITAGE - Up at Prospects for example in Launceston, at the Prospect schools or -

Mr CRANE - We've spent a lot of time and effort moving out of some of our locations and we've got new facilities in Burnie, Launceston, and we're looking at some changes in Hobart. There is a point where a decision is made with the assessor and it's usually in mutual agreement, but if the assessor doesn't feel comfortable with taking -

Ms ARMITAGE - Or allow them to go out.

Mr CRANE - Won't go out with them on the road, and that's we believe is starting to show some good signs in our crash stats. It's very early days and that process, that's out of Victoria. And it's been rolled out in other jurisdictions as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do you have any statistics of how represented learner drivers are in crashes? As opposed to just motorcycle riders, but people with an L? Or could we take that on notice?

Mr ROCKLIFF - With motorcyclists?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, with motorcyclists, yes.

Mr CRANE - As in L -

Ms ARMITAGE - As in crashes, yes, for people on their Ls.

Mr CRANE - For Ls for motorcycles?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr CRANE - I will take that on notice.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm happy for it to go on notice. One last question, Chair, if I could with regard to motorcyclists. I think it's important because it's a dangerous area for our people young and old. I appreciate that most motorcyclists have to have a smaller bike - I think it was 250 cc? I can remember in the past it was not difficult to have that overridden and get a larger bike. Has that changed? Is it still possible just to send in a stat dec or make a call to say I'm too tall, I'm too heavy and you get something excluding you from the 250 cc or has that been tightened up? It was very loose.

Mr CRANE - When I was in my previous role as registrar, I very infrequently gave permission on those. In fact it was people that were trying for various height and other reasons and they were -

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, no one checked them and that's why they all kept doing it.

Mr CRANE - No, we've tightened that up and I haven't been initialling a lot of those.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. I'll let someone else ask you a question.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. Supplementary on motorcycles or learners?

Ms SIEJKA - Learner drivers in general. On the new learner driving framework, it demands much more time driving prior to sitting tests and I wondered if you'd modelled on lower SES and regional communities and some of those groups that already struggle to get a licence. You know, access to vehicles, cost of petrol and all that sort of thing to see how they might be impacted.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it's a good question and an important one that we've considered. We have supported more the learner driver mentor program considerably over the last few years. The rider program as well, we're supporting and increasing access to education and particularly more access to the learner driver mentor program and we're going to, as I understand it, continue to do some more work with important stake holders such as TASCOS and -

Ms SIEJKA - The learner driver, are you seeing it growing at the same sort of rate because it's obviously limited as well in terms of engaging volunteers and there's always so much demand on that program?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is. I recognise that and we're mindful of not wanting the change to impact - while the changes I believe are good and evidence based, particularly around driver distraction, particularly around the extra hours which will now be 80 hours. It was always

recommended that there be additional 30 hours outside the 50 hours. When you compare that to other states, though, we're still below. New South Wales, I believe, is 120 hours and so it's still below that. I'm not dismissing the concerns in terms of accessibility, including the peer passenger restrictions as well or P1 drivers and that 12 months between the younger age group.

Mr SWAIN - Yes, so we have increased it over time and I think it started off, I'm looking at Mark, now, the 200, I'm trying to remember if it's 560 or 750 now?

Mr CRANE - Seven hundred and fifty.

Mr SWAIN - But in addition to that, we've brought in two or three years ago, a sort of performance benchmarking where as part of the application for funding, the number of hours on the road, just uses performance metric. And actually, that has dramatically increased the value for money we're getting out of that program, so we've seen the average hours on road, per dollar spent on the program guide quite fanatically, just by introducing that as a concept really. It's increased both in dollars but also in effectiveness. We're getting more value from every dollar we put into it.

Ms SIEJKA - I see the benefits in terms of safety and preparing people for the road, but do you admit that it would be hard to argue just having worked in - with youth and other sort of areas that I've worked in, I could see that it will impact some of those areas of the community without a lot more support in getting their licenses which then can mean more difficulty in getting employment. Has that - did that - was that examined at all of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it was and it continues to be. I mean, your interest and background in Why Not, for example, and TasCOSS together, they were committed to looking at specific concerns raised by Why Not and TasCOSS. The Government and Driver Mentoring Tasmania conducting a public awareness campaign later this year to increase the number of volunteer driver mentors in their LDMP program to enable more learners to participate in the program by doing more work to understand the barriers and the additional support that could be provided. This research will include a series of targeted focus groups with young people. For example, in the learner driver mentor program, we've increased funding to the learner driver mentor program to \$1 million per year in the 2018-19 budget. These programs allow people with barriers or known areas, small areas, areas of disadvantage to access driving supervisors and vehicles so they can get their learner log book hours up.

I understand the complexity around it, the overall aim of course is to balance out the importance of road safety and tragically, I'll use that term, our younger drivers are, you know, well and truly overrepresented in serious crash and - or serious crash statistics, including of course people losing their lives. It is a balance issue and we want our young people irrespective of their circumstance, financial or where they live to be contributing members of our community and so, for example, in the peer passenger restriction, there'll be exemptions to access education or access health services as an example, yes.

Mr SWAIN - To go on with that, if I could, we had a framework that was assessed as standard under a 3T process standard in augmented and exemplary and some of the other states were starting to pull away from us so the changes including the GLS would take us to enhanced, which is a pretty strong outcome but as the minister said, the approach we've generally taken is to look at how can we transition this in sensitive way rather than not doing. I guess, the connection between GLS and youth outcomes is very strong and it's been demonstrated

statistically in Victoria in GLS enhancements there they have had a dramatic impact on youth outcomes.

CHAIR - These proposed changes, minister, will come through the Subordinate Legislation committee through regulation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is requirement to change regulation.

CHAIR - Yes, so they'll come with a regulatory impact statement? If they don't they will need to.

Mr CRANE - I don't believe that we've had some initial advice but we don't believe that some of those changes will need a regulatory impact statement. As I said that's initial advice.

CHAIR - Interesting. I'll get back to you on that, because I think when it's going to have an impact and particularly financial, we obviously don't have a role in policy but it's a financial impact, then yes, there is a requirement for regulatory impact statement. That's one we can work with.

Ms SIEJKA - I just have one last one about learners in general. Once they've got all of their learning, I wanted to know what sort of wait times there were for people waiting to sit their tests. I understand in some places that's more readily available than others?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right. We've recently made some changes in that particular area which I will provide some detail on -

CHAIR - Average wait time would be good.

Ms SIEJKA - Across the state as I'm sure it differs.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. We recognise the importance of a driver licence in supporting our young people's employment access opportunities, education and community services. We're aiming to remove barriers for young people in obtaining their driver licence, the particular focus on reducing the wait times that young people can sometimes face when booking a driver assessment. In 2018 State Growth conducted 18 120 driver assessments that were conducted and an additional 4302 L2 assessments were conducted by external authorised driving assessors during the same period. Waiting times for driving assessments across Tasmania are generally around between three to five weeks. The north-west coast has fluctuated in 2018 and the State Growth is implementing strategies to reduce and stabilise wait times in that particular area.

Ms SIEJKA - So that's more than three to five weeks?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Three to five weeks.

Ms SIEJKA - No, but you said the north-west has fluctuated. Is that because that's been more than the three to five weeks everywhere else?

Mr CRANE - Yes, that's correct. Unfortunately, we've had some serious illness of some staff in the north-west and we've been moving some staff around to cover those long-term absences.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So in recognising the barrier, we know it's a frustration for young drivers, particularly in rural and regional areas and the waiting times for initial testing and re-testing if required to achieve the P1 driving licence. Allowing appropriately qualified private sector driving instructors to coordinate the P1 licensing assessment will help reduce wait times for assessments and the Department of State Growth is currently establishing an enhanced P1 assessment delivery model to allow suitably qualified driving instructors to deliver P1 driver assessments. The enhanced model will have road safety, integrity of the licensing system, professional development compliance, increased access and the use of technology at its core. An expression of interest opened up last month, 23 May in fact, and a pilot for the enhanced delivery model will be commenced early in the 2019-2020 financial year. Allowing the private industry to deliver P1 assessments will result in the P1 assessment becoming a GST applicable service and the government will be required to pay GST on all P1 assessments upon the commencement of the pilot, and I've mentioned the figures in terms of the number of assessments.

Ms SIEJKA - It's just that it's three to five weeks everywhere else in state except for in the north-west. What was the longest it's been?

Mr CRANE - In the north-west, unfortunately, it has gone up to nine weeks in some of our sites but we should point out that we deliver driver assessments in 23 sites, and what we're trying to do is keep the major sites of Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport at the lower rate to encourage people to come to those locations as we'd rather people being tested - well, to be honest, with the infrastructure around them. The better assessments of them make sure that they're safe to go on the road by themselves. Some of those time frames are for places that we only go to every three or four weeks.

Ms SIEJKA - Okay.

Mr WILLIE - We're still in land transport safety, are we?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - The school crossing patrol officer program. How many schools participate in that and what are the criteria for schools to participate in that?

Mr CRANE - I haven't got those exact numbers, Mr Willie, at the moment. We do have a large number of part-time staff working as crossing guards across the state and I would have to take that on notice, I'm afraid.

Mr WILLIE - How are the schools selected? Is it traffic movement? Is it enrolment numbers?

Mr CRANE - It's a combination. It's called a warrant and it's a combination of pedestrian and traffic movements. There are, to be honest, some historical factors at play as well.

Mr WILLIE - Interesting. I've worked in schools. We never had them at schools. We used to put the HiVis on and go and do it. I'm interested in how schools are selected for that program.

Mr CRANE - Road safety is obviously one of the major criteria for putting a crossing guard at a particular school.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. Mr Dean and I remind members, that if you want to get away before 9 o'clock tonight, you probably need to speed it up.

Mr DEAN - The minister might keep these answers as short as they can, perhaps, I'll give the question fairly short if I can as well. Minister, can you provide me with an update on the councils that have been successful in receiving funding under the 2019-20 vulnerable road users program and road safety improvements to council roads. I'm hoping that the Golconda Road fits into this somewhere which is the most dangerous road in Tasmania at the present time I would say - three fatalities in about three years.

CHAIR - We just need the answer to the question, not the preamble, thank you, minister, about how good the program is.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. Over the past five years, over 40 per cent of serious casualties in Tasmania were vulnerable road users, that's why this program provides an opportunity for local councils to apply for funding for small scale infrastructure treatments to improve road safety for pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists and that's whether its developing a wombat crossing, separated bike lanes, kerb extension or raised footpaths, upgrades and modifications. Many infrastructure projects can be achieved through this funding program.

I was pleased to announce that under the 2019-20 funding round, 14 safety projects will receive more than \$500 000, and with a co-contribution of councils, some \$700 000 will go towards these worthy projects. Some of the councils to receive funding include Sorell council for pedestrian refuges and kerb ramps on the Weston Hill Road. Launceston City Council for a bike lane on Howick Street between Charles Street and Wellington Street. Brighton Council for Hurst Street pedestrian improvements. Devonport City Council for a crossing on Middle Road for school or special education students and carers, and George Town Council for pedestrian safety upgrade works on Macquarie Street. These projects use cost-effective small-scale infrastructure works to improve sites where a real or potential conflict between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users has been identified. Over the life of the program we're providing \$3.7 million and with co-contributions from councils, more than \$6.6 million will be put to these potentially lifesaving works, and that's a good program with councils - and Golconda Road?

Mr DEAN - Was the City of Launceston council provided with any funding for that? I know they've got something in place, but that is the most dangerous Tasmanian road at this present time, it must be with three fatalities within three years and about 30 or 40 other crashes.

Mr SWAIN - We would have to take that on notice and we'll have to check whether it was in fact application for that.

Mr DEAN - I think there's blackspot funding as well, for it as well. It's a terrible piece of road.

Mr SWAIN - I was going to say, I would have thought it was more blackspot funding than vulnerable road users.

Mr DEAN - Yes, I think it blackspot. Minister, my next question - and probably a quick answer here - was about the Takata airbags and Tasmanian Roads has received some publicity. What has your department done to reduce those or get rid of those dangerous airbags?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's been pretty good progress in that area and I'll be quick. The recall of the Takata airbags is a serious issue for the Tasmanian public. I urge all vehicle owners to check the Product Safety Australia website to see if theirs is on a recall list and if it is on the list, contact the vehicle manufacturer immediately to have the airbag replaced for free. This is a serious issue. I'm pleased that Tasmania's led the nation when the dangers of Takata airbags became apparent. We were the first state or territory to commence the suspension of registration of vehicles fitted with the highly dangerous Takata alpha type airbags in August 2018. While a number of vehicle manufacturers undertook a voluntary recall of affected airbags, not all did and the Department of State Growth proactively encouraged those registered operators of vehicles with affected airbags to respond to the compulsory recall. However, if a registered owner failed to act, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles moved to suspend the vehicle registration. This was only used as a last resort. Takata airbags have been the subject of a worldwide recall when it was realised there was a 50 per cent chance they would misdeploy even when the vehicle was in a minor crash resulting in pieces of metal exploding into the faces of drivers with serious or deadly consequences. Our action led to all other jurisdiction, except Victoria, implementing their own methods of registration suspensions or prevent in renewals so we acted quickly on the airbags as they posed the greatest danger to drivers. Since then, the ACCC has added critical beta type airbags which also pose an immediate danger to the priority list for a replacement.

There remains a total of 12 vehicles in Tasmania that have an alpha or critical beta airbag installed. One is scheduled for replacement in June. Five vehicles fitted with alpha airbags are currently going through the suspension process. However, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles has been unable to serve the suspension notices on two of the registered operators. We are confident that these remaining vehicles will be off our roads in the near future, making us Takata alpha airbag free. Of the seven vehicles still fitted with critical beta type airbags, six of these vehicles are currently going through the suspension process and one vehicle is scheduled for airbag replacement in June.

Since commencing our direct action, 62 vehicles with alpha type airbags have been replaced in Tasmania, and seven vehicles have had critical beta type airbags replaced, and all airbags must be replaced before December 2020, and of course I repeat the call that I made earlier.

Mr DEAN - Next question is on the government fleet, minister, and we know that increasing the overall ANCAP crash safety rating in the vehicle fleet is one proven way of reducing serious casualty crashes. I don't know if you can update us in relation to the government's vehicle fleet safety rating because it's these vehicles that, once we finish with

them, go out into the public domain and the public area as well, so can you update us on where the government is at with that fleet safety ratings of government vehicles.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can provide some information. We introduced a new vehicle fleet safety policy that requires all passenger and light commercial vehicles on the Tasmanian Government vehicle fleet contract to have a five-star ANCAP safety rating. The Australasian New Car Assessment Program, more commonly referred to as ANCAP safety, is Australia's independent vehicle safety authority and our state government, along with other jurisdictions, provides funding contribution to ANCAP to support its work. This is sourced from funds collected through the road safety levy on Tasmanian vehicle registrations. ANCAP safety ratings are published for a range of new passenger sports utility and light commercial vehicles entering the Australian and New Zealand markets and using a rating system of zero to five stars. ANCAP star ratings indicate the level of safety a vehicle provides for occupants and pedestrians in the event of a crash as well as its ability through technology to avoid or minimise the effects of a crash.

Some of these active safety features, such as anti-lock braking systems and airbags, are better known than others, such as the electronic stability control and its different named variants, and newer technology like lane departure warning systems. Other key changes have been made in the way a vehicle's body is designed and built, especially the front, the engine bay and the driver and passenger cabin area. Since 1993 ANCAP has published independent safety ratings with thousands of new vehicles makes, models and variants. These independent safety ratings are used to compare the relative safety between vehicles of similar size, and become a critical factor in vehicle selection for private fleet buyers as well. I have quite a large area of -

CHAIR - I don't think we've got time for that whole page, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I appreciate that. That's why I've flagged the issue.

Mr DEAN - The critical areas out of that, are you able to identify them? It might be a bit difficult for you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Tasmania currently has the oldest vehicle fleet in Australia with an average age of 12.8 years. This means many people are not benefiting from improved safety features in newer vehicles, and of course the policy that's being designed will ensure safer vehicles in the government fleet, which will then, in turn, be sold into the community through the second-hand car market, and the majority of government vehicles are sold to the public after three years or when they have reached 60 000 kilometres on the odometer.

CHAIR - There's no plans to change that? Three years and 60 000?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not that I'm aware of.

CHAIR - Thank you. Are we done in this area?

Mr DEAN - Just one quick question and quick answer to this, that with all of the wind farms that are currently being discussed and on the north-west coast and there's one near Arthurs Lake and so on, and there's a lot of movement of a lot of equipment -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, off and on. It's difficult terrain.

Mr DEAN - Yes, so how are the turbines, for instance, being handled? What's the transportation in relation to them? There's a lot of heavy equipment -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Heavy, long vehicles; windy roads; very difficult.

Mr DEAN - And when is it being done. The public complain about this, it seems, of times when it ought not to be done. Can you -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course, we're actively expanding our capacity as a generator of renewable energy which is good, and as the future battery of the nation. With the Cattle Hill wind farm and the Granville Harbour wind farm under construction, as you mentioned, for example components for 48 wind turbines have been transported the 281 kilometres from the port of Bell Bay, at Bell Bay to Cattle Hill wind farm on the Central Highlands. Some of these components are large. For example, a turbine blade can be some 75 metres.

Now, the department has worked closely with the contracted transport provider for both wind farms to ensure the safe movement of the component parts for both wind farm projects, and thank you very much to - I appreciate the government - our appreciation to the officers of the access team in the Department of State Growth, together with the State Growth Commination's staff who have worked together to manage what has been a very big task. When these loads are on our roads, we continue to ask everyone to remain safe, stay patient and follow all the directions. The oversize, over mass movements will always cause traffic delays, and road users should allow more time when planning their journey. Up-to-date information regarding the OSOM movements have been available on the department's website under our 'Big Things Can't Be Rushed' section. Convoys will pull over where possible to allow other road users to safely pass.

Mr DEAN - It's an important part of it because it - they need to do that, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's very true. However, they must also stay central to the sealed surface as some loads are around the 180 tonnes and cannot always move over to let the other past. The department prepared for a significant increase in demand for these escorts due to the windfarm construction. At the same time, it needs to continue to provide escorts for loads from other industry sectors as well, and to meet the demand. Quickly, in conclusion, the department has taken sensible steps to address the increased demand and has supplemented its permanent workforce with a casual pool of approximately 21 qualified heavy vehicle escort drivers, and, yes.

Mr SWAIN - Minister, and just for the other part of your question, typically at night?

Mr ROCKLIFF - At night.

Mr SWAIN - So those Cattle Hill farm, obviously they're intersecting with some of the road works?

Mr DEAN - So we're trying to move them at night wherever we can and then often moving sort of between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

Mr SWAIN - That's good.

CHAIR - We have had a look here and it says that typically they do it before 5.30 a.m.

Mr DEAN - In the early trips for Cattle Hill farm, they were starting to compete, if you like, with some of the early morning traffic.

CHAIR - Thank you. I'll move now to 2.4 Passenger Transport. Mr Armstrong, thank you.

2.4 Passenger Transport

Mr ARMSTRONG - Minister, at last year's Estimates the issue of seat belts in buses was raised, as was passengers standing on school buses. I don't think you were the minister then -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I was. Minister for schools and buses.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, and you advised that you had requested a review of those issues. Can you tell us what's come out of that review.?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I requested a review from the head of the Department of State Growth, and the head of the Department of Education who together worked on that review. I expect the preliminary report by the end of September 2019. Through the contract payment system introduced in 2008, the Department of State Growth has taken positive steps to ensure that Tasmania's bus fleet, including school buses, is progressively updated. I'm also aware of strong community sentiment on the subject of safety of children travelling to school, and rightly so, and accordingly I have asked my secretaries, Department of Education, Department of State Growth are essentially responsible here for both, and I'm looking forward to that report in September 2019. While the on bus component of the full journey between home and school is where children are at least risk of injury, it is vitally important that children travelling to and from school on buses are as safe as possible. As I say, the secretaries are jointly reviewing the current seatbelt and standing passenger standards as they apply to school transport and to consider how government can build on the existing public education efforts to promote safe behaviour around the buses.

We've introduced and want to increase our safety awareness as students embark and disembark on buses. The Safe around Schools campaign was introduced in early 2019 to promote the need for drivers to slow down in school zones and around school buses. Safe around Schools replaced the previous back to school public education campaign to promote safe road behaviour around buses and the school environment that ended in 2018. With the new campaign, there's a dual focus one including targeting drivers to reduce their speed in school zones and educating children on road safety.

The absence of seatbelts on buses - there's often questions and the community has 50 years of experience of road safety campaigns that emphasise the important life saving effectiveness of seatbelts in cars. What is not widely understood is that buses are equipped with alternative safety features and the safety benefit achieved by having seatbelts decreases as the bus size increases and the size of and construction of larger buses is very effective in protecting passengers, regardless of seatbelt installation or use.

Few buses in Tasmania are equipped with seatbelts and this is because the Australian design rules exempt buses designed to carry standing passengers from their requirement to be fitted with seatbelts. Notwithstanding that, the work is underway and I look forward to that preliminary report by the end of September 2019.

Mr DEAN - I think this question comes here in this area, you'll tell me if it's not, but it relates to this discounts and concessions document, the Tasmanian Government Concessions Guide. My question here is that discounts and concessions document, in urban areas an adult student can travel for \$2.30, a single flat fare, that is. It will cost that adult student living on the urban fringe or rural area half the adult fare. I understand that the adult fare is about \$8 to \$10 in those areas, that's my advice. It will cost that same student living in those areas about \$4 to \$5 a single flat fare, I take it. This is an unfair position on these students. We want people migrating to these areas, living in the country areas. I understand that all students under 18 years, and correct me if I'm wrong here, pay the same irrespective of where they live. This to me is to create an uneven concession playing field and will not help getting people to continue with education. If I'm right in those facts, and I'm taking most of it from this document, I see that as grossly unfair. Minister, what's your position in answer to that question?

Mr SWAIN - I don't have the adult concessions front of mind but I know you're correct on the child ones. We are aware as part of the bus recontracting we've been having a look at fares. There's been some immediate changes to obvious anomalies, so where we've had fares that were much higher in Sorell than equivalent to somewhere like New Norfolk, we've made some changes. Where we've had integration of services and there's a lower fare on one service than another service, we've gone with the lower fare. But they are effectively the short-term view. We are preparing some advice for the minister on a more comprehensive basis around the state and concessions for adult students will be covered in that advice. We're very aware of the issue, also of the incentives that it may or may not be sending and it's going to be wrapped up in some advice to the minister that will be put to him later this year.

Mr DEAN - All right. It's likely that it could change. I guess that's the question I'm putting to you because I've had an approach made to me and we've got some of these people from George Town travelling to Launceston as adult students. It's just not going to help them at all.

Mr SWAIN - We will propose some principles to the minister and of course equity will be one of the considerations.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that.

CHAIR - If there are no other questions on passenger transport, we will move to 2.5 traffic management and engineering services. Mr Dean.

2.5 Traffic management and engineering services

Mr DEAN - I'll be quick here because some of the questions have been answered in other areas. What sorts of things does this section do and does it include speed limit setting? I think it does but I have another question there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This covers staffing in terms of the traffic management and engineering services, related to the operation and management, development and implementation of traffic safety projects, traffic standards, signage and speed limits. The specific functions include development of traffic standards and technical input into capital investment projects such as the Midland Highway investment program, provision of technical advice to network planning, project management and signal operations in relation to efficient traffic flows and alleviating traffic congestion. Representation of the Department of State Growth on various committees including the Austroads Network Task Force and the Austroads Traffic Management Working Group. Administration of the Australian government's black spot program within Tasmania and identification and development of traffic management and safety projects on the state road network and identification and development of traffic safety projects funded under the road safety level.

In terms of speed setting, this is a statutory function of the commissioner for transport and the commissioner - the department could provide some more information about the speed limit setting process and also about the importance of the Austroads Traffic Management Working Group of course. The commissioner of transport is Gary Swain who's to my right.

Mr SWAIN - So if I could jump in. Effectively that area of Shane's team does the assessments under the Australian standard and they give a recommendation to the Transport Commission in relation to state roads, in relation council roads we'll often get a proposal either from the general manager or an engineering manager in the council and again, it'll be referred to that area to look at in terms of the Australian standard. In applying the Australian standard, what we're trying to do over time is build an increasingly coherent speed regime across Tasmania so that people can self-regulate because they understand the environment they're in and that that type of road is likely to have this kind of speed regime. That's the intent.

Mr DEAN - I thank Shane very much for the support on the Pipers River Shop when that was a reduction in the speed limit there on that occasion, that's worked really well.

CHAIR - Slowing down when they're going to the shop now.

Mr DEAN - They certainly have. This time last year, minister, State Growth indicated that they would have a look at the speed limit on the East Tamar Highway which is probably the safest highway we've got in this state with 100 kilometre an hour top speed on it. But there was an undertaking given to me on the same question last year that they would review the speed limit on that road. Do you want me to give you the comment you made? I can, I've got them behind me but that was the undertaking given to me. Was the review done? If it wasn't done, minister, when will we have a review of the speed limit on that road completed? You know, a lot of people have come to me that travel that road regularly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is that that was an important election commitment and that we're committed to. As to how much we've progressed in that commitment, Mr Gregory?

Mr GREGORY - Yes, we engaged the Australian Road Research Board to do an independent review for us. We've got a draft of that report and we're just going through that now.

Mr DEAN - That's a good result. My other question relates to the second Tamar Bridge. There's been some funding available in the budget, I think, this year, minister. When

is it likely to start progressing in some way? I guess selection of the site and whether it's going to happen, I suppose. Is that where we're at or?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's part of our \$75 million West Tamar traffic solution. We're progressing that and a number of other initiatives within that. The vision will comprise of two distinct elements, an overarching document describing the vision for the transport future for Launceston and key principles and of course, the implementation of the vision including an action plan and identification of priority projects. The project's being funded from the Tasmanian government \$75 million commitment for a series of initiatives under the Tamar Valley traffic vision, and the - I've got quite a bit of information here, Mr Dean, I don't want to take up the committee's time. More specifically, Mr Gregory, on that.

Mr GREGORY - Last year the minister committed to the general managers of Launceston, West Tamar, George Town, Meander Valley and North Midlands, to have the department work with those councils on a Greater Launceston transport vision and that works underway now, and that's considering projects we talked about before, Charles Street bridge, but it's also looking at the broad picture of prioritisation of commitments and how they come together. One of the things which we'll be looking at, quite specifically, is, over this next 12-month period is what that bridge looks like, where it goes, where it best fits into the overall picture.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

Output group 6

Subsidies and concessions

Shipping and ferry subsidies

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Any other questions, members, on 2.5? If not, we will move to output group 6 which is subsidies and concessions, and shipping and ferry subsidies and we've already touched on ferries but the ones that come under this line item, minister, are the Furneaux Group and Bruny Island and King Island. I notice that there's been a whole increase of \$34 000. I need to understand whether that's going to cover the subsidies and concessions that come under this line item? I was of the understanding that there would be a new ferry for Bruny Island. Did I read that somewhere or hear that somewhere?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's two new ferries for Bruny Island.

CHAIR - Well, \$34 000 probably won't cut the mustard in subsidies. I know that won't pay for them.

Mr SWAIN - Members might be aware, there was a competitive process run which SeaLink won. The way that process effectively worked is the government specified a level of service and then bid a minimum level of support to provide the service. What the winning bidder did was propose effectively a fixed subsidy in that they would meet the capital costs which is a very good outcome in terms of cost pressures on government as well as level of service. We're able to do what we need to do for Bruny Island because of the way the bid came out through that funding envelope.

CHAIR - Okay. What about the Furneaux Group and King Island? Are they holding firm on their subsidies if there's only an increase of \$34 000?

Mr GARCIA - Well, there's a standard provision each year; I don't think there's an additional call on that at this present time.

CHAIR - Okay. Any other questions?

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, just a quick one on the Bruny Island. As far as the booking- it was going to have to have online booking to book - to move on and off the island. What's actually happened there? Has that progressed or has it been put on hold or? I know there was a lot of community meetings over there with the department and that about whether they would have enough ferries over the summer period, and I was just wondering how that worked.

Mr SWAIN - Yes, they did defer the introduction of the booking system because listening to the community and particularly the reference group that was set up. It's still to be implemented on a progressive basis and they're going to start in the second half of this year. They'll actually have to put a proposal to me as transport commissioner formally about how that will work which I'm yet to receive. But we've talked to them and basically what they're imagining is that they will start with people who have predictable and regular trips, you know, contractors and trades people and other people who need to get on and off the island at the same time, and they'll start to progressively implement a booking system and while they've got a low number of participants, iron out any wrinkles or issues and then expand it progressively. We will also time that expansion with the second phase with some capital works which is happening over at Roberts Point, just to make sure that there's no impediment physically to the operation of the ferry and the booking system once it is up and running.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For the quarter ended 31 December 2018, the first four quarter since SeaLink took over in September, SeaLink covered 46 251 vehicles which is an increase of some 2.6 per cent in the same period the previous year, and this included a significant 18 140 vehicles for the month of December alone which equates to an average of 585 vehicles a day.

The eight days after Christmas, including Boxing Day, were the busiest on record and SeaLink ran three ferries continuously for those days and vehicles increased significantly to 53 367 vehicles in the March 2019 quarter which includes traditionally busiest months of the year. There's been no reduction in capacity. There's actually been an increase and there will not be any reduction in capacity in following years. I know there was a lot said about that. But the fact is that the capacity is there in terms of there's been an increase. SeaLink continues to ensure that access to the ferry is available for important travellers like emergency services, school buses, regular service providers and special needs travel.

SeaLink's first new ferry for the Bruny has already been built right here in the Derwent at Richardson Devine Marine and this year we expect it to be delivered by the end of the year. We also welcome SeaLink's recent announcement that they have entered into a contract to build a second new passenger and vehicle ferry for the Bruny Island community and this is a \$7.5 million vessel, to be also built by RDM which of course, is a strong show of confidence in our local advanced manufacturing sector. SeaLink's two new vessels will provide a more reliable efficient and comfortable service adding new schedules faster and turning around a greater crossing capacity. We've also welcomed SeaLink's decision to explore the possibility of

making the second vessel an electric one which would be the first ferry of its kind in the southern hemisphere. we look forward to seeing how that might be progressed.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Are the capacities of those ferries bigger than the current ones?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not bigger but faster and in terms of the crossing per day, because, I guess, the changes to the access and configuration, the system, the turnaround time, the capacity should increase.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Has there been much queuing? I know at Easter, which is normal, it happens every year. Was there any queueing at Easter? It wouldn't matter how many ships, boats or ferries you had running on the link, but has there been queuing any other times?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, usually I hear if there a bit of queuing, and we did receive the feedback, of course, at Easter time, Good Friday, I think.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, that's normal.

Mr SWAIN - I think there was some limited queuing over that January peak period as well. We're still working through the capital upgrades on the Roberts Point sites. Phase 1 is nearly done and we did some work at Kettering as well, so we've still got a little way to go in terms of finishing off the capital and introducing the booking system which may have some smoothing.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I sat on the committee looking at King Island shipping. Is the new ship that was being specifically built for that, is that now on that run?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The *John Dygon* is on the run. It wasn't specifically built for the crossing, but we had the *Investigator 2* first, and then the *John Dygon* is running there now and the feedback's been reasonably positive in that sense, and that's a \$10 million commitment in terms of the *John Dygon* commenced a weekly service to the island about a year ago, which is good. Of course, island communities are reliant on regular and sustainable shipping services and we're pleased to be able to deliver on a commitment to King Island community to ensure essential shipping service is easily maintained. The new vessel, has been in service for about 12 months. It's now operating on a weekly service and the vessel calls at Geelong Port, Grassy and Devonport to ensure it best meets the need of the BIL customers, Bass Island Line customers. It is larger and faster than the vessel it replaced.

The *Investigator 2*, with the carrying capacity and improved sea handling capabilities and so it's working well. The introduction of *John Dygon* has been largely positive and I'm confident the freight needs have been met. In fact, the new vessel completed its 100th voyage on Monday 8 April which is an important milestone.

Further to your question, I believe TasPorts owner and operator of Bass Island Line is continuing to, and proactively seeking, import from Bass Strait operators, existing and new to enhance the shipping service. The company is speaking with the current and potential Bass Strait operators to determine interest in working with TasPorts to deliver a more efficient service and the next step will include consultation with key stakeholders to determine any improvements to the Bass Island Line service. So, work in progress.

CHAIR - Minister, before we leave shipping services, can you give me an indication of whether the Government has been in talks with Furneaux Shipping in regard to the Bridport port? Regularly, you see the ship sitting out and it's missed the tide. It can't get in and it waits for hours. When you've got livestock on it and you know you've got transport operators waiting at the wharf and there's the boat out 100 metres, but it's not going to be able to get in.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I appreciate that.

CHAIR - Has there been any discussions with the operators -

Mr ROCKLIFF - TasPort may well have discussions, but we can't say for sure. I'll take that on notice to see about that.

CHAIR - Thank you. Well, consider that I'm having the discussions with you now, in regard to that issue because it's not going to get any better until we get something done with that port.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand.

6.2 Metropolitan General Access Services

CHAIR - Moving on to 6.2 Metropolitan General Access Services, thank you, Ms Armitage.

Ms ARMITAGE - Minister, I note this output includes funding reallocated from non-metropolitan access services to more accurately reflect the cost of general access bus services. What was the extent of consultation taken with users of services classified as non-metropolitan? Were there any concerns raised about the reallocation of funding from non-metropolitan services to metropolitan services?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms Armitage. Mr Swain?

Mr SWAIN - This is a presentational issue in the budget papers. This has had no impact on service provision at all. So effectively what we had was a sort of historical allocation of costs between a branch concessions and subsidies and admin items and there wasn't, in the time that I've been the Dep. Sec. well, four/five years, that I could not find an explanation for why it was the way it is. It was purely historical. This is effectively a tidy up to make it easier to understand the budget papers.

Ms ARMITAGE - All right. No services were going to make up for other services; it was just tidying up the anomaly?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, we had some services that were described as an admin item, some that were concession and there wasn't a logic behind it. So effectively what we've done now is we've grouped services under general access services and special needs and school bus services.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you.

6.3 Rural and Special Needs School Bus Services

CHAIR - Thank you. Moving on to 6.3 Rural and Special Needs School Bus Services.

Ms SIEJKA - I've got questions around Project 2018. I think that fits here, would that be right?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right, Ms Siejka. I've got an answer to a question from the Chair. A request for funding was received in relation to works on the eastern training wall at the mouth of the Brid River to maintain access with Furneaux Freight. This is currently being progressed by Marine and Safety Tasmania. For your information it is likely to be in the amount of \$105 000 so there is discussions with Marine and Safety Tasmania as I'm advised. But we can continue.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms SIEJKA - The changes resulting from Project 2018 were quite disruptive for some students and families. Do you feel confident that the issues due to the changes in services in the Derwent Valley, Sorell, Southern Beaches, Tasman and East Coast have now been resolved. Do you anticipate getting to make further time table or route changes in other areas? I noted that the Huon Valley, I think were delayed due to the bush fires and there were some concerns in that community. I don't know whether there was further consultation work there and I think the north has yet to occur as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, these changes are a result of the first major review of our public transport network in a decade. We want to ensure our bus services more accurately reflect the needs of our local communities, now, of course and into the future. The changes see an overall increase in bus services and are aimed at providing better access to employment, education and important services as well as pave the way for an introduction of a single integrated state-wide transport network and a common ticketing system.

Changes to the public transport in Southern Tasmania came into effect on 20 January this year and in some cases, there were some changes which needed to be made as a result of community feedback which is not unexpected given the scope of the task. We have demonstrated with rapid responses to incorporate changes to services in New Norfolk and Sorell and elsewhere that our focus is firmly listening to the community and fixing issues quickly in that sense. I do have other information more broadly if you like.

Ms SIEJKA - I know that, so Huon is still yet to occur, so further consultation that it happened since the original -

Mr SWAIN - If I can -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, you want to? Yes?

Ms SIEJKA - Yes, and then the north.

Mr SWAIN - Yes, so on the north, I'm planning to do deeper consultation than we did on the south, so just recognising in part that people's attention when it comes to bus changes is really galvanised when they go to catch the bus, you know.

Ms SIEJKA - Yes, that's fair.

Mr SWAIN - At that point. We do recognise where we had problems, we did have a particular data gap, so we had engaged pretty deeply with councils and schools and we had a really pretty tight handle on who was using the school bus services. But because we don't yet have common ticketing, we don't have records of who gets on and off our general access service.

Mostly where we got caught out was where we had a cohort from a particular school or college who were heavily using a particular general access service and we didn't fully understand that. So New Norfolk, that was St Mary's and on Sorell, that was Rosny College. We couldn't rule out that there won't be a need for further changes for those type of events, but we're trying in the north, certainly to make that less likely by doing a lot more detail consultation at the minister's request.

That will involve advertising in the papers, tailored information being sent to any area that will have significant changes to services, spelling out the service changes forums for engagement counsels, et cetera. So we are seeking to learn from what happened down south and do a smoother rollout. In relation to Huonville, I'm just looking at my colleague, Martin. I think that's one of the areas where we're actually getting some strong patronage uplift already in the GA services. We're actually looking at putting a couple of extra services on there for good reasons as opposed to that it didn't work out quite well, in the first instance. That's an area where we're getting a good uplift in patronage.

6.4 Non-metropolitan general access services

CHAIR - Thank you. If there's nothing else on that one, we'll move to 6.4 Non-metropolitan general access services. The only question I have in regard to this one is that I can see that almost \$8 million has not been continued on in future broad estimates. It talks about a reallocation. Has that \$8 million gone up into the 6.3 area? Or has it gone into the - well, it can't go into the 6.2, for the Metropolitan. Has it gone into 6.3?

Mr SWAIN - Yes.

CHAIR - Okay. And we won't see that in the budget next year? That'll be gone?

Mr SWAIN - That's right.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr SWAIN - So that's part of the reason you've got that out lift from \$25 million to \$38 million.

CHAIR - Yes. They've got extra and that \$8 million has gone up there.

Grants and Subsidies

Ms SIEJKA - I have a grants and subsidies question.

CHAIR - So, I'm now moving on to Grants and Subsidies. Ms Siejka? I've got a question after you, thank you. I am now moving on to grants and subsidies, Ms Siejka, and I've got a question after you.

Ms SIEJKA - So the tax and subsidy program?

CHAIR - Grants and subsidies, can we do that first?

Ms SIEJKA - This is grants and subsidies. It comes under there.

CHAIR - No, but we'll do grants and subsidies first before we move to capital investment.

Ms SIEJKA - No, this question fits in grants and subsidies.

I understand that the scheme has recently been capped and there are possibly only about 1400 people that use it. It's estimated that about 25 per cent of people won't be able to spend the amount that they did previously. I'm just wondering why the decision was made, I guess, to cap the scheme and what evidence that was based on, research or information. It is a concern at the moment that some people with disabilities have been hit from quite a few different areas and I would hate for people to be further socially isolated when it's such a valuable scheme for them, without additional public infrastructure investment.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand. We introduced the scheme in 2016 because of the NDIS transition; we were concerned about where the transition was at. The \$1000 cap is for, I think, 85 per cent of users. That reduces to, I believe, \$350, which still covers 75 per cent of users. We're reducing it because we're expecting the transition for the NDIS to work through at that point in time. Our intention is actually not at all to disenfranchise or disadvantage anyone.

Ms SIEJKA - Is there any potential to review at that point if the transition's not working as smoothly? I know the NDIS has identified transport as one of their major issues. I guess that could still continue to be for a much longer time than across the next year or two?

Mr SWAIN - There is a balance in this one so, as you would understand, this is a Commonwealth responsibility. So the Government is intervening really to take some of that responsibility back. We will obviously need to continue to work closely with the Commonwealth and NDIS to see that they have an effective set of transport arrangements in their package. This is intervention that really alleviates the Commonwealth with some of its responsibility for a fixed term to give us some time to negotiate further. It's a recognised area of weakness in the NDIS.

Ms SIEJKA - Where there's that gap, though, the state does have a responsibility for people living with a disability if the NDIS isn't meeting that need.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that's the basis of why the policy was implemented in the first place in 2016 in terms of understanding the gap, and wanting to not disenfranchise Tasmanians as a result of that where that transition was at, if that's the right terminology. I hope it is.

CHAIR - Thank you. In regard to 6.5, and in the budget papers there isn't 6.5, but it actually refers to the construction of streets in towns. It used to be called the Unmade Street

Scheme for local government, but there's no allocation. I'm expecting that it might be in grants and subsidies, but given the decrease in that line item (a), has there been any construction of streets under the Local Government and Highways Act, and why isn't there a 6.5 line item?

Mr SWAIN - There is a 6.5 -

CHAIR - Not on my sheet there isn't, unless you've got different budget papers than I've got, Mr Swain.

Mr SWAIN - I've got a note here - I'll have to check it, excuse me - which says that there is \$50 000 available per financial year but typically the spend in recent years has been zero dollars.

CHAIR - So no local government areas are putting their hand up to use the Unmade Street Scheme that's been in place for as long as I can remember, Mr Taskunas. As long as I can remember.

Mr TASKUNAS - About 30 years only.

Mr SWAIN - I don't want to get into that discussion but in the time that I've been supporting ministers I haven't seen it being used in the last six or seven years, so.

CHAIR - Really?'

Mr SWAIN - Yes.

CHAIR - Unusual. Okay, that's why there's no 6.5.

Mr SWAIN - Possibly because it is quite a small amount relative to the cost of construction.

CHAIR - Okay. Might need to increase the amount available.

Mr GARCIA - Apparently Latrobe has an interest however in making application.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. They might get their whole \$50 000 if we can find it. Thank you, Mr Armstrong.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I don't know whether I'm in the right area, I think I am. Just recently trains have been a big issue with me and a few of the committee members with the north-east rail and rail trail, et cetera, and the EPP Railway keeps coming up in those discussions. I noticed there was 16, was there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$16 million over four years.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Four years? Can you just tell me what's that actually for? Is it upgrading the rail?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's upgrading infrastructure to rail, locomotive. I think some bridge work as well, and to support the operation of a service. I think it was you, Mr Armstrong, who mentioned you were in the west recently.

CHAIR - He's a regular visitor to the west coast. He loves the place.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. You would appreciate that the West Coast Wilderness Railway is very important, not only to Queenstown, but the whole west coast region. Since 2014, the Government has invested around \$18.5 million on the West Coast Wilderness Railway, including \$4.5 million in 2017-18. The growing popularity of the railway has seen visitor numbers spike from 20 270 four years ago to 32 551 last year, and the railway is currently experiencing around a 7.21 per cent increase visitor growth year on year.

The Government will now invest the \$16 million over the next four years in further capital upgrades at the railway as part of this budget. The replacement of 18 kilometres of track, upgrades to bridges to improve safety, as I said before. The introduction of a fourth heritage steam locomotive to further enhance that experience and the investment will ensure the ongoing viability of the West Coast Wilderness Railway is a safe, unique, authentic, enjoyable and interactive heritage tourism icon, and we are pleased to support the west coast. This was welcomed by the West Coast Council.

The natural environment the West Coast Wilderness Railway operated in is challenging, as you'd appreciate, as it is extraordinary, and that of course is part of the unique charm of the railway and a testament to the will and creativity of the people that built it originally. There is no doubt that it also adds to the challenge of maintaining the railway and complying with modern rail safety standards, and this investment of \$16 million will support capital upgrades to secure the long-term future of the railway and drive additional visitor growth.

In particular, the addition of a fourth heritage locomotive, the last of the original locomotives, will ensure that more services can be operated under steam power and will considerably improve the visitor experience. These steam locomotives have the rack and pinion system capable of driving the locomotives over the steepest gradient of the track, 6.67 per cent gradients, that diesel engines are not able to achieve - something I learnt when I was recently down there.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Is that locomotive round there and just needs restoring is it? You might not be able to tell me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The heritage locomotive is currently held by the Glenorchy Transport Museum and the \$16 million investment will enable its restoration and return to operation on the West Coast Wilderness Railway which is something I'm sure that rail enthusiasts will appreciate. Having spoken to the manager and employees when I went to visit the workshop recently, there's been upgrades to the café as well, and it's very smart and inviting for the people that come to visit. The Glenorchy Transport Museum, I visited recently, was amazing as well. It is amazing how many people from around the world recognise some of these hidden gems there and they know they're there and want to visit.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I encourage anybody to do a trip. It's brilliant.

CHAIR - There's a resurgence of people's interest in heritage rail, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, look forward to the committee's findings.

Mr DEAN - Capital investment - there have been previous discussions with the Launceston City Council about local roads and bridges. Has there been any progress on this, minister, in relation to those discussions with the City of Launceston council.

CHAIR - We talked about the Charles Street bridge, we've already done that one.

Mr DEAN - Yes. I'm not sure if there's any more to discuss on that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't think so.

Mr DEAN - That it, that covers it all? Okay. If I can go on to my next question then. Mowing of road verges - it's not a very interesting topic -

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is to some.

Mr DEAN - It's an area where I get a lot of complaints and questions being asked of me. Can you update us on just what's happening in that area and the responsibilities and so on and particularly, in the summer period is when most of us would get the complaints?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I get feedback from farmers. I get feedback from landholders. I get feedback from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association.

CHAIR - Members of parliament.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I get feedback from members of parliament and a lot of members have written to me in the last 12 months about this particular issue. Our state budget delivers ongoing funding for routine and periodic maintenance of the state road network. It's a significant amount of funding. This is the road network more generally of course. We have some nearly \$300 million across the forward estimates and \$64.4 million in 2019-20, for the state road network and maintenance. This includes roadside mowing and slashing on the state road network. The state road network of course comprises of 3724 kilometres of roads and 1253 bridges and major structures. The Department of State Growth is responsible for managing Tasmania's state roads, including the associated roadside verges. Approximately \$4 million is spent on roadside mowing, slashing and weed management on state roads, \$4 million a year.

The frequency of mowing and litter removal along key Tasmanian tourist and city gateway routes has been increased since the end of 2016 to meet expectations of visitors in the community with positive feedback. The higher frequency of mowing along key Tasmanian tourist and city gateway routes in the northwest, northeast and south will continue.

The department has specific programs for management of weeds across the full width of road reserves. It also records and retains data relating to the location and amount of roadkill on the state road network. That's not including local council roads. The department has identified that the roadkill on state roads over the past three years has declined, in fact by 50 per cent.

I know there's been some feedback about mowing widths on verges. I'm sure everyone's got a question about that in their electorate. We had a discussion within the department and to reinstate full width rural mowing due to community concerns and I asked the department if we could.

Mr DEAN - Full width, you mean right across to the boundary, is that what you're talking about?

CHAIR - There were two cuts before. They cut it back to one cut.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Fence to fence. Following a trial of reduced width rural mowing, some additional mowing has occurred already, with full reinstatement expected to occur following this year's winter. I want to recognise the advocacy of honourable members, the TFGA on this particular issue as well. We'll continue to take a flexible approach in terms of the department and responsive approach in delivering its mowing program to meet all requests of the Tasmanian Fire Service, to mitigate high fire risk roadside sites on state roads and so we recognise it covers a lot of area. Fire risk, safety, amenity.

Ms SIEJKA - It is an area that brings out a lot of passion in people.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Weeds, yes, it does. Thank you for that question.

CHAIR - Everybody wants everything to look good at Christmas time.

Mr DEAN - They do. I heard there's a transport vision for Hobart. Have we a similar transport vision for Launceston and the surrounding areas? I'm defending the West Tamar but no, it is the whole area of Tasmania I'm interested in, the growing area of West Tamar. There are issues and concerns there and complaints of people accessing Launceston and so on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In fact, last year, Mr Dean, I met with the general managers of the West Tamar, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, Dorset and City of Launceston councils to discuss what you're referring to, a more strategic approach to future planning and investment in transport infrastructure and services for Greater Launceston. Discussion included prioritisation in the scope of the \$75 million, Launceston and Tamar Valley vision election commitments, recognising the benefits and challenging of growing economic activity and the development in and around Launceston. We're working in partnership with the Greater Launceston councils to develop a transport vision to provide guidance for decisions around transport policy and investment.

The vision will provide guidance for a coordinated approach to transport planning and provision of transport infrastructure and services to meet the future needs of greater Launceston. The vision will comprise key principles for the future of the transport future of Greater Launceston and importantly, an action plan for the prioritisation of projects. And the project is being funded by the government's \$75 million commitment of course, for a series of initiatives under the Launceston Tamar Valley traffic vision.

There's no doubt that Launceston is transforming and becoming a more vibrant city and there is a need to protect what is great about Launceston while supporting of course growth in the local economy and encouraging investment from interstate and around the world as well.

In particular, the North Bank area of Invermay and Inveresk Rail site is undergoing a revitalisation with developments including the Silos Hotel redevelopment or development and surrounding other projects, the North Bank recreation area and the new University of Tasmania, Northern campus at the Inveresk Rail site. There's also significant urban growth planned for the West Tamar Highway corridor at Legana, Perth, Hadspen and St Leonards. And a bold vision for how Launceston will move its people in the future is therefore essential but it is important that informed and integrated decisions need to be made in planning for investment in infrastructure, services and programs which will enable Launceston to realise its full potential.

Ms ARMITAGE - So the eastern bypass has gone.

Mr DEAN - The ring road, that was my next question, the eastern bypass.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think I asked it last year.

Mr DEAN - Is that on the agenda at all? There's been lots of discussion previously in years. Is it totally off the books or what?

Mr GREGORY - It's all part of the broader transport vision approach, to understand what the traffic's doing, where it's going.

Ms ARMITAGE - Same answer as last year, I reckon.

Mr GREGORY - There was an election commitment during the federal election for some funding to look at an eastern bypass, but it's a matter of whether it's an eastern bypass in an outer sense or it's an inner ring road that provides for cross city for West Tamar to the eastern suburbs. So that will all be considered as part of the vision, that'll also have an influence on where and then what a second Tamar crossing looks like that.

Mr DEAN - Okay.

CHAIR - Before we leave this area, the federal government committed \$38 million to the upgrade of the Sideling in the north-east part of the state. I'm just interested in whether you've put your mind to that at all, minister, in your capacity? I'm sure \$38 million won't go very far on the Sideling. Have you addressed your mind to that commitment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've addressed my mind to it and mindful of the contribution and mindful of where the state government can also play a role as well. The department is mindful of the commitment as well. The commitment of course was based on a submission from the Dorset Council and the Department of State Growth will arrange for a review of the business case and confirmation of the scope of work that is required. But the commitment is for \$40 million to upgrade the Tasman Highway siding to B-double standard and of course this funding commitment is based on the Tasmanian government contributing \$10 million for a total of a \$50 million investment.

CHAIR - Have you had a discussion with Targa about how they feel about an upgrade?

Mr ROCKLIFF - When we consult on these matters, we consult with all stakeholders, so Dorset Council, people on the freight network and residents and Targa can be part of that.

CHAIR - Well, it's certainly a key Targa part of the course. So, thank you.

Mr DEAN - I'm not sure if I asked this question previously but will the Government continue its investment in its freight access bridges program across Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - So Birralea Road.

Mr DEAN - It comes in at Westbury back through to Franklin Highway.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right. Franklin Highway. Our 2019-20 state budget delivers on going for the continued upgrade of a number of access bridges across the state. The freight access bridge upgrade program is a four-year program to enable operation of higher productivity, freight vehicles on key freight routes, connecting Tasmanian ports, transport hubs and major industries while also providing additional road safety benefits for the community. Three bridges in the program were completed in 2017-18. Seven bridges will be strengthened in the 2018-19 works program. A request for tender has been issued for seven bridges in the 2019-20 program. And this important \$19 million program is fully funded of course by the state Government. The first three bridges in the program were completed in 2017-18 and they were Dunrobin, Blackman River South and Blackman River Flood Opening. In 2018-19 works this year, involved strengthening of several bridges between Burnie and Launceston predominantly. Probably in isolation.

A further seven bridges will be strengthened as part of the 2019-20 works. Two of these bridges are located in north-east Tasmania with the remaining five being located in the south. A design and construct methodology are being selected to provide innovative solutions to these bridges strengthening projects and the outcome is expected to provide the most cost-effective solution given the sight constraints with particular consideration given to the minimalization of whole of life costs. Works on site are expected to commence in October 2019 and conclude by 20 April.

CHAIR - Would you like to table the list of bridges? Thank you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I could read them out.

Mr SWAIN - Minister, if I could. I think we might have an old brief control issue here. I've actually got six bridges listed here so perhaps we could confirm the list.

CHAIR - And provide the list to the committee.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, fair enough.

CHAIR - But we're not sure that the list is the list, so.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I see.

CHAIR - So we'll get the right list.

Mr SWAIN - Yes, I'm just wanting to make sure that the minister hasn't got an old brief.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I see, yes, sure.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Howlett? Last question, thank you, on Capital?

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, how is the Richmond Road going? And what's happening next along that road?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, Ms Howlett. I was out there the other day with the Treasurer having a look at the Richmond Road and some of the works that have been completed on the road and some intersections that have been completed, and also areas for improvement. We're continuing to upgrade the Richmond Road between Cambridge and Richmond with a \$23.5 million allocation in the 2019-20 and the 2020-21 allocation of budget for us to complete the master plan. The first stage of safety improvements is a 2.2-kilometre section from Jane Lane to north of Denhams Road. That provided a 1.5 metre sealed shoulders between Jane Lane and Cole Valley Farm access. Vertical and horizontal realignment, with a short section just north of Hanslows Road which you'd appreciate is a high accident zone. Upgrading the Denhams Road junction to better cater for turning traffic and sealed layby areas at key locations to allow for slow vehicle passing opportunities.

The first stage of works was completed in August 2018 with the final seal and line marking completed in December 2018. Construction on the second stage of the safety improvements included the upgrade of the Malcolms Hut Road intersection, minor realignment of the Richmond Road and improved bus stops commenced in January and was completed in April this year. A commitment in the budget will complete the upgrading of Richmond Road, including the construction of the Cambridge Link Road connecting Richmond Road to the Acton interchange and improving safety by taking traffic out of this growing community.

Design of this next stage, the construction of the Cambridge Link Road and the safety improvements between University Farm and Stony Creek Bridge is complete and the package of works has gone to tender or will be very shortly with construction expected to start later this year. I expect these works to be completed by or in the 2020 construction season and the final two sections would go to tender after that. The provision of the 1.5 metre sealed shoulders which was clearly evident when I drove on the road the other day, will improve safety for all road users including commuters, tourists and especially recreational cyclists while respecting the 1.5 metre passing distance for cyclists on Richmond Road corridor and avoiding impacting the mature elms where practicable, as well as minimising property disruption. Of course, the speed limit along the Richmond Road, Chair, has been a little controversial.

Following the completion of the master plan, the Department of State Growth will commission an independent review of Richmond Road and the speed limit. The commissioner of transport will establish an appropriate speed limit when the review is complete with consideration of the completed road widening and safety improvement works. Richmond Road is another example of the job creating infrastructure that we're embarking on. Thank you for the question.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Now, we'll move, minister to Marine and Safety Tasmania.

The committee suspended from 5.45 p.m. to 5.47 p.m.

Advanced Manufacturing

CHAIR - We'll come back to Marine and Safety. We'll go to Advanced Manufacturing, which is another area that you have responsibility for and Defence Industries.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I'd like to invite to the table, particularly with Defence Industries, retired Rear Admiral Steve Gilmore, who is our Defence Advocate.

CHAIR - Welcome.

Mr GILMORE - Good afternoon, everyone.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With the retired Rear Admiral Steve Gilmore is Lara Hendricks, the Acting General Manager of Business and Trade, Tasmania, to take part.

CHAIR - Welcome. Brief overview?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're very pleased with the progress in advanced manufacturing, particularly defence industries. We're very pleased to have employed our first Defence Advocate on a permanent basis, Steve Gilmore.

CHAIR - We had a briefing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - He's had a briefing?

CHAIR - Has he? Is that right? I feel like I've met you before, so anyway. We'll go on with it then, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The budget provides for some \$2.75 million over four years to support our defence industry strategy. Employment of our Defence Advocate as well, the strategy, the 2023 guide to the government's activities and investment in the defence industry and of course, the more broadly, the Tasmanian manufacturing sector is the key contributor to our economy and employs just under 15 000 people and our support of this sector has been guided by the five-year Tasmanian Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan which was released in 2016. It is now under review again, but we have enormous opportunity in the defence industry space. We refreshed the Tasmanian defence industry strategy 2023 late last year which focuses on jobs and industry growth in four defence priority areas, specialised water craft, maritime products and advanced services, specialised support vehicle and component production, nutrition and food services, and innovative and technologically advanced systems.

It also contains targeted outcomes including the attraction of \$50 million of increased investment into trades in Tasmania and \$20 million of Australian government investment and supply opportunities in defence and national security. Of course supporting all that is the employment of our first defence advocate, and we are punching well above our weight in this

space, and essentially we always have, of course, with our Australian Maritime College based in the north which you both will be familiar with.

I can throw to the Defence Advocate to speak briefly about his role, if you'd like.

CHAIR - That would be fine and then we have a question from Ms Howlett, so thank you, minister.

Mr GILMORE - Thanks very much, minister. Thanks for the opportunity to spend just a few moments talking a little bit about the defence industry in Tasmania, because it's a really good story to pass on across the board, and it's a good story because there are so many Tasmanians that I've found in recent times who are just doing some quite extraordinary things in this space. As the minister was saying, we are punching above our weight.

It is quite remarkable, but I'll lament in some ways that it's a positive circumstance that's not that well understood, even in the state, certainly in Australia and somewhat internationally as well, and so I feel really privileged to be part of that group of Tasmanians now who are attempting to do even more.

I guess it is not a surprise to many of you that Tasmania has participated in defence in a way which is disproportionate to the size of the state from a people perspective, but also the quality of the service that they provide. There's a string of Tasmanians that have done some amazing things over time, General Gellibrand back in the First World War and Admiral Collins, first Australian to command the Royal Australian Navy, but perhaps the better known Teddy Sheean, from up north, and his exploits, Captain Deshano of Launceston who is the CO of Australia at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and the list goes on and on and on. This is remarkable when you think of the size of the state and what it has contributed. We should feel very proud of what they have done and continued to do. When I looked at the circumstance as I took up the job full-time, and considered what Tasmania is doing, I saw quite a characteristic evident and that was that this extraordinary work is done by people who are determined, yet very quiet and unassuming and that's good in many ways, but it does demonstrate the need that perhaps we should be more on the front foot and advocate for what we do.

It is a great time to do that because of our country's defence white paper and in the integrated investment plan that goes with that, \$200 billion of capability to be acquired over a decade. Really, it's a great thing clearly for the defence of our country. It creates a national challenge that we've got to do this in a way that creates sovereign capability which will build and sustain those things ourselves and that requires people and talent in industry to step up to the plate. Tasmania needs to do that and can do that in many ways. We identified four areas that we do, do things really well and are focusing on trying to do it even better. You wouldn't be surprised living in an island state that maritime is one of those things. We clearly design, construct, sustain, operate water craft second to none. It's world-leading in that regard and also provide the services of education, research, training that I have seen in the university do so well.

Specialised vehicles are another area, a bit like the maritime. We do great support vehicles in the north-west. All of those sorts of things that defence forces and organisations like Border Force, marine police, et cetera, need, and that's buses, graders, trucks, ambulances, and we do all that here very well. Nutrition and science were a third sector, again up in the north. You'd be very familiar with that.

Then there's a bunch of companies we've labelled under highly innovated advanced technology but are placing them second to none in the world, and these are some really great stories where Tasmania is making a difference. I might just highlight a couple to give you a sense of what Tasmanians are doing. There's a start-up called One Atmosphere that began in Western Australia; a bunch of Tasmanian ex-servicemen who had a great idea about how to create a new generation of helicopter post-crash floatation devices. It has been around for a long time, and very necessary for operating aircraft over water. They had an idea which was to reduce the size and weight significantly, so significantly it would be a very different way of operating the aircraft in a positive sense and they set about doing that. They wanted to come home to Tasmania to do it and the government assisted them in doing that a couple of years ago. Through a number of defence grants they've got to a point now where they're just awaiting certification of this product. This product is likely to change the way helicopter manufacturers and operators around the world work, and there is no peer and that's Tasmanian.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some of the product, if I've got this right, Defence Advocate, of previous survivability product which is essentially a floatation device in the wheel structures, the landing gear structure, if one of those floatation devices didn't work, then the helicopter would tip over in the water once it had landed, and the pilots would struggle to get out. In fact, the survivability of pilots and those within the helicopter are very limited in having a forced landing on water. This product attaches the floatation devices to the sides of the helicopter and so the risk of the helicopter overturning in the water is greatly reduced. The cabin essentially pops up above the surface of the water to enable the pilots and those within the helicopter to have a better chance of survival.

Mr GILMORE - It has excited the world. When the minister accompanied that company and some others across to the US last year, we spoke with a number of helicopter manufacturers, of course Bell, Boeing and they're all very excited and essentially waiting for this company to get its produce certified and we're working with defence to achieve that.

Currawong Engineering in Kingston, just to the south of us, have just moved to new facilities because they've been so successful, they had a great idea. One guy. An aeronautical engineer, Tasmanian, working in Victoria for Aerosonde had this great idea about how to totally revolutionise the power train for small piston engines, propeller engines for UAVs for uninhabited aerial vehicles. Not the big ones but ones with a couple of metre wingspan. He wanted to come as well and he set up his company with a handful of folks and they are now supplying that revolutionised power train into most of the world's major manufacturers of UAVs. Another great success story. The Premier opened their new facilities in January of this year. They've essentially doubled the size of their workforce and the world's their oyster.

There are a number of other examples at various stages around our state, and they are making a difference in defence. We knew we had to work hard at further promoting these companies and we've done that via a number of ways, engaging defence officials, getting them down here. Primary companies or Primes as they're referred to in defence, we have had 30 Primes. Now, representatives of those companies visited the state in the past year or so and that has had very positive outcomes, a number of our companies are now working in those Primes' global supply chains or have direct contracts with them.

We've also had people like the Chief of Navy, the head of the Defence Export Office and a number of others who have better understanding of what we can do, and they're connecting

our country. We've got to have those companies feel more confident to move forward as well, so there's an education process, making sure they understand the complexities of defence, it's not simple dealing with them, and they are doing that, and indeed some information that we have put together here to help those companies, we now have a number of others that have been operating in the commercial sector that have said, 'We're in, we'd like to be in defence', and a couple of those have now gained contracts over the past 12 months, which is a real positive for us.

There are more established companies, the Taylor Brothers of the state, who are going from strength to strength and in the last six months were announced as a partner to provide the navy's next generation of off-shore patrol vessels. That's a contract worth many tens of millions of dollars and builds on their reputation for supplying to the navy. There are many other examples I could give, but I wanted to highlight that there's an extraordinary capability in Tasmania. It can be further developed. We're connecting those companies appropriately and we're now seeing the results through numerous contracts.

CHAIR - Thank you. I've just reacquainted myself with last year, and you were on four weeks leave at that time, but you had a glowing report from those who were with us so. So that's where it was. Ms Howlett, do you have a question. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you for your contribution. It's a very exciting time to be in Tasmania at the moment. What a great portfolio. Minister, how is the Government going to continue to help grow the advanced manufacturing sector in Tasmania?

CHAIR - We've just had some examples already given, so we won't need to repeat those. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Through you, Madam Chair, I'm concerned about how we're going to assist the growth moving forward.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. As I've mentioned before in terms of advancing manufacturing, it's a significant part of the local economy. It employs around 15 000 people, contributing annually \$1.87 billion to our local community which is an increase of 6.5 per cent over the previous year. The Government is committed to responding to changes which are taking place in global manufacturing and efforts by the Tasmanian industry to adjust, and in many cases to lead that charge the advanced manufacturing action plan was released in 2016 as I've said.

It provides a pathway to enable growth in the sector across five key areas; support, innovation, and continuous improvement, support and greater collaboration within and outside Tasmania. Develop industry required, education and skills. Support market access and activities, and raise the profile and create a brand for the Tasmanian advanced manufacturing industry and by way of a bit of background, just very quickly, that strategy and I guess the state-wide summit we had just prior to that, was really in response to Caterpillar moving there or centralising their operations to Rayong in Thailand from Burnie, resulting in 280 direct job losses that have caused a lot of smaller satellite businesses that fed into that larger business, also were impacted as well.

The capital transition task force did its job, and did it very well. We can talk about that at some other time perhaps. Our team at State Growth undertake a wide range of activities to support the sector: including supporting the industry to access the skills required, working to

assist manufacturers to exploit marketing opportunities both nationally and internationally through the brand market and industry development.

Some of the recommendations of the Caterpillar transition task force was to have a marketing promotion as part of that, and the manufacturing videos is something all Tasmanians should be very proud of as it covered a wide range of sectors. In addition, it assisted, with the commercialisation of new products, with access to finance where appropriate and encouraging and supporting collaboration across the sector. Two manufacturing programs were funded under the action plan. Advanced manufacturing innovation and growth voucher system and the advanced manufacturing market expansion program. Under the expansion program, eligible manufacturers receive a financial rebate of up to 50 per cent to off-set the cost of marketing activities in national and international markets and the program has so far supported approximately 56 projects and there's a number of those listed there which is good. I thank you for your question, Ms Howlett.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Mr Gilmore was on a contract last year, is that still the same situation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - And still a 50 day contract?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Full-time.

CHAIR - Full-contract?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Full-time contract, yes.

CHAIR - Okay. Can we have the cost of the full-time contract? We only have a part-time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. The contract full-time is -

Ms HENDRICKS - \$250 000 grossed up. Superannuation included.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any other questions members, in regard to this particular area.

Mr DEAN - Just following on. The Russian pack thing, that's off, isn't it? That concluded, didn't it, the one that we have, I think, in the Scottsdale area.

CHAIR - New Zealand just took us over.

Mr DEAN - So no chance of obviously rectifying and getting that back, that's finished, gone forever? Sorry, I'm asking about the Russian pack contract that we did have at one stage at Scottsdale. Is there any chance at all -

CHAIR - The defence nutrition research centre.

Mr DEAN - Is there any chance of getting any of that back at all now?

Mr GILMORE - Last year the tender, the contract came up for rebidding and one of our companies, Forager Foods went into a joint venture with a Victorian company in an attempt to wrestle it back from New Zealand. They were unsuccessful in taking on the totality of the contract. But they have secured the opportunity to provide component parts. Freeze dried food which is their raison d'etre will be provided. So that's a positive.

Mr DEAN - It is, yes.

Mr GILMORE - DST in Scottsdale has taken on a new capability purchased by Defence, but to be redeveloped both by and for Defence but with the commercial sector here in the state. It's referred to as MATS, which is microwave assisted thermal sterilisation, and it's all about extending the shelf life and the nutritional value of food. There's much work just starting to occur there, and companies like Forager Foods are being involved, very actively, in that. There's quite a proposition in the longer term to try and wrestle them all back.

CHAIR - Okay. If you get a chance to have the Forager Foods beetroot chips I'd suggest you try them. They are awesome.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, I am partial to a number of their products but I will try that one.

Mr DEAN - You've covered it, but the support vehicles contract that we have on the north-west coast, what vehicles are they and what's the contract for? Mr Gilmore mentioned that in your overlays. What are they and what's the quantity and number of these vehicles?

Mr ROCKLIFF - One point I want to make in terms of our defence industry space in Tasmania, is that the space we are in is protecting our military personnel. It's about protection, rather than weaponry, as an example.

Mr DEAN - Yes, sure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And life raft systems, for example. The actual vehicles themselves, are we talking about Penguin Composites?

Mr GILMORE - Yes, so it's support vehicles that are being produced in the north of the state have not yet been produced under contract for the Australian Defence Force but some have been provided to overseas militaries, ambulances by Mader International and some of their tailored explosive ordnance disposal vehicles have been produced. As a whole capability for export, but Penguin Composites, as the minister just highlighted, are producing component parts now for a very large contract to Thales, the prime company, for 1100 vehicles called Hawkei vehicles. They're replacing essentially the Land Rovers in a support role, transport role within Army. And that is a significant contract of \$12 million and they've increased the size of their workforce by 60 per cent to service that contract up in Penguin. There are a number of other opportunities which we're exploring at the moment, an Australian Army contract for support vehicles and New Zealand as well.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If the members have been doing electorate tours, I'm not sure in the upper House if you do electorate tours -

CHAIR - My word we do. The last one was in the member for McIntyre's electorate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Very good. We'd be more than happy to provide the information on businesses to visit within the defence industry space and you'll find it excellent. So please contact me and we'll make sure that happens through the contacts.

CHAIR - An answer to a question, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was speaking about the freight access bridge upgrade program. I wanted to clarify that there are six bridges in the 2019-20 program. A request for tender has been issued for six bridges: Pipers River Bridge, Little Forester River, Humphrey Rivulet Bridge, North West Bay River Bridge, Leslie Road underpass and the Berriedale Rail underpass.

Mr DEAN - I'm happy that Pipers River Bridge is on that because it was a single lane bridge, and this is now making it a dual lane, which is excellent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure.

Marine and Safety Tasmania

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. Members, if there are no other questions then we very much appreciate your time today and we look forward to having the opportunity to take up the minister's offer of having a look at some of those really exciting businesses that are out there in this space. Now we'll move to MAST. Yes, we see Lia is here.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much. Lia Morris, the CEO of MAST. Marine and Safety Tasmania.

CHAIR - Minister, do you have anything you want to share with the committee before we start into questions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank MAST for the work they do and I'm mindful of time and members wanting to -

CHAIR - I'm sure that somebody that we know very well will be letting us know if we haven't taken our time to provide scrutiny to MAST.

Minister, just interested if you go to page 91 of the budget papers and have a look at the Taking Recreational Boating and Fishing to the Next Level and then have a look at the figures there it's a \$4.8 million program over four years and yet there's only 2018-19 there must've been \$1.130 million, I hope my maths is right, spent. I'm interested in what's been achieved for that amount of money because on the forward Estimates there isn't a 2020-21, 2022-23 allocation. I've worked out that there was been already \$1.13 million spent on this program. I'm interested in what that's achieved.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that's in line with our first-year agenda. MAST has been allocated \$250 000 for a community led master plan for the Bridport Foreshore which will make recommendations on infrastructure upgrades to support the growing number of recreational

fishers and boaters. Better access and improved amenity will be considered through the master plan and includes boat ramps, pontoon access, associated parking and the working port. The final report was completed in May 2019 and contains recommendations on marine infrastructure to be considered by the Dorset Council and the community. There is \$100 000 to continue arrangements for a breakwater at Binalong Bay, to improve launch and retrieval conditions for all boats and this project will commence in June and is scheduled for completion by August, September 2019, subject to weather conditions. There is \$500 000 over two years towards a 30 to 50 metre extension of the rock breakwater at Coles Bay to provide protection to boat owners in southerly weather. Preliminary wave wind modelling has been completed and MAST is working with Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure the project aligns with a draft Freycinet management plan. There is \$200 000 for an extension to the Nubeena jetty, to provide improved access for recreational and commercial vessels due to the Port Arthur jetty often being required for cruise boat visitors and works commenced on the extension to the jetty mid-May 2019 with completion scheduled for 30 June 2019.

Chair, other funded commitments that MAST will implement include \$700 000 over four years to improve access to jetties in shore based recreational fishing facilities.

CHAIR - But that's not out of the Taking Recreational Boating and Fishing to the Next Level bucket, is it? It is. We've got another line item, recreational boating fund, facilities and services which is \$1.4 million.

Ms MORRIS - Minister, I can explain. The recreational boating fund is for recreational boating licences and recreational boating registration and that's separate and distinct from the Taking Recreational Fishing to the Next Level.

CHAIR - So in 2019-20 there's only \$790 000 allocated. Is that enough to cover those initiatives that the minister just outlined?

Ms MORRIS - At the moment, in terms of the commitments, some of them are over four years, so that money has been spread out over four years, so there are some commitments that we wouldn't be able to fully undertake until the fourth year.

CHAIR - Which is 2021-22.

Ms MORRIS - Correct.

CHAIR - Where there's \$1.5 million allocated there. In regard to the marine infrastructure maintenance program and that doesn't have any increase in funding over the forward estimates, but it also doesn't tell me what was spent in 2018-19. May I have a figure on what was spent in 2018-19 and the allocation is \$929 000 and the forward Estimates are all the same. I would've thought that there would've been a slight increase at the very least. I'm not here to do the bidding of MAST but that would be my normal thought process, that you would have an increase. May I have some explanation, minister, around that.

Ms MORRIS - Through you, minister. The MAST does a three yearly structural audit on all its facilities, so that structural audit allows us to predict when things need replacing. The actual moneys that we get on a recurrent basis are for the maintenance of those facilities. So that structural audit allows us to envisage what will need to be maintained during the current year as well.

CHAIR - That \$929 000, that meets that forward planning as well and the current requirements?

Ms MORRIS - No, the \$929 000 meets the maintenance requirements going forward, although that is getting harder. But beyond that, in terms of replacement of facilities, we've put a case to government in terms of replacement of facilities when they need to be addressed, and give the government plenty of warning to do so.

CHAIR - So we may well see an increase in those figures if the government is of a mind to look at that in the future.

Ms MORRIS - Correct. And we'd give them plenty of warning to replace any facilities into the future.

CHAIR - Expect a request, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

CHAIR - What about the improved catch opportunities and there's a reference to artificial reefs and we know how much people like to undertake recreational fishing in our state. So what artificial reefs and structures will be located in Bass Strait off the north-west coast and in Storm Bay in the south of the state. May I have some indication of how that actually works?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. A million dollars over two years has been allocated to improve offshore catch opportunities by constructing two artificial reefs or reef structures in Tasmanian coastal waters. You're correct, the structures will be located in Bass Strait off the north-west coast and in Storm Bay in the south of the state. Preliminary research is underway with more detailed work scheduled to commence in 2019-20.

CHAIR - So how do they work? An artificial reef - is it built and put there or is it constructed? Or is it a dive wreck?

Ms MORRIS - Thank you, minister. Yes, there's a variety of different forms of artificial reefs. Some of them are concrete, some of them are steel, and some of them are sunken vessels. They are actually quite prolific around the Australian coast believe it or not, so there's quite a few in Western Australia, southern Queensland, Northern Territory. We've just undertaken some very preliminary research at this point in time.

CHAIR - I don't see one for the east coast. Is there a reason for that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've decided on the north-west and the south and if there's a further budget allocation and a site that's suitable, then we wouldn't draw out the east coast, but we need to have the budget to do that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And the site selected.

CHAIR - And so a sunken vessel may well be an option in some cases?

Ms MORRIS - It has been the case elsewhere but it may not be the case for Tasmania. The type of species that would be attracted needs to be ascertained first.

Mr DEAN - A question on the ramp at Egg Island Point. That's a marshland, I take it? Is it?

Ms MORRIS - I don't know, it's not -

Mr DEAN - It's not?

Ms MORRIS - Not to my knowledge, but the majority of boat ramps around -

Mr DEAN - So is that a private launching ramp then?

Ms MORRIS - They're usually owned by local councils. Yes, the majority are owned by local councils.

Mr DEAN - All right.

Ms MORRIS - There's over 400 boat ramps across the state and the majority of those - I think we only own six.

Mr DEAN - No, that answers the concerns about it servicing the area, that was all, as I understood. There was concerns about it servicing the area whether it's in the right place and so on by some people only. Others say it's right, some say it's not.

CHAIR - That's pretty much our community. Some like it and some don't. Mr Armstrong?

Mr ARMSTRONG - Just recently, I took my Stormy Seas jacket back in to get serviced and they told me that was the last time that jacket would be able to be serviced. It would only last another two years, I think it was. I noticed that they said about your program that you're running. Can you tell me about that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - MAST now provides an important service to the new Tasmanians including in itself. We enjoy spending time on waters as well as those visiting our shores. Of course, marine safety's not only their responsibility in terms of MAST, but that of the individual going out in a vessel or water craft. One of the most important safety features is to ensure everyone has a good life jacket that will help save your life if ever required.

A new Australian standard, AS4758.1 for Life Jackets was introduced in 2010 and implemented through the Marine and Safety Motor Boats and Licenses by-laws in the same year. MAST first advised the public in 2010 that the older AS lifejackets, the AS 151212 and 1499 and the 2260 would be phased out by 2020, so next year. And the rationale for the 10-year transition period was based on advice from manufacturers that the average lifespan of a jacket is 10 years.

To encourage and assist recreational boaters and licence holders to transition to the new AS life jackets by 2020, MAST introduced a \$200 000 voucher incentive project. Each voucher has a value of \$20 and is redeemable when purchasing a new AS4758 life jacket. To

obtain a voucher, the old AS style life jacket must be produced to one of MAST's many boatsafe or paddlesafe partners. MAST will also provide vouchers and boatsafe education nights around the state. Also, at other advertised events. A maximum of four vouchers will be issued per registered boat owner or license holder. The inside of the old standard jacket is marked with a voucher number and the voucher must be presented with the marked jacket for redemption.

The number on the jacket must correspond to the voucher number presented. Now, vouchers can be redeemed at participating boatsafe and paddle safe partners, printed on the reverse side of the voucher. These partners have received comprehensive training from MAST on the AS4758.1 life jacket and the importance of correctly fitting them and servicing inflatable life jackets. To date, 6149 vouchers have been distributed directly to the public and partners. We're 3154 vouchers redeemed. Vouchers have been printed with security features to prevent copying and will expire on 31 December 2020 and so the vouchers cannot be used to replace existing AS4758.1 life jacket, only the older AS1512 and 2260 and the 1499 life jackets. Funding for this important project, that comes from the recreational boat licence fees and of course this is just one of the important, many important services that MAST provides to Tasmanians who enjoy spending some time on the waters and I thank them for their hard word. I encourage everyone to check their life jackets and replace them if they own the older model.

Mr ARMSTRONG - So when you take your older model in, they then take that life jacket? They dispose of that life jacket?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - Looking at MAST's audit of TasPorts and this might be an appropriate area to answer or not, how often does MAST audit TasPort?

Ms MORRIS - Annually.

Ms ARMITAGE - Annually? I noticed that the last audit, there were four areas of non-compliance which included its ability to deal with an emergency? So TasPorts are MAST - what do you actually have to ensure that TasPorts comply with the areas you find they're not complying? They say that they're actually resolving the issues, have they resolved the issues? If not, what actual ability does MAST have to ensure they do?

Ms MORRIS - We have a deed of agreement with TasPorts and the EPA. It's a five-part deed agreement and part of that we delegate powers and functions to TasPorts. As a delegator we have the right to revoke that delegation if it needed to occur. We also, through that process, authorise particular people within TasPorts to carry out those functions for us. It's an overview that we actually undertake and take very seriously and yes, they have addressed all the non-conformances.

Ms ARMITAGE - The four areas have been addressed?

Ms MORRIS - Yes, they have.

Mr DEAN - I want to steer clear of the current Coroner's Court but I don't think that's been handed down just yet. When MAST register boats, is there any time that MAST will want to look at boats to see whether or not they are registrable vessels? Marine vessels?

Ms MORRIS - At this point in time, nobody inspects vessels in terms of registration processes or transfer of registration and that's no different to any other jurisdiction across the nation. In fact, it's the same worldwide. The only jurisdiction we could find that actually does that was South Africa.

Mr DEAN - Of all places.

Ms MORRIS - Yes. The issue is very complex because it's to deal with the seaworthiness of a vessel. There is no national standard in Australia in terms of the seaworthiness applying to recreational vessels. There are national standards that apply to commercial vessels and a vessel might be seaworthy for you to go from A to B in the Derwent River but if you were taking it down to Antarctica, it wouldn't be seaworthy. Likewise, you may have a very experienced person driving a vessel, which makes it seaworthy. If you have an unlicensed person driving a vessel, it can become very unseaworthy very quickly. Also, the way cargo is stored on the vessel, et cetera, so it is a complex issue, can affect seaworthiness of vessels.

Mr DEAN - I can't anticipate what's going to happen, but I would think that there'll be some directions coming out of that process.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Minister, there are no other questions from the committee in regard to the MAST area. We very much thank, Lia for her time and particularly thank the minister for the day that you have provided answers to questions which the committee put forward. I say thank you as well to your extensive team who put a lot of work together.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, thank you. I thank of course, Lia and thank you to the committee, for their questions. We have some questions on notice that we'll respond to.

CHAIR - I've already signed for some.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I understand I've already got an email. So that's very efficient. I also thank all my departmental representatives and particularly the team behind me who also do a fantastic job.

CHAIR - Education and Infrastructure, so, well done. Thank you, minister. All the best for the next day.

The Committee adjourned at 6.21 p.m.